



Hillside Monthly Dispatch

Hillside Baptist Church, Pembroke, NH

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Modeling the Truth of God's Word

December 2015

Seek Christmas Joy

From the Pastor's Desk

The Joy of Christmas

Luke 2:10-11

Not too long ago I was looking through some old pictures and I came across a picture of one of the kids in a Christmas outfit, crawling under the Christmas tree. I was immediately rushed back to a time in which I remembered the best part of that Christmas wasn't the gifts, food, tree, or events. The best part of Christmas was to be at home with family and just experiencing the joy of being together at Christmas.

With major shopping days like Black Friday and Cyber Monday, it is easy to get caught up in spending excessive amounts of money while jockeying for position at the registers. There are many families who spend a lot of money at Christmas time, maxing out their credit cards, which then takes the next full year to pay off. Others worry about buying the right gift or giving the right amount of money. Some worry whether or not the gift given will be warmly received or appreciated.

In all, the focus tends not to be on Jesus, who is the reason for the season, but on what gift is the largest, either physically or monetarily, under the tree. As I consider this I have to ask, what happened to the simple joy of Christmas?

What is Christmas? Is it the presents? Is it money? Is it cards? Is it a tree? Is it family gathered? Is it food? Is it good will toward men? To some degree it is every one of these, but each of these falls terribly short of what it is really about. We know what Christmas is really about because we get it from Scripture. You know, that story when the angels told the shepherds in the field, "For behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11 NASB).

On a simple breakdown of this passage, it is easy to see what Christmas is about. First, it is about recognizing the moment. The angels were proclaiming a moment in time in which God was doing something fantastic, a time in which God came down to man and dwelt among us. Such an event calls us to take a moment and behold, to take a moment and recognize the immensity of the event.

Second, the message is about good news – the good news

Upcoming Events and Meetings

Dec. 5, 8:00 a.m. – Men's Breakfast

The men share a meal, then engage in a Bible discussion.

Dec. 6, 10:45 a.m. – Lord's Supper

Dec. 6, midday – Christmas Lunch

Dec. 24, 6:00 p.m. – Christmas Eve Service

Come celebrate the birthday of the Savior of the world.

Dec. 31 – New Year's Eve

Weekly:

Sundays at 9:30 a.m. – Sunday School

Sundays at 10:45 a.m. – Worship Service

Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. – Adult Bible Study

that man no longer had to wallow in sin and shame, the good news that man no longer had to remain separated from God the Father because of the sin condition, the good news that man would finally be brought into a right relationship with God through the vessel that He had chosen.

Third, it is for all people, not just the few selected. It is meant for you, for me, for our least favorite cousin, and yes, for our snarly bosses at work.

Fourth, the proclamation points to someone specific. The one who it is all about is Jesus Christ who is Lord and Savior of the world. With these aspects in mind, it is clear to see why the angels said it was a moment of great joy. Thus the joy of Christmas is not in some things, but in someone, Jesus Christ.

Now before I am nicknamed Scrooge and people send me cards with the phrase "bah, humbug," I acknowledge that in modern times Christmas has integrated many good things in joyful celebration of our Lord's birth. Yet, even with all those good things, it is clear to see that the joy of the moment can and often does get lost, can and often does get

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On the web at <http://www.hillsidebaptistnh.org>

Pastor's Desk (from p. 1)

shrouded, can and often does get missed if we do not look for it.

Let me encourage you to pause and look for the joy of Christmas not found in toys, trinkets, or traditions, but in the coming salvation of our Lord Jesus Christ. When it is all said and done, that is what the joy of Christmas is all about. Please share it with others and know the joy of Christmas. Merry Christmas!

✠ Pastor Jim

Men's Breakfast

For December, the guys are meeting on Saturday Dec. 5 at 8:00 a.m. for some good old home cooking followed by further discussion of Paul's letter to the Philippians.

It's always a good time of fellowship and study of God's Word. So get up early and join us for a worthwhile time.

Fellowship Events

On Sunday December 6 at midday, we will celebrate a Christmas Lunch. The church is providing the turkey and ham. Please bring a covered side dish or dessert and enjoy some food and fellowship.

Property and Space Patrol

This past month, we mowed the brush on the slope in front of the parking area and I got a bad case of poison ivy. We also removed the leaves from the front lawn.

We received the new salt spreader that replaces the one that was rusted out and the new one is ready to go. Here's hoping we don't need to use it very often.

✠ Pastor Al Page

The Meaning of a Name

The following inspirational article comes from the *Our Daily Bread* devotional passage for December 1st.

According to a New York Times article, children in many African countries are often named after a famous visitor, special event, or circumstance that was meaningful to the parents. When doctors told the parents of one child that they could not cure the infant's illness and only God knew if he would live, the parents named their child Godknows. Another man said he was named Enough, because his mother had 13 children and he was the last one! There's a reason for everyone's name, and in some cases it also conveys a special meaning.

Before Jesus was born, an angel of the Lord told Joseph, "[Mary] will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins" (Matt. 1:21). Jesus is the Greek form of Joshua, which means "the Lord saves." In that day and culture, many children would have been named Jesus, but only one came into this world to die so that all who receive Him might live eternally, forgiven and freed from the power of sin.

Charles Wesley wrote these words we often sing as Christmas nears: "Come, Thou long-expected Jesus, born to

set Thy people free; from our fears and sins release us; let us find our rest in Thee."

Jesus came to turn our darkness into light, to transform our despair into hope, and to save us from our sins.

✠ David McCasland

The Early Days of the Christian Faith

Eerdman's Handbook of Christianity is a gold mine of scholarly articles about the people who spread the gospel after the original apostles had passed the torch to their followers. One pet peeve of mine is that today's church doesn't seem to take any time to study or discuss the 2,000 year gulf between Jesus and the apostles and now. This byline will attempt to illuminate some of that history. This first article is on Justin Martyr.

Justin was born about 100 AD in the Roman city of Flavia Neapolis (ancient Shechem in Samaria). Raised by pagan parents, he sought to find life's meaning in the philosophies of his day.

At last, about 130 AD, after a conversation with an old man, his life was transformed: "A fire was suddenly kindled in my soul. I fell in love with the prophets and these men who had loved Christ; I reflected on all their words and found that this philosophy alone was true and profitable. That is how and why I became a philosopher. And I wish that everyone felt the same way that I do."

His teaching ministry took him first to Ephesus (c. 132), where he held a disputation with Trypho, a Jew, about the true interpretation of Scripture. The *Dialogue with Trypho* teaches three main points: the Old Covenant is passing away to make place for the New; the Logos is the God of the Old Testament; and the Gentiles are the new Israel.

Later Justin moved to Rome, founded a Christian school, and wrote two bold apologies (i.e., defenses—from the Greek *apologia*). Justin's *First Apology*, addressed to Emperor Antoninus Pius, was published in 155 and attempted to explain the faith.

Justin argued that Christians are, in fact, the emperor's "best helpers and allies in securing good order, convinced as we are that no wicked man ... can be hidden from God, and that everyone goes to eternal punishment or salvation in accordance with the character of his actions." He further showed that Christianity is superior to paganism, that Christ is prophecy fulfilled, and that paganism is actually a poor imitation of the true religion.

Justin's *Second Apology* was written soon after Marcus Aurelius became emperor (161). Justin tried to show that the Christian faith alone was truly rational. He taught that the Logos (Word) became incarnate to teach humanity truth and to redeem people from the power of the demons.

Four years later, Justin and his disciples were arrested for their faith. When the prefect threatened them with death, Justin said, "If we are punished for the sake of our Lord Jesus Christ, we hope to be saved." They were taken out and beheaded. Since he gave his life for the "true philosophy," Justin has been surnamed Martyr ("witness" in Greek).

Mathematical Puzzle

During Thanksgiving Day while visiting neighbors, we had some fun telling jokes and riddles. Here is one that is amazingly simple to understand once you know the answer but hard as all get out to figure out.

Determine the pattern behind this numerical sequence:

8 5 4 9 1 7 6 3 2 0

Tell the editor if you solved it, otherwise beg him for the answer when you see him.

Hymns for Different Job Titles

This list was scanned and sent by Cynthia Ward. Having just visited the eye doctor, I can appreciate the hymn listed for that job.

There is also a good list of hymns for those of you who might like to speed on the highway.

Dentist's Hymn..... Crown Him with Many Crowns
 Weatherman's Hymn..... There Shall Be Showers of Blessings
 Contractor's Hymn..... The Church's One Foundation
 The Tailor's Hymn..... Holy, Holy, Holy
 The Golfer's Hymn..... There's a Green Hill Far Away
 The Politician's Hymn..... Standing on the Promises
 Optometrist's Hymn..... Open My Eyes That I Might See

The IRS Agent's Hymn..... I Surrender All
 The Gossip's Hymn..... Pass It On
 The Electrician's Hymn..... Send the Light
 The Shopper's Hymn..... Sweet Bye and Bye
 The Realtor's Hymn..... I've got a Mansion, Just Over the Hilltop
 The Massage Therapists Hymn.. He Touched Me
 The Doctor's Hymn..... The Great Physician

AND for those who speed on the highway here are a few more hymns:

~45 mph..... God Will Take Care of You
 ~65 mph..... Nearer My God To Thee
 ~85 mph..... This World Is Not My Home
 ~95 mph..... Lord, I'm Coming Home
 ~100 mph..... Precious Memories

Lord, give me a sense of humor,
 Give me the grace to see a joke,
 To get some humor out of life,
 And pass it on to other folk.

Wildlife Thanksgiving Dinner

Also sent in by Cynthia Ward is this cartoon showing how vultures celebrate Thanksgiving Day.



Birthdays and Anniversaries



Hillside wishes a happy, happy, happy birthday to the following people who are celebrating another orbit around the Sun:

- 12/12 Tracey Bachand
- 12/16 Connor Robertson
- 12/21 Juliette Robertson



Hillside also wishes God's blessing on anyone who celebrates a wedding anniversary this month:

If we missed yours, please send a note to the editor so we can include you on our list.

Prayer Requests

If you need us to pray for a physical, spiritual, financial, marital, or other need, contact Pastor Jim, Pastor Al, or Michael Frascinella and they will get the word out to the membership. It will be our duty and privilege to lift you up in prayer to Jesus our Lord.

Hillside on the Web

Go to the Hillside web site <http://www.hillsidebaptistnh.org/> for more information about our fellowship, including this newsletter in PDF format.

Submissions for Next Issue

Deadline is Dec. 27. Send news items to News Wrangler Michael Frascinella, mfrascinella at comcast dot net.



Hillside Baptist Church is a member of the New Hampshire Baptist Association, part of the Southern Baptist Convention.



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