

Christmas Eve

12-24-15

Can you hear it? There's a murmur in the air. In the air there's a feeling of Christmas." It's everywhere. It's everything! Christmas is indeed a very special time! But because of everything that's going on, during this Christmas season, it's so easy to forget what's important. The true meaning of Christmas isn't found in the decorations, the lights, or wrappings, but in the gift.

Luke 2:4-7, *“And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.”*

Now that's what Christmas is all about! It's about the gift. It's about God with us. It's about God coming to earth to touch us. On this one night, God chose to come to us in human flesh. Heaven came down!

The Gospel of Jesus Christ is the greatest love story ever written! I wish with all my heart that everyone would know this Gospel and experience the love of our Lord and Savior, not just tonight on this Christmas Eve, but every day!

The Birth of Christ at Christmas is a classic love story. Imagine the world at the time of Jesus birth. The world was very busy. Most people were traveling to their hometowns to register due to the proclamation of Caesar Augustus. Mary, along with Joseph were one of these people. Mary gives birth to a son, and lays him in a manger, but most people really didn't notice, most people were so busy that they missed the presence of God come to earth.

The world hasn't changed much. There's still the hustle and bustle. Everyone's so busy. No matter how busy you are, deep down in your soul, there needs to be a desire to look into the heart of God.

This evening, I want you to walk into Bethlehem near the manger, and stand next to Mary, and see what she sees. She sees a baby, and listens for His breathing, just as every new parent would. Yet she sees so much more, and she remembers the promise of God. And as she stares into the face of that child, she realizes that she's staring into the very heart of God.

Luke 2:8-14, *“And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in*

swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

That was the message of the angels to the shepherds, and they tell Mary what the angel had said to them.

They crowd around the manger, and gaze into the face of that special child.

Verses 15-18, *“When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them.”*

And then the shepherds leave, and the Scriptures tell us Mary ponders all these things in her heart. Everything the world needs is right there lying in the manger. The key to eternity is right there!

Now Mary lifts the baby out of the manger and she hands Him to you! And there you stand, holding in your arms the one and only Son of God! In your arms you hold everything that the world is truly longing for.

You look outside. It’s a bright night. The stars are out, but one star seems to be shining especially bright, but you also see a shadow, the shadow of a cross. And then you truly understand. You understand why this child came into the world. He came to give life, eternal life! But before you walk away, you take one last look. You see God's love for you, His mercy, His forgiveness, His grace.

This year, like every year, millions of people, will open millions of gifts. Some won’t fit, some will be the wrong color, some will be returned or exchanged. But there’s one gift that will meet all your needs, and will never run out!

And that one gift is the gift of Jesus Christ your Savior who tonight lies in the manger and had come for you. He’s the light of your world, even when your world might seem to be going the wrong way. In that child, the Divine and the human cross paths.

Do you have room for him? Jesus is your living, breathing sign of the immeasurable love that God has for you. This is the night when Christ entered the world fully God and fully human. We find that as we have gathered in His name, we fall within the embrace of His love.

Take time this Christmas to look into the heart of God, and fully experience His love. It’s a love that will never stop shining! Share the message of the angels about the Savior and share it with everyone you meet!

“Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”