

# Let Christmas Be Christmas

Luke 2:1-20

## Preface

This morning I would like to ask that all of the children come forward. I would like to for everyone to turn to Luke 2:1-20 as we read the Christmas Story together.

## Scripture

(Children gather around the Christmas Tree as Pastor or someone sits in a chair and reads the Christmas Story Luke 2:1-20.)

## Introduction

The Christmas Story is the story of the birth of Jesus Christ.

Isn't it wonderful that the greatest story ever told is a true story? It isn't some fictitious story but rather a story of our loving God reaching down to His creation.

His birth has grown into an international holiday in which millions of people celebrate. We purchase Christmas trees, exchange gifts, gather with family and many other traditions. We do all of this in celebration of the Christmas Story and birth of Jesus Christ.

Let's take a moment and reflect on some of the people involved in the Christmas Story. Perhaps we can learn from their character.

## 1. Mary

There was young Mary. The Bible tells us she found favor in God's sight. She must have been a special young lady who had a warm and kind heart.

Our Catholic friends make much of Mary, sometimes to our disagreement. It sometimes seems that they elevate her to a point above Christ.

On the other hand we place too little recognition on Mary. We rarely speak of her except at Christmas. Yet Mary is the most special, most righteous woman in the history of mankind. She found great favor in God's sight. One can only wonder what our world would be like if our ladies used Mary as their role model rather than the likes of Britney Spears or Martha Stewart.

Mary was certainly frightened and yet she remained faithful. She trusted God. And, God knew she would trust Him. This is why He chose her. She kept God and His messages to her close in her heart and pondered them daily.

## 2. Joseph

Skeptical at first, Joseph became a model husband and father.

Joseph was a Godly man. Matthew 1:19 tells us he was a righteous man who cared deeply about Mary and was determined to take care of her.

In a dream, an angel told Joseph of Mary's child and that it was the Christ child. Joseph could have ignored the Lord and chosen to spare himself of any shame. But he didn't. Instead he listened, obeyed God and remained steadfast and faithful.

In a day of dead-beat dads and self-centered dads, what would our world look like if young men had half the commitment and faithfulness of Joseph? Oh if only our men would listen to the Word of God and not bail out at the first sign of difficulty.

## 3. Shepherds

Then there were the Shepherds, everyday blue collar guys doing their job. Remarkably, God chose to use them to announce the birth of His son.

At first they were afraid. But they quickly realized this message was truly from God. Oh if we could recognize when God speaks.

After their encounter with the angel they didn't just returned to work. They chose to seek out the Christ child and they found what they sought. As a result of their find, the Bible tells us they returned "glorifying and praising God."

You and I can learn much from the Shepherds as well. The shepherds were not too busy for God. The Shepherds didn't just hear; they acted and sought Him out.

The shepherds wanted to experience this miracle from God. They were eager to go to Christ and see Him first hand. They took the necessary steps to see Christ and they walked away changed.

They went away praising and glorifying God. Do you praise and glorify God because of your experience with Christ?

#### 4. Jesus

Without Jesus there is no Christmas Story. Jesus is the very centerpiece of Christmas.

Illus: For many years my wife has wanted a large nativity scene to place on the front lawn. Two year ago our neighbors put one out that was exactly the size and type she has been wanting. I asked Mike where they got it and he told me Pottery Barn of all places. I got Pam and said let's go get you one. She was reluctant because it would be just like the neighbors. I didn't care, I was going to get her one.

Needless to say Pottery Barn was out of them and we haven't found them anywhere since. We have found expensive large ceramic ones but they are thousands of dollars but none in our price range.

Suppose we found large nativity scenes on sale for 90% off. Now that would be a deal wouldn't it? Suppose when we went to get one we found that they had 10 sets left. The only problem was that the baby Jesus and manger were missing from all 10 sets. Would we purchase one at 90% off? Certainly Not! It wouldn't be a nativity scene without Jesus. Without Jesus it would just be a collection of statues.

Christmas isn't Christmas without Jesus. That seems obvious but it isn't. We live in a day when Christmas has been diluted and commercialized to be about everything but Jesus Christ.

Jesus has been so left out of Christmas that we now have bumper stickers and buttons that say things like; "Jesus is the reason for the season", "Put Christ back in Christmas" and "It's ok to say Merry Christmas." These are all in response to the world and Satan's attempt to remove Jesus from Christmas celebrations.

The birth of Jesus was the great outreach to mankind by a loving God. God sent His son to be born a virgin, to live a life of perfection and ministry, to die on a cross and then be miraculously resurrected. All of this was done for you, me and anyone else who will receive this great gift of love from God.

The Christmas story is about the greatest gift ever given; the gift of a Savior to a lost and dying world.

#### 5. You

There is one more character in the Christmas Story. It is you!

Just because you celebrate Christmas doesn't make you a Christian. Many people who have Christmas trees and exchange Christmas presents are not Christians. Your lawn can be covered with a million Christmas lights but that doesn't make you a Christian.

Is Christ really the center of your Christmas? Have you accepted His gift of salvation? Is He Lord of your life?

Luke 2:13-14 says; *"<sup>13</sup> And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, <sup>14</sup> Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."*

Have you experienced the peace and good will that God offers through Jesus Christ the Savior?

#### Conclusion

The Christmas Story is an open ended story. It doesn't end with the birth of Christ, His death or His resurrection.

Every individual must write their own final chapter to the Christmas story. Every final chapter is highly personal.

Each final chapter involves a sinful person with unique burdens and unique baggage. Each final chapter involves a soul who one day comes to the manger, the cross and the resurrection and says; "I receive the gift from God."

Until you have received Christ and given your life to Him, the Christmas story isn't complete and Christmas is not Christmas.

Are you praising Christ with your life?

Let Christmas be Christmas, experience Christ in your heart.