

Series: "A DIFFERENT CHRISTMAS"

For Message: Luke 1:1-4, 2:1-20

Message Title: "Don't Miss It!"

Introduction: MERRY CHRISTMAS EVERYONE! I'm so glad you are with us for CHRISTMAS EVE as we CONTINUE "***A DIFFERENT CHRISTMAS***"!

As we have gone through this ADVENT (The ARRIVAL of a notable PERSON, thing, or EVENT) season, we have been PREPARING ourselves for the COMING of JESUS by talking about being DIFFERENT / LIGHT in this DARK and HOPE-DEPRIVED WORLD. If we're going to BE DIFFERENT, we NEED to have a RIGHT RELATIONSHIP with GOD. Jesus said, "***Go into all the world and make disciples...***" That's OUR JOB! IF we're going to be PREPARED for Jesus to come again, we need to be DOING our JOB.

We CAN'T do our JOB of inviting others to FOLLOW JESUS unless we OFFER something DIFFERENT in the middle of THEIR DARK DAYS.

The other thing we are doing AGAIN this Christmas is remembering WHOSE BIRTHDAY it is. It's JESUS' BIRTHDAY! JESUS said Matthew 25, to GIVE HIM a GREAT GIFT, the best way is to HELP those in NEED. For those of you who are GUESTS with US TONIGHT, we are ATTEMPTING to HELP FAMILIES LOCALLY and GLOBALLY ...

Over the past weeks, BMZ has HELPED people with PHYSICAL NEEDS LOCALLY and INTERNATIONALLY ... Our Food Pantries served MANY PEOPLE over the last month with FOOD and some CHRISTMAS GIFTS! Our GIVING TREES have helped MANY FAMILIES / STUDENTS this CHRISTMAS.

Remember Jesus said we are to "***go into all the world...***" This year we're again GIVING GLOBALLY, supporting INTHERHOPE MISSIONS. AND, we have a **MATCH GIFT!**

WE are MAKING a DIFFERENCE for people who may have NEEDS.

WHY do we do it? Because "***God so loved the world that He gave His only Son, that whosoever would believe in Him would not die, but live forever.***" JESUS OFFERS ETERNAL LIFE in what he calls "Paradise". We DISCOVER as we become DISCIPLINED and FOLLOW Jesus that "Paradise" can START HERE in this life. ***BUT we also REALIZE this side of our EARTHLY DEATH is just a DROP in the OCEAN compared to our ETERNITIES. And JESUS HOLDS our ETERNITIES! In RESPONSE, WE are willing to DO WHATEVER Jesus calls us to do! Like give to help others in need!***

So, CHRISTMAS is a CELEBRATION of Jesus coming and a CHANCE to SERVE Him as Lord! Well, our Scripture is a FAMILIAR one. We READ IT or some version of it EVERY CHRISTMAS. We are going to READ and TALK ABOUT a BABY being BORN.

BUT you know what? This STORY REMINDS US HOW IMPORTANT WE ARE TO GOD! God gave a GIFT ... GOD SENT His SON as a GIFT to US ... ME and YOU ... and it's REALLY IMPORTANT we KNOW ABOUT the GIFT and WHY God GAVE IT!

THIS STORY is SO IMPORTANT ... a DOCTOR wanted to MAKE SURE NO ONE could ARGUE over the STORY'S VALIDITY! It's REAL! Let me remind you LUKE is the AUTHOR of this account of Jesus' life. Luke was a PHYSICIAN, a science-minded guy who wanted to WRITE NOTHING BUT the TRUTH.

LUKE 2:1-20 = At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. ² (This was the first census taken when

Quirinius was governor of Syria.)³ All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census.⁴ And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee.⁵ He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born.⁷ She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.⁸ That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep.⁹ Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified,¹⁰ but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.¹¹ The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!¹² And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."¹³ Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,¹⁴ "Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."¹⁵ When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."¹⁶ They hurried to the village and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger.¹⁷ After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child.¹⁸ All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished,¹⁹ but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often.²⁰ The shepherds went back to their flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.¹

This SUNDAY, we'll GO DEEPER into the CHRISTMAS STORY ... BUT, for TONIGHT. I just WANT US to GO to BETHLEHEM...

As we CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS, REMEMBER it was NOT a ONE-TIME event so WE could GET OFF WORK and SCHOOL. It's a PART of a MUCH BIGGER STORY.

The OT POINTS to the MESSIAH COMING (Jesus Born as a HUMAN, Conceived by the HOLY SPIRIT). The NT is ALL ABOUT Jesus LIFE and the REPOSE to HIM in the YEARS FOLLOWING His DEATH and RESURRECTION.

CHRISTMAS is ABOUT a BABY BORN to DIE. FOR US. FOR OUR FOREVER / ETERNITY! Do NOT MISS the GIFT ... JOHN 3:16 = ¹⁶ "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life."²

GOD GAVE a GIFT ... The SAVIOR of the WORLD / The ETERNAL SAVIOR of EVERYONE who BELIEVES in HIM. Now, let's be CLEAR. Jesus DID NOT come FROM the WORLD ... HE ENTERED the WORLD from the OUTSIDE. JESUS is NOT just a GOOD TEACHER or The BEST HUMAN BEING. He is NOT a MAN becoming GOD ... He is GOD INCARNATE (In PERSON ... in The FLESH). Our LORD'S BIRTH was a GREAT/HISTORICAL EVENT for ALL HUMANITY. GOD entered HUMAN HISTORY from OUTSIDE the WORLD ... AS HE PROMISED!

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (1k 2:1-20). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2015). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Jn 3:16). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

In the SAME WAY, JESUS must come INTO ME from OUTSIDE. Have YOU ALLOWED your PERSONAL LIFE to become a “BETHLEHEM” for JESUS? Is HE ALLOWED to ENTER your LIFE? **You can NOT ENTER the REALM of GOD’S KINGDOM without ALLOWING your LIFE to be FULLY INVADED by JESUS.**

Is HE BORN in YOU? For US to be SAVED, we must BELIEVE (John 3:16 ... *“Everyone who BELIEVES in HIM will not perish...”*) AND BELIEF is NOT an ACT of INTELLECT. We can NOT THINK ourselves TO SALVATION! **Being FORGIVEN / SAVED / BORN AGAIN is a SURRENDER of the WILL!**

It’s a GREAT GIFT. The HARD PART is BELIEVING ... We have a HARD TIME NOT being our OWN GODS and SURRENDERING to the ALMIGHTY / CREATOR. The STOPPING POINT for MANY is they will NOT TRUST God ... they WANT to TRUST their OWN UNDERSTANDING. It does NOT WORK!

The ONLY WAY to BELIEVE in GOD is to WILL to BELIEVE ... AND this can NEVER be DONE WITHOUT a DELIBERATE / VIOLENT EFFORT on MY PART to DISCONNECT MYSELF from my OLD WAYS of LOOKING at THINGS and by THROWING OURSELVES into JESUS ARMS! My RELATIONSHIP with JESUS is a PERSONAL ONE ... NOT an INTELLECTUAL ONE. *Your thoughts are not His thoughts.*

Listen, it’s CHRISTMAS ... BUT it is NOT going to MEAN ALL that MUCH if we are NOT WILLING to ACCEPT JESUS as the SON of GOD and OUR WAY to ETERNITY in God’s PRESENCE. You’ll take DOWN your Christmas TREE in a FEW DAYS and GO BACK to the SAME OLD, SAME OLD. You’ll MISS the OPPORTUNITY to EXPERIENCE JESUS! You may PRACTICE RELIGION, BUT you will MISS GOD.

You will MISS the GREATEST GIFT EVER GIVEN ... The SAVIOR / MESSIAH / The LORD, BORN in BETHLEHEM! Is He BORN in YOU?

It’s Christmas ... what a GREAT TIME to come and MEET Jesus! STOP making excuses ... MAKE a DELIBERATE / sometimes VIOLENT EFFORT to THROW yourself into JESUS ARMS. Your ETERNITY DEPENDS on it!

If the SHEPHERDS had NOT gone ... they would have MISSED out on getting to TELL the STORY ... they would have missed out on the CELEBRATION ...

WE have a CHANCE to SHARE what we’ve SEEN and HEARD ... the GOOD NEWS of JESUS. We have OPPORTUNITIES to EXPERIENCE and SHARE ETERNITY ... SOMETHING DIFFERENT ... with people who are living in DARKNESS and HOPELESSNESS ... ALL OVER the WORLD! Remember the STORY? 2 TEENAGE GIRLS, BOLD in their FAITH ... *“Will you COME and FOLLOW JESUS?”* At a FUNERAL ... 90+ people came to a SAVING FAITH in a CULTURE that is 4-5% CHRISTIAN! ... THAT is what YOU’RE SUPPORTING! We GET to be MAKE a DIFFERENCE this CHRISTMAS ... MATCH GIFT! Don’t miss it! WE get to be LIGHT in the DARKNESS... CANDLES!

“Silent Night”

Let’s PRAY!

Hosting (Closing)

HEY, it has been a GREAT DAY here at BMZ... Glad you've been here with us!
Or NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD (**FULLY FILLED OUT!!**)

You can drop that card in the offering basket.

IF you are a First-Time Guest with us today

We are so glad you joined us ... And we have a GIFT for you.

It's this book "**UNSHAKABLE**" and it's at the BACK TABLE / By the DOORS...

all you need to do is **HIT "SEND"** your COMPLETED Connection Card

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I just want to remind you that ... STEWARDSHIP is DISCIPLESHIP ... we RECEIVE an OFFERING EVERY Sunday BECAUSE it's BIBLICAL ... AND it HELPS us GROW in our FAITH!

STEWARDSHIP VERSE ... Matthew 25:40 = ⁴⁰ "And the King will say, 'I tell you the truth, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, * you were doing it to me!' ³ NOT JUST LIP SERVICE ... FULL WEIGHT!

FIRST of our EARNINGS go back to the ONE who Blessed us in the 1st place! That's why WE/I do Automated Giving! I get paid ... the TITHE comes OUT FIRST!

God's plan for BUILDING His Church was through TITHING and GIVING of the FOLLOWERS ... Share the GOOD NEWS! To REFRESH OTHERS!

As Developing Followers of Jesus Christ, WE need to KNOW what the BIBLE says about GIVING ... NOT just what we THINK it should say.

MONEY is a HEART ISSUE. And GOD wants what is BEST for your HEART! Listen, if GOD LOVES US so much that HE is willing to GIVE UP His OWN SON FOR US, WHY would GOD LEAD us ASTRAY in FINANCES?!

Next Week: **A DIFFERENT CHRISTMAS ... The REST of the CHRISTMAS Story**

"God **whispers** to us in our pleasures, **speaks** in our conscience, but **shouts** in our pains: it is His **megaphone** to rouse a deaf world." — C.S. Lewis

"Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy)."

Special thanks to Andy Stanley, Nelson Searcy, and R.A. Pegrum for outlines and ideas for this worship series.