

God's Greatest Gift

LAST WEEK'S MESSAGE

The message of Christmas is the Good News that brings great joy because it satisfies our greatest need to be saved and forgiven. The Christmas story in Luke 2 unwraps for us comforting truths about God's power as well as the amazing grace and living hope we find in the greatest gift God the Father has given to mankind, His Son Jesus Christ!

God's Sovereignty (Luke 2:1-7)

Luke opens chapter 2 by mentioning two historical figures: Cesar Augustus, the first Roman Emperor who issued a decree to have a census, and Quirinius the Governor of Syria (Luke 2:1-5). This defines a specific period in history when Christ was born, and establishes the story of Christmas as a historical fact. The Roman Emperor issued the decree to find out the number of men that can be sent to fight in a war, but GOD'S DIVINE PURPOSE was for Jesus to be born in Bethlehem as prophesied in Micah 5:2. God's timing is amazing, for Joseph and Mary arrived in Bethlehem just in time for Jesus to be born there.

God's sovereignty does not always mean there will be no challenges in our way. This was true for Joseph and Mary — they had to travel 150 kilometers from Nazareth to Bethlehem when Mary was about to give birth (vv. 3-5), there was no room available for them at the inn, and Mary had to give birth in a manger (vv. 6-7). It wasn't the most ideal situation to usher the birth of the Messiah, but God made it happen! He accomplished His purpose to tell the world that the good news is for everyone, rich and poor. He came to save all of us. Christmas was from God's own free will and no one, not even the Roman Emperor, can stop Him. God is the Most High, Lord of heaven and earth. God is subject to none. He does as He pleases, only as He pleases; No one can hinder Him (Isaiah 46:10; Daniel 4:35).

God's Faithfulness

God is completely dependable (Numbers 23:19), in contrast to men. When God gives us a promise, He will

fulfill His word. God kept His promises in relation to Jesus; the Messiah. Peter Stoner, a mathematician, calculated that for someone to fulfill even just eight of the prophecies about Jesus is statistically impossible, yet Jesus fulfilled all 300+ prophecies! God's faithfulness is so true (2 Timothy 2:13)!

In His faithfulness, God may cause challenges and trials in our life. God will sacrifice our physical comfort for the sake of transforming our character and spiritual growth (Psalm 119:75). What promises from God are you holding on to today? May we be reminded that when we seek Him with all our hearts, He will take care of all our needs and that He will cause all things to work together for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purpose (Matthew 6:33, Romans 8:28).

God's Greatest Gift, Jesus (Luke 2:10-11)

God gave Jesus three titles:

- Savior - "soter", rescuer
- Christ - "anointed" messiah, chosen one: Son of God
- Lord - "Kyrios" absolute owner, Yahweh — name of God

God's greatest gift to us is His Only Son, Jesus, because we need a SAVIOR. He became man to die on the cross to save us from our sins and to make forgiveness available for all. This is the greatest gift — the good news!

To know of this GREAT NEWS and not act is a missed opportunity. Let us be like the humble shepherds who went straight to Jesus upon hearing the news of His birth. Let us make room for Christ in our hearts, and receive Him as Savior and Lord of our lives!

Discussion Questions

Why do you think Christmas is great news for you? How does it bring you great joy?
In what ways have you seen God's sovereignty and faithfulness in your life?
How do you plan to respond to God's greatest gift for you?

Last Week's Memory Verse

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

LUKE 2:10-11

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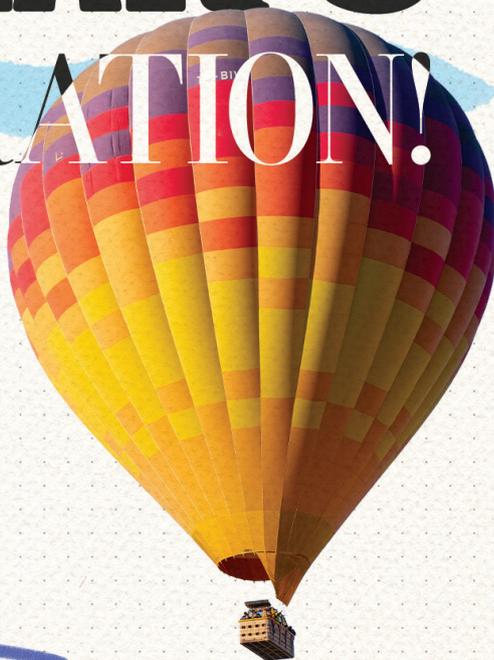
MAY YOU HAVE A JOYFUL & *Spirit-filled* NEW YEAR'S CELEBRATION!

But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. So do not worry about tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

MATTHEW 6:33-34



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LOOKING FOR ANSWERS? THINK YOUR VISIT IS A COINCIDENCE? YOUR BEING HERE TODAY IS NO ACCIDENT!

God brought you here for His purpose.

1 God loves you.

He desires for you to have a meaningful life with Him in the present and gain eternal life with Him in the future.

Know therefore that the Lord your God, He is God, the faithful God, who keeps His covenant and His lovingkindness to a thousandth generation with those who love Him and keep His commandments —Deuteronomy 7:9

2 God is holy.

We are sinful, and our sin separates us from Him.

Everyone has sinned and is far away from God's saving presence. — Romans 3:23

3 God is merciful.

In His love, He made the only way for us to be reconciled to Him: through His son, Jesus Christ. Jesus had to die on the cross for our sins and be raised to life for eternity.

But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then, having now been justified by His blood, we shall be saved from the wrath of God through Him. — Romans 5:8

I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father but through Me. — John 14:6

4 God is gracious.

By placing our faith in Jesus Christ, we are forgiven of our sins and saved from eternal death.

For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. — John 3:16

For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, so that no one may boast. — Ephesians 2:8-9

5 God keeps His promises.

You can be sure that you have eternal life when you trust in Jesus.

And the testimony is this, that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life. These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. 1 John 5:11-13

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