

Sunday 9AM & 11:15 Notes
12/8/19 – Jeff Lyle

“3 Christmas Memories” Galatians 4:4-7 | 9 AM

What is the most essential theology connected to Christmas? What must we know and believe about the advent of Messiah? Is it enough to simply declare that God the Son came and was born into the human race? While that glorious truth is certainly the headline of the birth of Jesus, there is so much more that feeds our soul if we will ponder the beautiful ramifications of the incarnation. How is it that Jesus' birth lends itself to the eternal salvation of sinners? This non-traditional Christmas passage from Galatians helps us to know more deeply and treasure more greatly what God began to accomplish when the Creator entered the human experience via the incarnation of Jesus Christ. There are three important things we all must remember concerning the birth of Jesus.

I. We Remember The Will Of The Father (4)

A. He appointed the moment (4a) - “But when the fullness of time had come...”

What was significant about this particular time period that God determined it was the fulness of times wherein Jesus should be born?

Idolatry had been removed among the Jewish people. They were now monotheistic again. Places of worship & teaching had been established by the establishment of synagogues. The Old Testament had been completed and was received as the Hebrew bible. The proclamation of the coming of the Messiah was systematic. The common language was Greek and it was dominant throughout the known world, making future evangelism much more effective. The Roman peace provided for political and economic stability; the Roman highway system was present for advancing the Gospel. The Jewish people were hungry for God because no true prophet had spoken for 400 years.

B. He offered the treasure (4b) - “...God sent forth His Son,

1. As the Divine Son, Jesus alone had the nature for the acceptable sacrifice. 2. As the human son, Jesus had the nature for the appropriate substitute.

C. He assumed the identity (4c) - “...born of a woman, born under the law...”

Jesus came and met the human race exactly where they were. He became fully human so that He could qualify as the kinsman redeemer of

Sunday 9AM & 11:15 Notes **12/8/19 – Jeff Lyle**

mankind. He came as a Jew to offer Himself as the Jewish Messiah. In all of His ways, for all of His days, Jesus fulfilled the Jewish Law, submitting Himself to the pleasure of the Father in all matters. While the conception of Jesus was wholly supernatural, his actual birth was wholly natural with all of elements that are attached to any human birth. Jesus was born of a woman and under the Law. God Incarnate submitted Himself to the confines of a womb and the mandates of the Law.

II. We Remember The Work Of The Son (5)

A. To meet us in our helplessness (5a) - “To redeem those who were under the law...”

The Law of God reveals His righteous nature and His holy will for humankind. It is a unilateral representation of who God is and how He is. It is the eternal revelation of His holy will for humankind. God understood that every member of the human race would come woefully short of this holy standard. Because of our sin, we have all transgressed the Law of God and are thereby condemned in our guilt. We become slaves to sin and deserved wrath which God will release at the end of the age. Jesus, coming as our kinsman redeemer, fully human, fulfilled the Law perfectly. Because of this, He is suitable to become our substitute, receiving in Himself the wrath of the Father on the cross. Three days later, when He rose from the grave, it was manifest that the Father had accepted the sacrifice of the son on our behalf. Jesus, as the ever-living Savior can now redeem us from the slavery of our sin and bring us out from the condemnation of the Law. We are no longer under the penalty of the Law because the Law has been perfectly fulfilled on our behalf by Jesus.

To secure us in our standing (5b) - “...so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

1. Redemption sets us free from slavery from the demands and penalties of the Law.
2. Adoption welcomes us as sons, with all the privileges afforded to mature sons on God.

III. Remember The Witness Of The Spirit (6-7)

A. His is a family testimony (6a) - “And because you are sons...”

B. His is an assuring testimony (6b) - “...God has sent the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!”

Sunday 9AM & 11:15 Notes
12/8/19 – Jeff Lyle

Adoption is expanded for us in Romans 8:14-17:

"For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God. 15 For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, "Abba! Father!" 16 The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, 17 and if children, then heirs - heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with Him in order that we may also be glorified with Him."

C. His is a gracious testimony (7)

1. Privileged in our position - "So you are no longer a slave, but a son..." 2. Privileged in our provision - "...and if a son, then an heir through God."

What do we inherit as an heir of God in Christ?

Riches of His kindness, Riches of His grace, Riches of His glory, Riches of His glorious inheritance, Riches of His goodness, Riches of His wisdom, Riches of His gospel, Riches of full assurance, All the riches of God in Christ,

Specifically: Love, Salvation, Peace, Power, Joy, Protection, Mercy, Promises, Provision, Victory, Stability, Wisdom, Hope, Discernment, Boldness, Courage, Compassion, Purpose & Expectation for Second Coming

Sunday 9AM & 11:15 Notes
12/8/19 – Jeff Lyle

“How Christmas Can Banish Fear” Matthew 1 & Luke 2 | 11:15 AM

Most everyone has something about which they are occasionally afraid. In heartbreaking scenarios, some people live in fear, dread or anxiety almost every day. It is no surprise then that the most frequently repeated call in the Bible coming from God to us is the command to not be afraid. God wants us to live in assurance that He is in control and that He is for us, not against us. Because we live by faith, we embrace the reality that we must live with many unknowns as we follow Jesus. Our response to these unknowns is meant to be faith and trust, not fear and terror. In the very first scenes surrounding the birth of Jesus, we find three separate occasions wherein Heaven commands Mary, Joseph and the shepherds to refuse to live in fear. Christmas is the great message of hope that serves to banish our fears.

I. Fear Not: When Your Assignment Is Overwhelming (Luke 1:26-38)

A. Mary gets ambushed from Heaven (26-29) - “26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.”

B. Mary gets her assignment from Heaven (30-33) - “30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.”

C. Mary gets aligned with Heaven (34-38) - “34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy- the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.”

Sunday 9AM & 11:15 Notes

12/8/19 – Jeff Lyle

It would serve all of us well to place ourselves in Mary's place. 2,000 years after this her encounter with Gabriel, we tend to romanticize this moment in Mary's teenaged life. But think of what this encounter and message from Heaven landed with her? She was a virgin who was soon to be pregnant through supernatural means. While there would be immeasurable honor and favor from God in being chosen as the mother of the Messiah, imagine how those around her would respond to the news that she was pregnant. Joseph would struggle mightily to believe her story of a supernatural encounter resulting in a pregnancy. What about her parents' reaction? Neighbors, friends and family would likely have been highly skeptical to any explanation of Mary about how she came to be pregnant. Scorn, slander and shame was likely heaped upon this teenager chosen by God. Her assignment was glorious, but it would have carried a heavy stigma from the human perspective. It is no wonder then that Gabriel's message to her began with a command to not fear. Mary would be the first person to be shunned for carrying the Christ within. She would not be the last. When God calls us to our appointed assignment in the Kingdom, it will attach itself to resistance and misunderstanding from others. As Gabriel commanded Mary not to be governed by fear of the unknown, we have that same calling to walk in confidence and trust with God.

II. Fear Not: When Your Dreams Fall Apart (Matthew 1:18-25)

A. Joseph was experiencing delight (18a) - "Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph..."

B. Joseph was entrusted with dismay (18b-19) - "...before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly."

C. Joseph was enlisted for duty (20-23) - "But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us)."

D. Joseph was elevated through dignity (24-25) - "When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus."

Sunday 9AM & 11:15 Notes

12/8/19 – Jeff Lyle

Perhaps Joseph's part in the birth of Jesus is more difficult than even Mary's part. Mary would be revered throughout the ages for being the mother of the Messiah. Joseph would be a historical footnote after the birth of God's Son. He vanishes into obscurity and is never mentioned again. Joseph's limited dream of a quiet life with Mary gave way to a more significant calling to be an instrumental part of God's eternal plan. God's plan cost Joseph his own plans. His wife would be gossiped about as an adulteress, and Joseph would be shamed by those who believed him to be too weak to walk away from the woman who cheated on him. Initially, Joseph began the painful, humiliating work of breaking off the arranged marriage. It was then that he received his own "do not fear" message from the angelic messenger. Joseph needed to know that God's plan for his life would alter the course of human history. It was different than what Joseph had envisioned for himself, but it was also immeasurably bigger than what Joseph could have imagined. Joseph received precise information about the plans God had through his life. It was bigger than Joseph could handle on his own, so he received a fear-not command from Heaven. In every detail, Joseph humbly obeyed the plan from the Lord.

III. Fear Not: When God Begins To Dramatically Move (Luke 2:8-20)

A. An unexpected invasion (8-9) - "And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear."

B. An unprecedented experience (10-14) - "And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

C. An unanticipated affirmation (15-20) - "When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." 16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. 18 And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. 19 But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. 20 And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them."

Sunday 9AM & 11:15 Notes **12/8/19 – Jeff Lyle**

On the night upon which the Son of God was born as the Son of Man, there was an angelic invasion to announce the news. A praise explosion in the middle of a blue-collar late shift as countless angels filled the sky above where shepherds had been watching over their sheep in the dark of night. The instincts of these shepherds were to respond in stark terror - who can blame them? Immediately, the angelic spokesman releases the third "do not fear" command which is attached to the birth of Jesus. The angel announces the place of Messiah's birth, describes how we will appear when the shepherds go to find him, and declares this announcement to be the good news that is weighted with great joy for the human race. Choosing faith over fear, the shepherds immediately make their way to Bethlehem to meet the newborn king of the Jews. They testified to Mary and Joseph about their encounter with the angelic host before returning to their flocks in a level of joy that they had never before experienced. Mary, we are told, pondered deeply in her heart the testimony of the shepherds. Fear had been intentionally banished from Mary, Joseph and the shepherds. The arrival of the King of kings is meant to deliver all of us from living in fear. Our assignments are larger than us, but we do not fear because God will accompany us. When our previously held dreams are shattered, we do not allow fear to come and rule us. God has a peerless ability to pick up the fragments of our broken dreams and create His own masterpiece for us. And when God begins to dramatically move, interrupting our routines and bringing an unexpected vibrancy back to our lives, we must choose, like the shepherds did, great joy instead of faithless fear.