

Jacob Hanson  
12-30-2018

Sermon Title: "What's After Christmas?"

Prelude

First Hymn Sing, Songs Chosen from the Hymnal

Responsive Reading: UMH #861, Psalm #148

Sharing of Blessings and Concerns

Prayer of Affirmation: UMH #888

Children's Message: What does God have in store for me?

Nicene Creed: UMH #880

Lord's Prayer UMH #896

Luke 2:39-52

Ephesians 2:17-22

Sermon: "What's After Christmas?"

Second Hymn Sing, Songs Chosen from the Hymnal

Offering

Doxology: "Glory Be to the Father" UMH #71

UMH #251 "Go, Tell It on the Mountain"

Sending Prayer

Benediction

Announcements/Dismissal

Postlude

Questions:

- 1) Why do we sing songs in church? Is it worthwhile to sing even if we aren't good at it? Do we have to sing?
- 2) Reflecting on 2018, how was your walk with the Lord this year? Did you grow in your faith?
- 3) Do you understand what Christ is doing in your life? Are you aware of His bigger plans and purposes for you?

Memory Verse: Ephesians 2:19 "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household."

Pastor Jacob Hanson

"What's After Christmas?"

12/30/2018

### **Opening Prayer**

Welcome here to the combined service between Kasson and Pleasant Corners United Methodist Churches. It is a joy to be able to do a special service like this every couple of months together. My name is Jacob Hanson, and I am blessed to be the minister here. I pray you all had a wonderful Christmas celebration. What a joyful time of the year that was... but now what? Likely for you all of the important Christmas things are now done. There are no more gifts to open, all of the family has headed back home, and soon we will all head back to the regular routines of our lives in a brand new year. My wife and I were talking about this on Wednesday, that after Christmas there almost always seems to be a bit of sadness and let down. Things change, we are all reminded that we are getting older when the New Year comes, and everything seems to start all over again. So that begs the question, what comes after Christmas? What comes after Christmas in scripture, and what does that mean for us? For Jesus it meant growing from being a baby to being the Savior as a man. For us it is a perfect time to remember that we are made new through Christ's sacrifice.

While I cannot answer the question for you in regards to your daily lives, your New Year's Resolutions, etc., I can share with you some encouragement that comes from the Bible's perspective following Christmas. In our reading from the Gospel of Luke we read the only story we get about teenage Jesus. In fact, it is the only story we really get about Jesus between the ages of two and thirty. Before this

scripture our latest encounter with Jesus is when the Magi show up when Jesus is likely a toddler. Our next encounter with Jesus after this will be when Jesus turns water into wine in the Gospel of John. In our reading for today, we saw that each year Jesus went with His family up to Jerusalem for the Passover Feast. This was a common practice, and even at such a young age it was expected that all men were to be there, although women were allowed to come as well. It is on one of these trips that Jesus goes off and converses with the religious leaders in the temple. Of course Jesus's parents thought that He was on the caravan home, so they are upset when they do finally find Him five or so days later in the temple. Without getting into good vs. bad parenting, or talking about differences in communities two thousand years ago vs. today, there is something important here that we learn about Jesus following the Christmas story. That is that we see Christ from an early age looking the part of the coming Messiah.

But what does this story have to do with Jesus's preparation for becoming the Messiah? How does this give us a clue that He would one day take away the sins of the world? Our clue here that Jesus is the Messiah doesn't come from His actions in sitting with the teachers of the law, but rather in His words to His parents. Often when we recount this story we will imply that Jesus is actually the one teaching. He is the Messiah, the Savior, God in human flesh, so it would make sense that He would be leading and teaching the religious rulers, but instead Jesus is more humble, listening and answering questions. This goes along well with the verses where we read that Jesus grew in stature and faith before beginning His ministry. Jesus did not come straight out of the womb performing His ministerial duties, but rather had a long period to grow and lead a human life. While all of that is really interesting, what is really telling that Jesus after Christmas is going to be the Messiah are

the words He speaks when His parents question why He didn't head home with them from the start.

We read in verse 49 "And He said to them, 'Why is it that you were looking for Me? Did you not know that I had to be in My Father's house?'" The important piece in that verse is that Jesus refers to the temple as "My Father's house." He calls the Lord "My Father" in a way that belies who Jesus really is... the Son of God. We know that this is not a common statement of any kind by the reaction of Mary and Joseph. At the time Jesus's parents didn't get it, or at least they didn't understand the full implications of the statement. But looking back on it now as we are able to do, we get a clear indication from Jesus's only words spoken before adulthood that He knows who He is. There are no questions about who Jesus is or what He had come to do. What comes after Christmas, after the birth story of Christ? Jesus, the Messiah, the Teacher and Preacher... that comes after Christmas. Christ grows from being a babe in a manger to being the Messiah realized. It is important that we recognize this shift, especially at this time of year. Even though Christmas is done, there are a lot of good things coming in the life of Jesus for the sake of the world. But what about you? What comes after Christmas for you individually here and now?

In our reading from Ephesians chapter two we see what Christ the Messiah, the Teacher, and the Preacher accomplishes for us. We see what post-Christmas (or more accurately post-resurrection) comes to look like for you. I am going to read this scripture again, and this time I would encourage you to place yourself as the one Paul is speaking to: "He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and

aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit." What does this post-Christmas season mean for you? What does this time following the Lord's coming to our world, living and dying and rising so that we might know our Lord personally mean for you and me? It means that now is the time where Christ has come to dwell not only amongst us as Emmanuel, but in our very hearts. You have been given the Holy Spirit. (There will be more on that in 2019 in case it sounds confusing.) You are never alone. You have been given the intimate gift of knowing your Creator personally. So what should come after Christmas for you is a living out of this truth. What better time to start than now, as we leave behind 2018 and enter the new year.

You have been set free from sin by your Creator. Through Christ's birth (celebrated this last week), death, and resurrection you have been made citizens of God's kingdom. As our memory verse from Ephesians reads: "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household." I like the sound of that! So what comes after Christmas? In scripture it was Jesus's growth from being a baby in a manger to being the promised Messiah realized. For us what should come after Christmas is a recognition and a renewal of our faith. What a great time of the year for us to remember that we have been made new in Christ!

This Tuesday we will enter 2019. As a foretaste for this next month, we are going to be talking about becoming new creations in Christ, with a

lot of our scriptures coming from the book of Isaiah. We are going to be talking about this while we talk about the big “E” word... evangelism. This idea of being a new creation in Christ and sharing the faith given to us are inextricably linked. As we get into those topics, hopefully we will learn more and more about what it means for us after Christmas. Blessings on you, and a Happy New Year, let us pray.

**Closing Prayer**

**Combined Service Today at  
Pleasant Corners United  
Methodist Church,  
Join us from 11-Noon!**

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