

December 5, 2021

It Is Christmas, Christ is Alive and We Are Blessed

Isaiah 9:6 and Mathew 5:2-12

As a child I thought as a child. How could this baby born on Christmas be a grown man by Easter? If Santa Claus was not real why should I think Jesus is real? But I am no longer the child I was!

Because of God's choice to send his son I am now an adult child of God. Every one of us here this morning who confesses Jesus is Lord and believes God raised him from the dead is now a child of God. (Romans 10:9))

In the days leading up to the birth of Christ his mother, Mary, walked 90 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem because that is what the Roman government demanded and because that is what the prophets had foretold. (Luke 2:1-5) and (Micah 5:2)

Because of God's choice this morning we will join together with Christians all over the world in the sacrament of Communion remembering that Christ is born: He's alive! He's alive!!

Christmas! What is it about? God chose to send his only begotten son so that you and I might have everlasting life.

Christmas! What is it about? It is about choice: about choosing. Will we be an instrument of grace, calling ourselves Christians, witnesses of God's mercy and justice? Or will we be an agent of the enemy of our souls, Satan, who like a roaring lion even now is seeking to devour those we love and those we have never met? (1 Peter 5:8) We are free to choose.

God is concerned about our freedom to worship, witness, etc. and because of Christmas and the birth of this baby, God the Holy Spirit, will help us.

God asks nothing of us that he will not help us accomplish "For a child has been born for us, a son given to us; authority rests upon his shoulders; and he is named Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." (Isaiah 9:6)

Christmas! What is it about? Joseph was to name the baby Jesus because he would save his people from their sins. The virgin would be with child and bear a son and they call his name Emmanuel: God with us. (Matthew 1:21-23 and Isaiah 7:14)

This baby is called Son of Man, Son of David, and Son of God about whom God said “This is my Son in whom I am well pleased”. (Matthew 3:17)

The good news of Christmas was confirmed when Jesus began to proclaim, ‘Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near.’ (Matthew 4:15-17)

He teaches us how to live a new life; we call this The Sermon On the Mount. It is timeless. Because of Jesus’ birth he is speaking to you and me even today.

Without Christmas we would not have the Beatitudes. For us they can make every day a blessing.

A great gift of Christmas is that we can have a new way of living in a time of frustration, hurt and fear. The Beatitudes can reinvigorate our faith journey.

For those who are searching this morning these promises of a new way of life can become a reality in your life because of the birth of this baby.

These Beatitudes of blessedness or joys of heaven are the qualities that characterize Jesus and should characterize those of us who are his witnesses. (Matthew 5:3-12)

Would you want people to say they characterize you? The birth of Jesus makes that possible for every one of us.

Blessed are you if you are poor in spirit having nothing, being helpless, a sense of spiritual poverty you are promised a place in the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 5:3 blessed are the poor in spirit).

Blessed are you if you mourn over your own sense of sin and sin we see around us rather than seek out excuses or justification because God promises to comfort you. (Matthew 5:4 blessed are those who mourn)

Blessed are you if you are meek, not weak, but humble and balanced for you shall inherit the earth. (Matthew 5:5 blessed are the meek)

What a blessing for those who hunger and thirst after righteousness for you will be filled (Matthew 5:6 blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness and Mathew 5:33)

You will be blessed and receive mercy if you are merciful, interceding for others, identifying with others, freely forgiving as you are forgiven. (Matthew 5:7 blessed are the merciful)

Blessed are the pure in heart you will see God. (Matthew5:8)

Blessed are peacemakers, not dividers. As Christ makes peace between you and God possible we are to be peacemakers and reconcilers and we will be called sons and daughters of God. (Matthew 5:9 blessed are the peacemakers)

You will be blessed when you are persecuted for righteousness' sake (not your own pride, words or actions). (Matthew 5:10 blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake)

We are to rejoice when others revile and persecute and say all kinds of evil against us falsely for Jesus' sake because we suffer like the prophets did. (Matthew 5:12 rejoice and be exceedingly glad when they revile and persecute you)

We are called to witness these blessings so that other can see God's grace.

This child, born for us, will die for us, because it is God's will for us: that we be forgiven, recipients of God's overwhelming grace.

We see God in the words and acts of this child. Jesus tells us if we see Him we see the father. (John 14:9) Do others see Him in you and me?

God chose to send his only begotten son so all men and women and children might have everlasting life.

In life today many of us feel a darkness, fear and confusion even when we are happy and laughing. We know Christmas is coming and we know God knows our hearts and encourages us even in the darkness because of the words of the prophet Isaiah 'The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death upon them a light has shined.' (Isaiah 9:2)

Jesus is the Light and we are his and he calls us the light of the world.
(Matthew 5:17-20)

What does Christmas mean? It means anger is now defined as murder. And it means our yea must be yea and our nay, nay. We are to turn the other cheek. It means love our enemies. It means forgive as we are forgiven: completely.

Christmas, what is it about? It is about the promise ask, seek, knock and we will find. (Matthew 5:7-11)

Christmas what does it mean? Before Jesus was born there was nothing to build your faith on except shifting sand. The birth of this child was God telling us that he cares enough about us that he now gives us a Rock upon which to build on into eternity. (Matthew 5:24-27)

Jesus shows us God requires mercy more than sacrifices. (Hosea 6:6)

Christianity is not something we just add like a patch on old cloths. It is totally new. That is why we can be made new.

This baby demonstrates compassion and shows us how to live.

Freely we have received we must freely give. (Matthew 10:8)

It is Christmas. Do you look at this baby Jesus and see a new life for yourself, an everlasting life which you can share with those you love as well as others you do not now know?

Christmas, Jesus' birth meant a new beginning then and a new beginning now for every person who will believe He is the Son of God and God has raised him from the dead.

Just as the birth of Jesus demonstrated God's intervention in time and space changing the course of time immemorial His entrance into our lives changes us. The old becomes new and we are born again!

What is Christmas about? It is about a new way of living: a new beginning. It is about perfect love casting out fear. It is about good news to be freely shared. And because one night, Christmas, Jesus was born we can be new every morning if we

so choose. Choosing is important because if we choose God's way he will help to live out our choice and we will be blessed.

This morning the angel says to us, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; You shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, 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, good will toward men." (Luke 2:10-14)

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PRAYER: