



CrossRoads Notes:

Our key text today is Luke 2:19

Title: Christmas Treasures Worth Pondering

Theme: What is so special about Christmas

Series: Grasping the Truths of Christmas

Introduction: *On the twenty-fifth of this month much of the United States will close their stores, business offices will be closed and very few people will be traveling in comparison to the normal day of the week.* Christmas has even provided a day off for those who reject the worship due to Christ, the Savior of the world.

The response of most today, even church attendees, is no where near like those who heard the proclamation of the birth of Christ on that first Christmas. However, to Holy Spirit- illuminated Christians there are treasures worth pondering in their hearts. They become like Mary who, in the midst of all the excitement, took time to ponder. The Bible says, “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.” (Luke 2:19)

This passage of Scripture is the beautiful picture of a humble trusting heart that is after God. Mary had been told that her child was truly of God. The angel Gabriel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” (Luke 1:35) Both Joseph and Mary were told that they were to name the baby, conceived through the Holy Spirit, Jesus. (Matthew 1:20-21; Luke 1:31,35) Mary and Joseph no doubt talked about their visits from the angel with each other over the several months of her pregnancy, therefore, she knew more than anybody that baby Jesus was the Messiah, (*Messias*) the Christ, (*Christos*) meaning “the anointed One” or the “anointed.” (The New International Dictionary of the Bible)

Jesus (*Iesous*) meaning “Savior.” (The Complete Word Study Dictionary) As a matter of fact the angel in a dream told Joseph that he was to give the son born to them the name “Jesus” “because he [would] save His people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:21) Mary “pondered” (*sumballo*) meaning to consider, to put one thing with another in her mind while considering the circumstances and all that has been said and then holding them in her heart (The Complete Word Study Dictionary; Vines Amplified Expository Dictionary of the New Testament Words; Thayer’s Greek-English Lexicon)

Proposition: *I would propose to you there is much in “Grasping the Truths of Christmas” that is worthy of pondering, worth meditating on, and holding within the child of God’s heart.*

Interrogative Sentence: *What is so special about Christmas? Is there relevance in Christmas? What is the reason for and the result of Christmas?*

Transitional Sentence: *There are three truths that the Holy Spirit of God wants you to ponder on today.* Many do not know the “Relevance of Christmas.” “Relevant,” means having to do with the case at hand.

The Apostle Paul writes about the case at hand, Jesus Christ, “...being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made Himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! (Philippians 2:6-8)

Illustration: D-Day

Just a little over 2,000 years ago, bigger news came through the angel announcing the birth of Christ, when God in the flesh came, walked on this war torn world during it's battle with man's sinful flesh, the world's view and Satan. Sin always holds a multitude in its grip. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit invaded and broke that grip by Jesus coming on the first Christmas. Jesus being God and man made the way for Him to take on the sins of the world upon Himself, pay the ultimate price on the Cross of Calvary, be raised from the dead thus, getting victory over sin and death and liberating all who accept Him as personal Savior and Lord.

One truth worth pondering in Christ's coming is that He “emptied Himself” or rather “made Himself nothing” and became man. This was not “the humility of Christ,” but rather what theologians refer to as the “humiliation of Christ.” (The Preacher's Outline and Sermon Bible; Thru the Bible)

Ponder these Biblical truths about Christ being man:

1.) The Lord, whom we are to serve for eternity came to serve us. As a matter fact one of His purposes in coming was to show all what God is like, He taught that Christians are to become His disciples and He said, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves benefactors. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves.” (Luke 22:25-27)

2.) The Lord, whom we are to love came and showed the ultimate love for us. Jesus said, “My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends.” (John 15:12-13) There is a truth proclaimed often this time of the year, “Christ was born to die” and He commands us to have the same measure of love for our brothers in Christ as He showed for us. The beloved John caught the truths of Jesus' teaching. We read in 1 John 3:16, “This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down His life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.” (1 John 3:16)

3.) The Lord, whom we are to seek with all our hearts so that He may be found, came to seek that which was lost. While in the home of the tax collector, Zacchaeus, the Lord said, “Today salvation has come to this house... For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” (Luke 19:9-10)

Those who are bound by the flesh, the world and Satan’s lie are always looking for something and are not listening for the call of the Lord upon their souls. However, He left the abode of God, heaven, to seek that which is lost and offer fellowship to those whom will let Him into their hearts and lives.

Transitional Sentence: *Christ coming to earth is worth pondering in the hearts of Christians.* Jesus also came for a specific reason.

Many people and church attendees today form their views of the true God much as the pagan mythologist did. Their view of God is the product of their own experiences or the experiences they have heard recounted by others and is not formed by seeing God’s inerrant revelation of Himself in the Scriptures. (Dr. Jim Berg, Created for His Glory) (John 1:1-2,14)

Illustration: Paul Harvey took time to tell the story of a man who the Lord gave a glimpse of the purpose of the incarnation.

Jesus is the embodiment of all that God is. Jesus said, “... Anyone who has seen Me has seen the Father.” (John 14:9)
(John 1:14)

“Glory” (*doxes*) as it is used here means God’s self-manifestation was exhibited in the character and life of Jesus Christ. God’s glory was recognized in Jesus’ divine character. (Vines Amplified Expository Dictionary; The Complete Word Study) Jesus was the glorious power and the full perfect guiding light of God, the magnificence of God. This word, glory, refers to that which is the visible presence of God among men. (William Barclay) There is no greater Christmas present than having, experiencing and enjoying the life changing presence of Jesus Christ in our lives. And that is a treasure worth pondering.

Transitional Sentence: *Just as the people in the time of Jesus walking upon this earth beheld the glory of God, Christians today can really know the Lord.*

The life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus mean that God acted decisively to save a people from sin and eternal death. The God who saves people in Christ is the God of His redeemed, those who are under the blood of Jesus Christ. And when sinners find Jesus Christ as both Savior and Lord they are allowed to come to God because of the cost paid at Calvary. These Christians are under the new covenant of whom the writer of the Book of Hebrews wrote about.
(Hebrews 8:10-12)

All those who enter into the new covenant and are interested in all that the Lord is doing in this time in which we live today will become acquainted with the Lord; learn His character and determine His will for them in this life and service unto Him. Each child of God will have his own intimate relationship with the Lord Jesus. God Himself will put His Holy Spirit within them and He will write His Word upon their hearts and move them to follow His decrees and be careful to keep His laws.

(Ezekiel 36:26-27)

Testimony: Terry Laughlin

Is this taking us off the point of the knowing God? No, for God's Word says in the very same Book of Hebrews in chapter 13:7-8, "Remember your leaders, who spoke the word of God to you. Consider the outcome of their way of life and imitate their faith.⁸ Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:7-8) "Leaders" (*hegeomai*) here is a general term, therefore, this means anyone who has authority over you and has the Biblical integrity to teach you the Word of God in regards to all that you are doing. Most generally these leaders will be elders or spiritual leaders in a church. It is the outcome of their ministry that determines your loyalty and your undivided attention. Once Christian character is established, take heed to their teachings and imitate their faith in God, their obedience to Christ, and their willingness to walk by the leading of the Holy Spirit of God, in good times, trials and victory over temptations. (Thayers Greek-English Lexicon; The Complete Word Study Dictionary; Thru the Bible; Matthew Henry Commentary; The Expositors Bible Commentary)

In Closing: *What is so special about Christmas?* The Christ and the walk He had on this earth is "Relevant."

Christ coming in the flesh was for man to see what God is like and to show Christians how to live the abundant life in the midst of a sin torn world. Because of Christmas, Christians can know God.

Illustration: Rick Warren

Have you opened the gift God, Christ, and the Holy Spirit have for you? You can choose this day to enjoy the gift of getting victory in your life through having Jesus Christ as personal Savior and Lord. Thus, the flesh, the world, and the Devil will no longer have a death grip on your heart and life.

Have you grasped the glory of the incarnation of Christ? Do you live a life that expresses living a Christ-like character, hungry for God's will in this life and service unto Him?

Let us pray!