

## EMPHASIZING THE GOSPEL DURING CHRISTMAS TIME

### **TEXT: LUKE 2:1-20**

#### **INTRODUCTION:**

1. I saw an article the other day about a bunch of drunken Santa Clauses beating each other up on the corner of 17th St. and Third Avenue in Manhattan.
2. A new Pew Research poll says church attendance and singing Christmas carols have been on the decline. Nowadays for most Americans Christmas is just about shopping and exchanging gifts.
3. There have been many articles about violent Christmas shoppers fighting in department stores or in mall parking lots. One man was recently shot in the head and killed in the parking garage in a NJ mall.
4. There is much wickedness and drinking and worldly foolishness this time of year, and of course none of this has anything to do with the birth of our Lord.
5. While people are busy drinking and decorating and shopping and visiting and eating, etc., we should be looking for opportunities to share the Gospel.
6. Adam Clark said, "These shepherds were the first preachers of the Gospel of Christ: and what was their text? Why, Glory to God in the highest heavens, and on earth peace and good will among men. This is the elegant and energetic saying which comprises the sum and substance of the Gospel of God. This, and this only, is the message which all Christ's true pastors or shepherds bring to men."
7. The word "Gospel" means "good news" or "good tidings" (Luke 2:10).
8. The angel of the Lord said unto Joseph, "And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). That is the true message of Christmas.
9. The apostle Paul said, "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners; of whom I am chief" (I Timothy 1:15).
10. This morning, I would like for us to emphasize proclaiming the Gospel during this busy Christmas season.

#### **I. JOY AT CHRISTMAS (LUKE 2:10).**

1. "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy" (2:10). This angel came down from heaven where there is nothing but joy. And he came down to earth to proclaim this "good (news) tidings of great joy."

2. I hope there are none gathered here this morning that are satisfied with the fleeting pleasures and shallow amusements of this world. Especially after an angel came from heaven to declare something much, much better – “good tidings of great joy” (2:10).
3. The true Christian life is a life of joy – “joy unspeakable and full of glory” (I Peter 1:8).
4. One of my favorite Christmas songs is “How Great Our Joy.”

*While by the sheep we watched at night,  
Glad tidings brought an angel bright.*

*How great our joy! Great our joy!*

*Joy, joy, joy! Joy, joy, joy!*

*Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!*

*Praise we the Lord in heaven on high!*

5. (German carol translated into English by Theodore Baker)
6. “A merry heart doeth good like a medicine: but a broken spirit drieth the bones” (Pro. 17:22). Christians appreciate a good, hearty laugh. God knows this weary world needs more joy!
7. William Williams was an English pastor who was a close friend of Charles Haddon Spurgeon. In describing Spurgeon’s delightful sense of humor, Pastor Williams said, “What a bubbling fountain of humor Mr. Spurgeon had! I laughed more, I verily believe, when in his company than during all the rest of my life besides. He had the most fascinating gift of laughter...and he had also the greatest ability for making all who heard him laugh with him. When someone blamed him for saying humorous things in his sermons, he said, ‘If he only knew how many of them I keep back’” (*Personal Remembrances of Charles Haddon Spurgeon*).
8. Joseph Haydn, the famous Austrian composer, was once asked why his church music was so cheerful. He replied, “When I think upon God, my heart is so full of joy that the notes dance and leap, as it were, from my pen, and since God has given me a cheerful heart it will be pardoned me that I serve Him with a cheerful spirit.”
9. John Wesley was traveling from England to Georgia to try and convert the Indians but he himself was still unconverted. But on that ship he met a bunch of joyful and happy Moravians, and it made a lasting impression upon him. Soon John Wesley was gloriously saved.
10. Galatians 5:22 says, "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy..."

11. Sinners feel they need worldly parties and lots of alcohol to have a good time during the Christmas holidays. But those of us who know the Lord do not need any of that.
12. And we do not want any of that. And we can have the joy of Christmas all year long.
13. The angel told the shepherds, "Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people" (2:10).
14. Years ago, one of our members called up WFME and asked the manager why they stopped broadcasting my sermons. The manager said, "Your pastor believes Christ died for the sins of the whole world." Yes, that is true – I certainly do believe that because that is what the Bible teaches (John 3:16).
15. The angel said unto them, "Which shall be to all people" (2:10). Not just to the elect or to the Jews, but to all people.
16. While driving to church last Sunday evening, my wife I were listening to Dr. J. Vernon McGee on the radio explain the extent of the atonement. Dr. McGee said that I John 2:2 makes it clear that Christ died for the sins of the whole world. Dr. McGee said, "I don't care who you are, there is a legitimate offer that has been sent out to you today from God, and that offer is that Jesus Christ has died for you. You can't hide and say, 'I am not one of the elect.'" I believe Dr. McGee was right.
17. The Gospel is suited to "all people." The Gospel is suited to every age and condition of the human race. It is what the strong Romans needed. It is what the philosophical Greeks needed. It is what the religious Hebrews needed. It is what the superstitious pagans needed. And it is what proud and self-sufficient Americans desperately need!
18. It is what Europe needs. It is what Africa needs. It is what Asia needs. It is what South America needs. It is what Australia needs. It is what Antarctica needs.
19. During Christmas season the whole world seems to celebrate to one extent or another. Even Hindus and Muslims and other non-Christians decorate and put up Christmas trees. Even atheists bring their kids to see Santa Claus.
20. While the whole world is observing Christmas, let us make sure they understand the true meaning of Christmas. Recently atheists put up a billboard in Times Square asserting that Christ is not needed during Christmas. Their sign says: "Who needs Christ during Christmas?"
21. Most of us assembled here today confess that we need the Lord Jesus Christ. Our Lord said in John 15:5, "Without me ye can do nothing."

## II. SALVATION AT CHRISTMAS

1. "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:11). What a wonderful proclamation!
2. Jesus Christ the Lord is our Saviour. In fact, His name means "Saviour." Matthew 1:21 says, "Thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins."
3. Is He your Saviour? Are you saved?
4. In Isaiah 45:21, the LORD says, "There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour; there is none else."
5. The angel said to the shepherds abiding in the field, "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:11). "Christ" means, "Messiah," the Anointed One.
6. The great purpose of the incarnation was the substitutionary death of Christ. "And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins" (I John 3:5).
7. The Lord Jesus Christ came into this world -- "He was manifested" -- to die for our sins.
8. That is why John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).
9. Christ died to save us from the guilt of sin, and the penalty of sin (hell). Praise God, He also died to save us from the power of sin. He saves us and He keeps us. Our hold upon Him might be weak and feeble, but thank God His hold upon us is strong and mighty to save.
10. Not only are we saved from the penalty of sin, and the power of sin, but some day we will be saved from the very presence of sin.
11. Up yonder in heaven we will be surrounded by the heavenly host singing praises to our wonderful Saviour (Luke 2:13, 14). In heaven, every day will be like Christmas but far more wonderful and glorious.
12. Four hundred years before Christ, the great Greek philosopher Plato said, "Oh, that there might come forth a word from God to make all things clear!"
13. Four centuries later, the apostle John wrote, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us" (John 1:14).
14. And the apostle Paul wrote, "And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh" (I Tim. 3:16).
15. May this be our emphasis this Christmas!

## III. PEACE AT CHRISTMAS

1. "And on earth peace, good will toward men" (Luke 2:14b). There is precious little peace in this wicked, sin-loving world. Think about it: the very ground where the shepherds stood is now stained with blood, as suicide-bombers and other devilish terrorists blow themselves up along with their numerous victims.
2. There are presently wars, battles, terrorist attacks, and various "armed conflicts" all over this blood-stained world -- including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Iraq, Turkey, Syria, the Sudan, Yemen, Somalia, Mali, the Congo, Israel, India, Burma, Thailand, Nigeria, and Columbia.
3. Last month the communist North Korean government executed 80 Christians. Their only offense was owning a Bible. The American media and the American politicians largely ignored this.
4. Yes, we can understand the sad words of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow when he said:

*And in despair I bowed my head: "There is no peace on earth," I said.  
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song of peace on earth, good will to men."*

5. Now let us for the moment forget about all the poets, and pundits, and presidents, and politicians, and preachers – and just go to the Bible.
6. The world is at war with God; sinners are at enmity against their Maker and against each other. It's not just A & E, it's the whole USA, and it's the whole world!
7. Isaiah 48:22 says there is no peace to the wicked. But Jesus came to make peace; and this he did by reconciling the world to God by His atonement.
8. Second Corinthians 5:19 says, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself."
9. According to the Bible there can be no peace till the Prince of Peace returns to earth.
10. Isaiah 9:6 says, "For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."
11. Isaiah 2:4 says, "And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."
12. There are several sculptures and statues outside the United Nations. One statue is called "Let Us Beat Swords into Plowshares" and was a gift from the Soviet Union and presented in 1959.

13. The bronze statue represents the figure of a man holding a hammer in one hand and, in the other, a sword which he is making into a plowshare, symbolizing man's desire to put an end to war and bring peace on earth.
14. There certainly will be peace on earth some day but the United Nations will have nothing to do with it. If I understand Bible prophecy, the United Nations will be behind the antichrist, who will usher in a reign of terror.
15. There will be peace on earth only when the Lord Jesus returns. With that in mind, let us refer once again to the poet, who goes on to say:  
*Then pealed the bells more loud and deep: "God is not dead, nor doth He sleep; The wrong shall fail, the right prevail, With peace on earth, good will to men."*
16. The Christmas story is a message of peace – “And on earth peace, good will toward men” (Luke 2:14), but there can be no peace without the Prince of Peace. Sinners must first make peace with Christ.
17. Romans 5:1 says, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

### **CONCLUSION:**

1. A.C. Dixon was pastoring the Immanuel Baptist Tabernacle in Baltimore, Maryland when his firstborn child died, his nine-year-old son Howard.
2. The first Christmas morning after Howard's death was very difficult for Pastor and Mrs. Dixon. Everyone was very quiet and all felt very sad.
3. Finally, one of the young children broke the silence, “This is Howard's first Christmas in heaven!”
4. Another child then added, “I should think it is Christmas every day in heaven.” The Gospel brought great peace and comfort to that family at Christmas!