

December 24, 2017

THE WAY IS PEACE!

Luke 2:1-24

Jesus is the Messiah God promised from the beginning to restore peace between God and man. The covenant that Adam broke thru his disobedience in the Garden Jesus restored thru His loving obedience & sacrificial death on the cross. The scripture says, **“Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”** And this Peace with God thru Jesus is the Gift of Christmas the angels proclaimed at His birth!

In a stroke of pure genius, God became one of us – a human being – THE man, Jesus Christ – to meet us in our darkness & lead us back into eternal life with God for which we were created but disqualified (barred) by sin!

How did we get disqualified? Being born from Adam – sinners by nature & choice! But instead of God simply washing His hands of us and giving up on His plan to share His life/love with us, God became one of us to do what no one but He could do: **to reconcile us to the Father! Jesus is the being in whom God meets man in perfect union; in Him, God & man are one!** This morning, Luke’s gospel will tell us how God did it!

READ: Luke 2:1-24 (NLT)

1-7) Mary is traveling in her ninth month of unwed pregnancy

- The I.C. still brands God’s couple as unrighteous/unfaith
- God cares for His own! *Not phys. comfort, but conviction*
- Cave (not stable) = foreshadows Christ’s death/tomb

8-14) Angel(s) proclaim the Good News about Jesus to shepherds

- Angel’s greeting always, **“Do not fear or be afraid!”**
- All Israel poised for news @ the Savior God promised
 - None expected God as a man to save from sin!
 - Israel “*defined*” the Savior/salvation politically

15-20) Shepherd’s visit Messiah: they all believe, then testify!

- Their actions show our role: testifying @ Christ as we go*
- When did you last abandon your plans for God’s**

21-24) Joseph/Mary operate under the commands of the O.C.

- Circumcision, rites of purification, & sacrifice to redeem!
 - Why?* B/c Christ has not inaugurated NC yet!
- The Redeemer is redeemed: 1st/Final Cov’s work together

In the opening, I stated this truth: Only Jesus can reconcile us to the Father because only in Him does God meet man in perfect union – God and man are joined as one! This is the truth for all of us who have trusted Christ for salvation: ***we have been reconciled to God thru faith in Jesus Christ to enjoy perfect union & oneness with God!*** And our oneness is not based on our ability to do right, but on Jesus having done right perfectly. And because His righteousness is complete, **we have peace with God now!**

And that’s why the Angel greeted the shepherds saying, **“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth PEACE, good will toward men!”** Jesus is the proof, the instrument, & the source of reconciliation with God – Peace and Good will!

INVITATION TO RESPOND PERSONALLY:

- 1) *Do you have peace with God thru faith in Christ?*
- 2) *Does your faith in Christ yield peace with God?*

WORSHIP IN MEDITATION: Luke 2:14

One of the most familiar scriptures related to the nativity scene is, ***“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.”*** *And what is this “peace & good will toward men?” promised by God?* It is the Messiah, Immanuel, the Consolation of Israel – the One who reconciles sinful people with a holy God to reverse the curse!

Not all translations are as straightforward in their presentation of God’s peace & good will toward men. For example:

“...peace among those with whom God is pleased”

-With whom is God pleased? How does a person please God?

“For without faith it is impossible to please God...!”

Those who believe/trust Him

“...peace to people He favors (on whom His favor rests)”

-Which people does God favor? On whom does His favor rest?

Only on those who believe/trust in Him

“...peace to men of good will”

-Which people are of good will?

Only those who are “of God,” born again of Spirit!

No matter how you slice it, God’s peace and good will toward mankind comes in one final form...the God-man, Jesus Christ! He is our unbreakable Peace with God, the One thru whom we receive the full measure of God’s good will toward us!

Sermon in a Sentence: **THE WAY IS PEACE!**