



Sunday, December 11, 2016

## “What Is Christmas All About?”

Luke 2:8-14

**Idea:** Jesus is the good news that brings joy to all people.

**Intro:** Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. For a lot of people this is their favorite season. It definitely is for me. There are several things that make it so wonderful such as decorated Christmas trees, houses covered in an array of lights, Christmas music playing in all the stores, parties, parades, candy, and of course the exchanging of gifts. Nevertheless, it is also the busiest time of the year, and in all the busyness the meaning and purpose of Christmas can sometimes become lost.

Have you taken time this season to reflect on what is Christmas all about? Is it about family gathering together? Is it about children joyfully waking up on Christmas morning and opening gifts? Is it about a jolly ole guy in a red suit and nine reindeer? Perhaps it's appropriate now for Linus to remind us what Christmas is all about. [Show clip from A Charlie Brown Christmas.](#)

Charlie Brown is best known for his uniquely striped shirt, and Linus is most associated with his ever-present security blanket. Throughout the story of Peanuts, Lucy, Snoopy, Sally and others all work to no avail to separate Linus from his blanket. And even though his security blanket remains a major source of ridicule for the otherwise mature and thoughtful Linus, he simply refuses to give it up until this moment when he quietly drops it. Did you notice that Linus let go of his blanket? In that climactic scene when he shares “what Christmas is all about,” he drops his security blanket. I don't think this was an accident by Charles Schultz because Linus drops the blanket when he utters the words, “fear not.” Schultz's message is clear. The birth of Jesus provides the way for humanity to be set free. Because of Jesus we can be set free from our fears, from the habits that we can't break, and from the false security

we cling to so tightly. Because of the birth of Jesus we can put our trust in Him.

Have you taken time this Christmas season to think and reflect upon what Christmas is all about?

Read Luke 2:8-14.

**Inquiry:** As Luke records for us the events surrounding the birth of Jesus, we learn that a decree had been issued by Emperor Caesar Augustus requiring everyone to return to their hometown to be registered for the census. At the time the decree was issued, Joseph was betrothed to Mary. He had already discovered that she was pregnant even though they were not married and had not been together. An angel had visited him in a dream, explaining how Mary had become pregnant and instructed Joseph to take her as his wife. The census required Joseph to take his very pregnant betrothed wife from Nazareth and to travel to Bethlehem. When they arrived the little town was packed with people who had returned for the census. As they were looking for a place to stay, Mary went into labor. The baby was coming, so they had to find a place for her to give birth. The only available space was in a stable, so it was there that the Son of God was born into this world.

As Jesus was being born in the stable, an angel of the Lord visited a group of shepherds out in the countryside. There in the middle of the night they were shaken by the glory of the Lord. The sight and the sound of the angel terrified them. The angel reassured them and delivered the good news that a Savior had been born as the starry sky was filled with a heavenly choir declaring the glorious coming of Christ. What an incredible experience that must have been! What an incredible message they were given! In that moment the angel gave those shepherds a message defining what Christmas is all about. What is Christmas is all about? Lets walk through this passage and see what God wants us to know about ourselves and about Him?

## **1. You are by nature a fearful person.**

The shepherds were filled with great fear by the appearance of the angel (vs. 9). The messenger and the glory of the Lord caused great fear in their lives. Why were they gripped by fear? I think there are several reasons for their fear. Most likely one reason was the fact that they had never experienced anything like this before. They had never been visited by an angel or experienced the glory of God. The underlying reason, however, was their sin. Can light have fellowship with darkness? The answer is no. The shepherds responded in much the same way as their ancient ancestor Adam did in the Garden of Eden.

*And they heard the sound of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day, and the man and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the Lord God among the trees of the garden. – Genesis 3:8*

Fear gripped Adam's heart, causing him to hide from God and to be overwhelmed by anxiety. This, however, was not how it was in the beginning. Fear wasn't even a term Adam would have known in the beginning.

## **2. Sin created the fear that consumes you.**

Prior to Adam and Eve's rebellion against God, they enjoyed the presence and company of God. They didn't hide when He revealed Himself and walked in the Garden; but that all changed the moment they sinned.

*And he said, "I heard the sound of you in the garden, and I was afraid, because I was naked, and I hid myself." – Genesis 3:10*

The reason you run and hide in fear is because by nature you are a sinner. Your sin rightly causes you to fear the holiness and righteousness of God. Yet rather

than fall down before Him in humility and brokenness, you run and grasp onto anything that you think can remove or cover the fear you feel. Adam and Eve did this when they made clothing from fig leaves to cover their nakedness (Gen 3:7). They thought the leaves would remove their shame, but as soon as God's presence was heard in the Garden the fear they covered up returned.

We live in a scary world. And most of us find ourselves grasping to something temporal for security, whatever that thing may be. It is very difficult for us to "fear not" in the world in which we live. Yet in the midst of fear and insecurity, this simple cartoon from 1965 reminds and inspires us to seek true peace and true security in the one place it has always been and can always be found.

### **3. There is a universal solution for fear.**

*10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*

*14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace...*

– Luke 2:10-11, 14a

Why do we need peace? The fear and shame that gripped Adam and Eve has universally gripped all of humanity.

*12 Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all sinned – Romans 5:12*

Every single person is born a sinner. It is our fleshly nature. We are born into this world in rebellion against the God who created us for Himself. We are anxious, fearful, insecure, and ashamed. And we should be

because we are all under the curse of death. We are separated from the very One with whom we were created to be in relationship with in this life. Our problem of fear is universal and absolute. Nonetheless, so is our solution.

*17 For if, because of one man's trespass, death reigned through that one man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ. 18 Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.*

– Romans 5:17-18

There is a universal solution for fear and that solution was born in the little town of Bethlehem. He was wrapped in swaddling clothes and laid in a manger. The night of his birth the heavenly host visited a group of shepherds outside of town and proclaimed the good news of great joy that was for all the people. They declared that a Savior had been born.

#### **4. Jesus removes the fear and replaces it with peace.**

*"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!" – Luke 2:14*

The sin that Adam committed created fear in his life just like the sins that we commit create fear in our lives. The fear is the byproduct of our separation from God. You see when Adam sinned by eating from the tree God had forbidden, his relationship with God immediately died just as God had said. He instantaneously became lost, and the feeling of being lost is always accompanied with fear.

Illust: I remember a time when I was in K-Mart with my dad. I was three or four years old, and I got

distracted by something on the shelf and lost track of my dad. All of sudden I went into panic mode when I couldn't find him. I started searching the nearby isles and calling out to him. He wasn't far away, but in that moment I felt lost. I was scared to death.

The Bible says that we have all sinned (Rom 3:23). This is our nature; we are born as sinners in rebellion against God (Rom 5:12). We are at war with Him. We are born as sinners gripped by fear because of our separation from God. But God was pleased to give us a Savior who is Christ the Lord. The Savior that He spoke of to Adam and Eve in Genesis 3 is the Savior the angels declared to the shepherds in Luke 2. Jesus is the Savior who came to secure and offer peace to men and women, boys and girls who are in rebellion against God. He is the Savior who brings peace to those who are gripped by fear and anxiety caused by sin.

**Conclusion:** What is Christmas all about? Christmas is all about a God who created you. Christmas is all about a God who loves you. And Christmas is all about a God who seeks to redeem you. Jesus says, *“Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest”* (Matt 11:28). He wants to remove your fear and shame. He wants to wash away your sin and guilt.

This Christmas season don't get buried in the presents and wrapping paper. Don't get lost in the dinner parties and school plays. Don't get side tracked by all the hustle and bustle of Christmas. Take time to think and reflect upon what God has done for you. Take time to appreciate the depths that He succumbed to redeem you. Take time to place your faith in Him for forgiveness of sin. Ask Him to remove the fear from your life. Recommit yourself to the Lord, and choose to not live in fear. Like Linus lose your insecurity in Christ.