



Christmas at Journey

Ed Noble, Lead Pastor

December 23 & 24, 2013

¹⁰ 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; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. Luke 2:10–11

THERE'S THE STORY and then... "What does it mean?"

"THE GIFT" — think "Christmas" as "gift"...

we don't bring... we get ... JESUS.

Jesus shows us:

- ✓ WHAT God is like.
- ✓ WHO we are really made for.
- ✓ HOW life actually works.

⁶ Christ was truly God. But He did not try to remain equal with God. ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men.

Philippians 2:6–7

Jesus — emptied himself at birth... in his life...all the while talking continually about "thirst".

Jesus invites us... "Follow Me — this is how it works — your own journey of emptying..."

Like everything else at Christmas, it's kind of hidden, subtle, backwards, counterintuitive.

EMPTYING... a.k.a. Faith

- ▶ Merit — Proving myself, justifying myself, making myself OK
- ▶ Control — "I can do this."
- ▶ Self Trust — "I'm good on my own."

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Christmas Eve: Celebration of His Arrival

The Christ Candle

"Who has believed our message, and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed?" (Isaiah 53:1). The message to Mary (Luke 1:31) and to Joseph (Matthew 1:21) is singular in this regard: "and you are to give him the name Jesus."

Joseph's Story

Mary and I are together. After arriving at Bethlehem we find a makeshift spot next to a feeding trough to bed down; but the time is at hand and the baby is coming. As comfortable as I can make it for Mary, I deliver the child I never expected to see—but an angelic visitation can change your mind:

"Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." (Matthew 1:20-23)

At least I can make her comfortable. We have the traditional cloths to wrap Jesus in, but the manger is a crude cradle. I could do better if I had my tools at hand. It is a little disconcerting but shepherds have started showing up. They are a rough lot but very respectful. They seem drawn to us, and yet they are so quiet around the baby and Mary. Then one pulls me aside to tell me what has happened, I have to get him to slow down and start from the beginning. I bring him to Mary; she has to hear this for herself. Our God is truly amazing! Even though we are in this situation which is less than ideal, spiritual forces are at work. Our circumstances do not seem so grim, even though they are difficult; the favor of God is with us!

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. (John 1:14a)

Our Story

Remember in the Charlie Brown Christmas special when Charlie asks in a loud voice, "Doesn't anyone know what Christmas is all about?" Linus to the rescue recites the Luke 2 passage about the shepherds—Jesus has come!

What are we to do with Jesus? We see the characters of the Crèche on the piano or in front of the church building down the block. As we drive by on the way to the Mall, do we look the other way? But Jesus presents himself to us during this season, over and over. There is a straight line from the Manger to the Cross, and with your invitation it can run it straight through your heart.

Take some time this holiday season to investigate what it means to become a Christ-follower if you haven't already. Listen to the story, or read it for yourself in the Christmas narrative in the gospels of Matthew and Luke. The celebration of the season is all about Jesus—"good news of great joy!"

Written by Charles Phillip Roof



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THERE'S THE STORY and then... _____

"THE GIFT" — think "Christmas" as _____...

we don't _____... we _____ ... JESUS.

Jesus shows us:

✓ WHAT _____.

✓ WHO _____.

✓ HOW _____.

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Philippians 2:6-7

Jesus — emptied himself at _____... in his _____...all the while talking continually about _____.

Jesus _____ us... " _____ — this is how it works — your own journey of emptying..."

Like everything else at Christmas, it's kind of _____.

EMPTYING... a.k.a. _____

▶ _____ — *Proving myself, justifying myself, making myself OK*

▶ _____ — *"I can do this."*

▶ _____ — *"I'm good on my own."*

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