

The Glory of Christmas



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 2: December 17–23, 2016

Day 1

December 19



Pray / Thank God for his Christmas gift of Jesus.

AH, THE GIFT of Christmas music playing everywhere this time of year, music that easily becomes background noise . . . unless an artist does something so unexpected that it gets your attention every time you hear that old, familiar tune with their new musical interpretation. With sales of 27 million Christmas albums of their stylings of “18th-century classical rock,” Chip Davis and Manheim Steamroller redefined Christmas music. What Chip did for rock music, Paul O’Neill and the Trans-Siberian Orchestra did for heavy metal music, with sales of over 10 million albums. You can’t help noticing their musical renditions with drums, synthesizers, and electric guitars, making songs relevant to a whole new and different audience.

When you read today’s passage, imagine the angels’ song backed up by your favorite artist, and then know that God did it better than that! Consider, too, the giver of a gift of his Messiah, who was not gift wrapped in royal robes born to a comfortable life but in swaddling clothes. Then he was placed in a feeding trough in a stable.



Read / Luke 2:1–20



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Ponder for a moment the absurdity of the prophecies about the Messiah. Taken individually, they are strange. Put them all together, outside of the biblical Christmas story, and they seem to be an impossible checklist of disparate things. God fulfilled every prophecy as only he could. God made events occur on a macro scale, all to get Mary and Joseph to that stable on time, even making sure there would be no room in the inn when they arrived. He did it all for you.

What events that were (or are) beyond your control may God have been (or is) using right now in your life to get you to the right place at the right time for his purposes?

When your world collides with God's in an undeniable and miraculous way, do you hasten like the shepherds or ponder like Mary? In other words, what is your response?

God pulled off the logistics to bring salvation to the entire world that first Christmas morning. If he did that, then what thing(s) in your life do you need to trust him with right now?

Day 2

December 20



Pray / Thank God for seeking and saving the lost.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION . . .

It may be good for business, but being the right person in the right place at the right time, well, that is absolutely necessary for salvation. For those who remember records and record player needles, you can almost hear the distinct sound of the needle skipping across the record at the end of that sentence. God, through his prophets, put in place prophetic signposts that pointed to his coming Messiah. There was a specific place: Bethlehem. There was a specific task: being born to die. There was no kingly castle, and there were no servants bearing hot water or clean linens to greet the birth of the Messiah. No nobles and foreign delegations came bearing gifts and seeking a sight of the future king. Instead, the king of the universe made himself a servant. He came into the world in a back alley so that he could serve, seek, and save the lost.



*Read / Micah 5:2; Matthew 20:28; Galatians 4:4–5; Romans
5:6–8*



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Consider God's gift of salvation and when it comes. Salvation comes to us only at the point when we place our faith in Jesus Christ alone. When we acknowledge he is God's own son and that he died for our sins and rose to bring us the peace God promised through the angels, we are saved. Why is it important that it is God's timing and saving and not our own?

If you are running away from acknowledging that you are a sinner in need of a savior and somehow need to be worthy of salvation, reread Romans 5:6–8. Where is God willing to meet you and forgive you?

The fact that Jesus is both fully God and fully man is only marginally comprehensible to us. Perhaps it is Jesus' divinity that took over where his humanity gave up, and this was why only God could choose to die for us while we were still sinners. Do you agree or disagree, and why?

Day 3

December 21



Pray / Pray for wisdom and discernment over knowledge you gain.

ARE YOU MERELY a repository of collective knowledge?

Talk to children in daycare or elementary school, and it is scary to realize they already have been gifted with a collective knowledge from their peers. They can tell you about movies, TV characters, and video games they have never seen or played in person, just from interacting with their peers. This knowledge is flawed, as it's based on secondhand information edited through collective interpretation rather than within the original context. Adults are the same, often letting the gift of inaccurate collective knowledge corrupt the truths we used to know. How many of our Christmas traditions have nothing to do with Christ? Important as this holiest of days in the Christian faith is, when it is removed from the true context within the story of God, we are moving toward collectively formed untruths.



Read / Genesis 1:1, Revelation 4:11; Colossians 1:16–17



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

The story of God is the gospel, or Good News. Remember that we are given many great gifts, such as being created (by God) in his image. Since God created everything, and the Bible is very clear on this, then our ability to create is a reflection of God's creativity and is in no way equal to it. If God created it all, then he owns it all. If God owns it all, then only God can redeem it all.

How does acknowledging that God owns it all move you toward a place where you can accept his plan of redemption?

A local church sign read "No God, no peace. Know God, know peace." If you do not yet have a relationship with Christ, what part of the birth of Jesus is most troublesome for you, and what do you think you could do to find peace this Christmas?

If all things are created by God, and we as human reflect his image, then how should we see others around us, and how should they see God through our treatment of them?

Day 4
December 22



Pray / Pray that you will share God's salvation gift this Christmas.

EVERYONE WANTS TO be in the in crowd. Congratulations, everyone is in! Through God's eyes, every one of us is a sinner, redeemable only through accepting God's gift of salvation through Christ Jesus. Gifts are free for the recipient unless they are monetary, because the IRS definitely wants to know about those. In reflection, most likely you would agree that the gifts you received that required your interaction, time, and regular use that were the best loved and appreciated by you. When you give a good gift to someone and get to experience the joy of seeing the joy your gift brought to them, it is but a small taste of God's joy when you receive his gift of salvation. It is no wonder that the word *gift* is used so often in relation to salvation, because everyone can relate in some way to the concept.



*Read / Romans 3:23–24; Romans 6:23; John 3:16; Ephesians
2:8–9*



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

So why doesn't everyone who has accepted God's free gift of salvation through Jesus invest their time, interact regularly with him, his Father, and the Holy Spirit?

You cannot truly appreciate a great gift unless it is beyond your means to procure it for yourself. All four passages refer directly or indirectly to the gift of salvation. Is this a gift that you need or that you want? Or can it be both?

When you get a really great gift, you want to use it, touch it, and show it off to anyone who will put up with you. How might the Holy Spirit be prompting you right now to share God's gift of salvation with someone in your life who really needs it? Or, if you are someone needing to receive God's gift of salvation, who might you need to seek out to learn more about God's gift of Jesus?

Day 5

December 23



Pray / Pray, thanking God that you're worth one Jesus to him.

THE GIFT RECEIPT—glorious assuager of guilt and bringer of better choices. However did we survive before these beautiful things came preprinted with our receipts? Wrong size, wrong color, or even the wrong gift? All are problems easily fixable, up to a certain dollar amount at least. The ability to exchange one thing for another is arguably one of the oldest desires regularly exercised among humans. Values are assigned based on what someone is willing to pay and then finding someone willing to make the exchange. Everyone gets something, or at least that is how it is supposed to work. Then there is God, who is willing to trade the life of his own son for someone who willfully chose to become their own god. God's love for us is incredible, beyond words. However, these lyrics from artist Everybodyduck come close: "And in this day when something's worth is based on what someone would pay, it's nice to know I'm worth one Jesus to you."¹



Read / 2 Corinthians 5:21; 1 Peter 3:18; Matthew 7:11

1. Everybodyduck, vocal performance of "Telestai" on *Everybodyduck*, Diadem Records, B000005VPM, 1996, compact disc.



Reflect / Choose one or more of the following for reflection.

Has there ever been anyone you thought you loved enough that you'd be willing to die for him or her? What about if they acted as though you never even existed? Would you be willing to die for them then?

Parents are often willing to take relative nothings from their children and exchange them for a whole lot of somethings. They do it out of love and often more than once. Let it sink in for a moment: What does God's sacrificing his one and only son to adopt you into his family do for your self-worth?

God is waiting to welcome into his family everyone who receives his gift of eternal life. Are you ready to give yourself the only gift that truly matters by joining God's family today?

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