

## NOTES

### A. Introduction:

1. Notice the repetition of the word "Yes" in Part 2 of the Eckert's story and in the children's Christmas video retelling the story of Mary and Joseph's road trip to Bethlehem.
2. "Yes" is a word of trust.
  - a. **Julia Eckert:** "Trust means giving your heart, being willing to say 'yes.'"
  - b. The Christmas story is full of yes's.
  - c. **Pastor Laurel:** "Confusion (last week's theme) is a sparring partner with trust."
  - d. Advent helps us hold the tensions of now and not yet. Last week, Pastor Derrick suggested pondering as a way of dealing with confusion.

### B. A road trip to the temple: Mary and Joseph – Luke 2:22-24

1. Mary and Joseph made this trip to fulfill requirements of the Judaic law.
  - a. This illustrates their spiritual devotion, their "yes" as to how it would be spiritually in their family.
  - b. They carried on taking Jesus to the temple annually – Luke 2:41.
2. **Pastor Laurel:** "What daily, weekly, yearly rhythms do you have that you let hold open your 'yes' to God? Do they extend to family and home?"
3. Upcoming family initiatives planned at CLA:
  - a. Family worship Sundays.
  - b. A monthly take-home paper to help parents engage their children spiritually during the week.
4. God also wants our 'yes' in the everyday road trips of life, the errands, staycations, and daily round of mundane duties.
  - a. Laurel was discouraged, tired, and complaining to God while bathing her 15-year-old daughter Emma (who is autistic and non-verbal). She sensed God reply to her monologue of complaint: "Every mundane seemingly meaningless stroke of this bath is an expression of love to Me. Nothing is lost; nothing is without eternal significance."
  - b. Laurel went deeper: "But who is going to love me?"—to which she heard God's answer: "I, in them, will love you." And she's seeing it in the way Emma gently tucks Laurel's hair behind her ear, "... mirroring the way I care for her."
5. For parents "trust" shows up in faithfulness.
  - a. **Pastor Laurel:** "The first thing God did was to entrust Jesus to a young, inexperienced couple." Why? Because He was also concerned about the growth and development of Mary and Joseph.
  - b. **Pastor Laurel:** "Raising children to love and trust God is also about raising parents to love and trust God."

### C. The temple trip: Simeon

1. Simeon pondered in his waiting and did it so well that when the moment came and he saw it, he recognized salvation. He stayed engaged with God through his lifetime. At the revelation moment, he was involved and ready to participate.
2. The spotlight was on a baby. **Pastor Laurel:** "This is not a superhero story but it gives a place to start and how to start. The start is always with children."
  - a. **Jesus** to Nicodemus: "You must be born again" – John 3:1-8.
  - b. Jesus brought a child into the disciples' midst to teach them a lesson about the Kingdom of God – Mark 10:13-16.
3. Like the parenting experience would be costly for Mary (**Simeon:** "A sword will pierce through your own soul...") there may also be costly experiences for us on this parenting and life journey. **Pastor Laurel:** "Don't be afraid to ponder and wait on God again. Don't hesitate to open yourself up to God's love, and when you see salvation, engage."
4. Like the Eckerts are trusting in the middle of their story, so we can all practice the discipline of trust in our lives.

## DISCUSSION:

1. To what things have you said "Yes" to God? How have these decisions impacted your life, the life of your family? What do you sense God asking for a yes answer right now? How is "yes" an expression of trust?
2. What were Joseph and Mary's spiritual rhythms? What spiritual activities and rhythms do you remember taking part in as a child? What rhythms have you established for your family? What challenges them? How do you overcome the challenges?
3. Caring for children often seems thankless. Discuss Laurel's statements: "Nothing is lost; nothing is without significance" and "I, in them, will love you." Do you agree? How have these principles played out in your experience?
4. What is God's opinion of children and childhood as seen through the life and ministry of Jesus? Discuss: "Raising children to love and trust God is also about raising parents to love and trust God." How has this proved true in your life, the life of your parents, or friends, or children? How is trust a discipline?

## PRAYER:

Dear Father, thank You for the "yes" of Joseph, Mary, and Simeon. May our lives also be known for our yes's to You. Help us to live our lives and raise our children and grandchildren in an atmosphere of obedience and trust. Amen.