

A Most Special Gift to Receive, Treasure and Give

Have you ever looked at the people involved in what we call the first Christmas and wondered what they thought at that moment in time? (References in Matthew 1 and 2, Luke 2) Think of these people:

- Mary—she had an angel, Gabriel, greet her and call her favored. Gabriel announced that God had chosen her to carry Jesus Christ, our Savior and Redeemer. This would be shocking! Talk about walking in faith! Now what is she going to tell her fiancé, Joseph? Now imagine her in Bethlehem. She's carried Jesus and she is told there is no room for them in the inn. Imagine. Here God has given her an assignment of no other and she doesn't have a place to stay.
- Joseph—how many guys are going to hear from their fiancé that she is pregnant and has not been intimate with a man? Well, thank God, Joseph had an angel visit him too. We get to see Joseph walking in faith! He now has an assignment of being Jesus' earthly father for a moment in time. (For you that are fathers—can you imagine having a perfect child?)
- Shepherds—these individuals had very lowly jobs. I personally grew up on a farm and farming alone has some long days. Sometimes the work is a bit dirty. However, God has a love for shepherds. (David was a shepherd who became a king.) Jesus is considered our Good Shepherd. But, oh, these shepherds had an angel deliver the good news of Jesus' birth! Then a host of angels started to praise God! Just think—these angels knew what Jesus came to earth for. They were praising this most perfect and precious gift to all. These shepherds didn't waste any

time; they went to see Jesus. They then found themselves also praising and sharing the good news! What a way to share a gift!

- Wise men—these men noticed a magnificent star in the sky and followed. These were very wealthy individuals who sought the Lord. When they arrived, they “fell to the ground and worshiped Him.” They had gifts for this special infant—“gold, frankincense, and myrrh.”

Dear friends, God loves us so much to give us these details in the Bible. I like to think of the Bible as God’s love letter to us. What do we do with this treasure? We are in moments of celebrating the Savior who is also called Immanuel or “God with us.” Jesus came to earth to step alongside of individuals, some of whom weren’t very popular. Some even had reputations. In Jesus walking this earth, He could identify that we go through difficult times.

Jesus then laid down His life to pay for the sin debt of all humanity. He was laid in a tomb and three days later He rose in victory. He spoke that we would have an Advocate and Helper, the Holy Spirit. He then ascended into heaven where He is now. The Holy Spirit is how God is still with us. The Holy Spirit indwells in Christians. How’s that for “God with us”? Can I get a “Praise the Lord”?

During this celebration season, remember and “unwrap” the story of Christmas again. Let’s be mindful we are blessed and favored like Mary. Let’s be obedient to what God calls us to do like Joseph. Let’s be like the shepherds and go after Jesus to love Him and share His love and message with those around us. And let’s be like the wise men who worshiped Him.

Dear Christian friends, God loves you so much! We have a most blessed gift. Make the most of this holiday season, treasure that gift and share Him with others. Take hold of the promises found in the Bible. God gave those to you. Spend time in

prayer—a constant communication with God. Speak and take time to listen to Him. Praise and worship Him, for He is most worthy. Walk in faith, trusting Him for He is always faithful. Love and serve Him.

While we are here, we each have an assignment that only each of us is qualified to accomplish. Recognize we are just where God wants us and He will guide us in that assignment when we ask. Give Him every care, worry, trial and battle, for He is most able to take care of it. And please look forward to the day we see Him face to face in heaven very soon. (Side note—Jesus is a perfect builder. He has a mansion for you there.) Dear friends, I may not see many of you this side of heaven. For now, we are heaven-bound and walking with the Lord. I'll join you to praise Him there one day!

Wishing you and your families a most joyous and Merry Christmas!

Holidays are around the corner and I have a free download for you. My website includes an area called "Read Full Testimony." When you go into this, you will find a "Christmas Program" nearly two thirds of the way down. Let it inspire you or please share with your pastor and leaders. It may be the program you use this year (works well for virtual/electronic services too).

Dear friends, I would like to make sure you have great affordable resources for yourselves, family and friends that will help you in your journey of knowing, growing and sharing the great God we love, serve and worship. My website, , has two of my books, Heaven Bound and Walking The Talk, featured and following the links should make your purchase easy. I have been leading studies using these two books. Please listen to my recent episode of Loved Always where you can listen to those studies. Yes, you'll want a Bible as it's the foundation for any book I write. Honestly, there are many scriptures referenced in both books. The podcast framework gives you the

highlights.

The website includes a verse of the day to encourage your study of scripture. You are most welcome to leave a prayer request. This ministry is dependent on God and people like you. The website has a donation link where you can sow into this ministry. Would you consider donating to this ministry? Perhaps even become a monthly partner? I value your partnership as we have the privilege and opportunity to make Jesus famous. Your prayers and support are always most appreciated.

“The LORD bless you, and keep you; The LORD cause His face to shine on you, And be gracious to you; The LORD lift up His face to you, And give you peace'” (Num. 6:24-26, NASB). {eoa}

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