

Free Christmas Sermons

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LOOKING AT FOUR UNIQUE EVENTS IN HISTORY

To understand the present is to value the past.

This is especially truth of the Christmas story. In fact, the Christmas story, which is told today, is defined by several events that took place over two thousand years ago.

To appreciate the Christmas story, we must go back in time and look at four unique events that took place in history.

These four unique events define the redemptive nature of the Christmas story for us.

If we do not recognize the value of these past events, then we will not understand the redemptive nature of the Christmas story.

Over the years, the movie world has used different ways to present storylines. Because we are so media oriented these days, we need something special to get our attention. So the movie buffs often start the movie in the middle of the storyline. I don't know if you realize this but movies often start in the middle and they move both forward and backwards.

Now to understand what is going on, they often go back to past events to reveal the present. They usually call this flashback. Popular movies and television serials such as: I Robot, Lost, Prison Break, and many others, use this style to great effect. If they didn't do this, we would not understand the story.

In the same way, we need to flashback to four unique events in history to help us appreciate and value the redemptive nature of Christmas story.

The first flashback involves...

1. A Unique Announcement (Luke 1:26-38)

It says in Luke 1:26-33, “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, ‘Rejoice, highly favoured one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!’ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favour with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.’”

It says in Matthew 1:23, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,’ which is translated, ‘God with us.’”

What an announcement!

Of all women, Mary was chosen to be the mother of God’s Son—Jesus Christ.

Just imagine that moment when the angel Gabriel said to Mary, “Rejoice, highly favoured one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women! [why? The reason is because] you [Mary] will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS” (Luke 1:28, 31).

You know, at first this announcement seemed bewildering to Mary. “How can this be? She said, “Since I do not know a man” (Luke 1:34).

But after the angel Gabriel further explained the announcement, Mary said, “Let it be to me according to your word” (Luke 1:38).

The unique announcement—the virgin birth of Jesus Christ—was the beginning of something very special in the history of mankind.

Let me also say this:

Although the virgin birth of Jesus Christ was unique, nevertheless, it was not unexpected because the Prophet Isaiah had foretold the virgin birth in 735 BC when he said, “Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.” (Matthew 1:23)

The second flashback involves...

2. A Unique Moment (Luke 2:7-20; Matthew 2:1-12)

It says in Luke 2:7, “And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.”

It also says in Luke 2:11, “For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.”

What a moment in the history of mankind!

Just imagine for a minute the awesomeness of the moment.

The shepherd came and found Mary, Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger. And the shepherd told Mary and Joseph all that had happened to them out in the field.

The wise men came into the house and they saw the young child with Mary his mother and they fell down and worshipped Him. And when they opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh (Matt 2:11).

The incarnation—God in the flesh! Jesus Christ is God in the flesh.

Just think God who is spirit came down from heaven incarnate—in the flesh.

What a moment that must have been for those who saw the baby Jesus...those who touched Him!

The third flashback involves...

3. A Unique Mission (Matt 2:21; Luke 2:11; Gal 4:4-5)

When we read the message of the cradle, we see the mission of the cross.

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matt 1:21)

“For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord” (Luke 2:11).

“But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons” (Gal 4:4-5).

The message of the cradle reveals the mission of the cross.

Even the carols we sing of Jesus’ birth reveal the mission of the cross.

Hark! The herald-angels sing, Glory to the new-born King! Peace on earth, and mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled.

How was God and sinners reconciled? It was through the cross. As the apostle Peter said, “Christ suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God” (1 Peter 3:18).

As someone said, “Christ’s birth brought God to man, but it took Christ’s death to bring man to God.”

Silent night, holy night! Shepherds first saw the light, heard resounding clear and long, far and near, the angel-song: Christ the redeemer is here, Christ the Redeemer is here.

So, what’s the unique mission—the redemption of mankind. The apostle Paul summed it up so well when he said, “In Him (Jesus) we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace” (Eph 1:7).

The birth of Jesus Christ was only the beginning of that mission. We know that Jesus grew into a man...a man who died upon the cross of Calvary. “The just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God.”

Yes, we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ—the coming of the King.

But let’s not forget the mission of the King.

The fourth flashback involves...

4. A Unique Opportunity (Luke 2:17-20)

“Now, when they [ie. Shepherds] had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all who heard it marvelled at those things, which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God

for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told to them” (Luke 2:17-20).

So, what’s the unique opportunity?

I see two unique opportunities here in these verses.

A. I see a time to share.

I believe a unique opportunity is telling someone else about Jesus.

The shepherds made widely known the virgin birth, the incarnation, and the mission of Jesus Christ.

Telling people about Jesus Christ is a unique opportunity. Think about it. Every time you share Christ you are participating in a unique opportunity.

There is something special about telling someone else the message of Jesus Christ.

Do we see the message of Jesus Christ as a unique opportunity to inform someone of what God has done in the sending of His Son—Jesus Christ?

B. I see a time of worship.

After pondering upon what they heard and saw, the shepherds returned to the fields worshipping God—giving Him the glory and praise that God deserves.

May we take a unique opportunity this Christmas to worship God and to share Jesus with someone else!

REFLECTING UPON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHRISTMAS

As I get older, it seems that Christmas comes around faster every year than the previous year.

This year has been especially quick. Do you realize that it was eight (8) years ago when the Millennium Bug was the big issue of the day?

It was eight (8) years ago, WOW!

Two more years and the first decade of the third millennium will be over.

All I can say is that time has flown...in fact time is flying.

What happened to time? One person put it this way...

When as a child I laughed and wept, time crept
When as a youth I dreamed and talked, time walked
When I became a full grown man, time ran
And later as I older grew, time flew
Soon I shall find while travelling on, time gone

You know, time is a precious commodity. Once gone, it cannot be retrieved. It cannot be reclaimed.

As Carl Sandbury said, "Time is the coin of your life. It is the only coin you have, only you can determine how it will be spent. Be careful lest you let the world spend it for you."

The world seeks your time. And yet, I am reminded of that verse in Psalm 46:10 which says, "Be still, and know that I [Yahweh] am God."

We can be so busy that finding time for God becomes secondary rather than primary.

In many ways, Christmas can be like that. We are so busy that finding time to stop and reflect upon the significance of Christmas becomes secondary.

There are so many things to do...shopping...presents...preparing for Christmas day holidays...friends...endless end of year functions...etc.

Sometimes, we need to ask ourselves: Do we really have time for the real reason for the season?

And yet, we need to stop and reflect upon the significance of the season because it has eternal benefits.

So, this morning I want to take some of your time and look at five reasons for stopping and reflecting on the significance of Christmas.

The first reason for stopping and reflecting at Christmas is because...

1. Christmas is a time to ponder (Luke 2:19)

The Bible says, “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart” (Luke 2:19).

The picture I get from this verse is that...

- A. Mary stopped and pondered upon all the things that took place

On that day when Jesus was born, Mary stopped and pondered.

The word *ponder* here is significant because it means “she was putting all these things together in her heart.

In other words, she was meditating upon the meaning of all that took place.

I suppose she could still remember the Words of the angel, Gabriel. “Don’t be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God” (Luke 1:30).

Look at verses 31-35, and 38, “And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end. Then Mary said to the angel, ‘How can this be, since I do not know a man?’ And the angel answered and said to her, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.’” “Then Mary said, ‘Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.’ And the angel departed from her.”

Now these words had become reality in the birth of Jesus Christ. But that’s not all...these words were heightened by the Shepherd’s confirmation that indeed a special event had taken place in the birth of Jesus Christ.

No wonder Mary stopped and pondered upon all these things that took place!

B. Are we going to stop and ponder upon the significance of Christmas?

I wonder will we find time to stop and ponder!

If Mary, the mother of Jesus, had to stop and ponder these things; how much more we need to stop and ponder the significance of Christmas!

For me, it has been refreshing to read again the Christmas narratives—to actually stop and read.

Christmas is a time to ponder...to stop and ponder.

The second reason for stopping and reflecting at Christmas is because...

2. Christmas is a time to marvel (Luke 2:18)

The picture I get here from this verse is that...

A. They were astonished at the report of all that took place

That is, the people who heard the shepherd's report...not just Mary and Joseph as we can see from the preceding verse.

The word *marveled* here is significant; in fact, profound.

It is profound in that it conveys the expression of something really special happening that produces (brings forth) a reaction—a reaction of astonishment, a reaction of amazement, a reaction of awe or maybe even a hint of fear.

God in the flesh...here on the earth!

As one writer said, “a reaction that arouses a man's thoughts of the divine...a reaction that makes a man think about something he would not normally think about.”

B. I wonder, does the Christmas narrative arouse thoughts of the divine

Or are we too busy to be aroused?

Too much to do to even read the Christmas narrative!

And yet, something very special took place on that first Christmas...God came to this earth in the flesh...to walk among men...to die upon cross to save man from his sin.

I wonder what will be our reaction to the Christmas story!

Christmas is a time to marvel...a time to have our thoughts of the divine aroused.

The third reason for stopping and reflecting at Christmas is because. . .

3. Christmas is a time to praise (2:20)

A. They (the shepherds) praised God for all that took place

Just imagine for a moment, these shepherds were watching over the flock, and behold an angel of the Lord shone around them.

That glory that was there when Moses received the Ten Commandments!

That glory that rested in the tabernacle when Israel wandered in the wilderness!

That glory that was in the temple...in the holy of holies!

That glory of God shone around them as the angel of the Lord spoke to them...no wonder they praised God.

But it didn't stop there because verse 13 says, "And a multitude of angels appeared praising God saying..."

BUT that's not the main reason they were praising God. The main reason was because they had received the message of Jesus' birth. Moreover, they were eyewitnesses to the birth of their Savior.

Look at verse 11, “For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.” That’s the Christmas message.

God sending His Son to be our Savior...the One who would save man from his sin!

B. Yes, we need to take time this Christmas to praise God for Jesus Christ

For sending His Son to be our Savior! We have much to praise God about this morning.

Christmas is a time to praise God.

The fourth reason for stopping and reflecting at Christmas is because. . .

4. Christmas is a time to tell (Luke 2:17)

These shepherds told their story to Mary and Joseph and to many others.

Christmas is a time to tell the story of Jesus.

That God came to this earth in the flesh...He walked among men...and ultimately died upon a cross to be our Savior.

God in this act was showing the way to Himself.

As Jesus Himself said, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (John 14:6)

People need to hear this message...because there is no other way to God other than through Jesus Christ.

The fifth reason for stopping and reflecting at Christmas is because...

5. Christmas is a time to find Jesus (Luke 2:16)

Christmas is a time to point people to Jesus Christ...a time to show to them their need for Jesus Christ.

The Bible makes it clear that without Jesus our destiny is a lost eternity.

Have you found Jesus Christ?

Do you know Him as the way, the truth, and the life?

Do you know Him as your Savior and Lord?

Can I encourage you this Christmas to stop and be still?

Take time to ponder the significance of Christmas!

Take time to allow God to arouse your thoughts of the divine!

Take time to praise God for Jesus Christ!

Take time to tell someone about the Christmas story!

Take time to point someone to Jesus Christ!

If you don't know Him, take time to find Him!