

SERIES: Why did Jesus Come? - Part 1 (Slide #1)

TITLE: "I Have Come That You Might Have Abundant Life."

TEXT: Luke 2:1-7; John 10:9-10

DATE: November 29, 2009 - First Sunday of Advent

I. INTRODUCTION.

A. (Slide #2) **Illustration: Michael Davies tells the following parable entitled, "A Parable of Christmas Eve.":**

"Once there lived a king who had power over all the nations and peoples. His courts were of richest splendor; His tables were heavy with the finest food. Music and laughter and gaiety floated from His castle. Clouds wrapped it in ethereal majesty. Peasants - in their valley of violence and hunger - stopped and looked at the castle for a long while, wishing they might know the king. But none were able to reach Him.

In the cold of Winter, the king's tailor entered the royal chambers with the latest additions to the King's wardrobe. He had selected the finest materials and woven them into the most beautiful garments that eyes had ever seen. But the King was not pleased. He ordered His tailor out, vowing to make His own clothes. The door to the throne room was shut and locked. Weeks passed. The royal court waited with anticipation to see what the king would make for Himself. They knew they were bound to be blinded by the glory of it. Finally the awaited day arrived. The door opened and the King appeared. Everyone, especially the tailor, gasped in surprise. His Majesty was dressed in the simplest, cheapest, most unkingly garments imaginable. He had the choice of the world's finest materials, but He had chosen to wear the clothes of a beggar.

*He spoke quietly [and yet very deliberately] to them all: **I AM GOING TO THE VALLEY!"***

B. Luke, in his gospel, writes some of the most amazing words when he states in **Luke 2:4-7: "So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."**

C. I wonder if it is ever possible to lose the awe of this most sacred event; to lose the wonder of the miracle of the birth of God, ushering Him into His world that He might impact those of us who live in the valley.

1. He deserved a special wing of the most influential hospital; but instead He chose a stable and some hay.
2. He deserved a trumpeted welcome by a long line of royalty, but instead He was greeted by animals and shepherds.
3. He deserved the best of childhood pleasantries and conveniences, and yet He chose the simple life of Joseph and Mary's carpenter's home.

D. (Slide #3) **Why did Jesus come in such a lowly fashion when He deserved so much more?**

1. Because He did not come to impress us, but to impact us.
2. Because He did not come to rule over us, but to live in us.
3. Because He did not come to tower over us, but to walk beside us.
4. Because He did not come to lift up Himself, but instead to lift us up.

E. Friends, it is my goal and my hope that we can take the story that we know so well and have grown accustomed to and rediscover its miracle. The coming of Christ is no ordinary event; it is the event of all events for all of time.

- F. Why did Jesus come? We read in *John 10:10*: *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." or as another translation puts it, "I have come that you might have life, life abundant and free."*
- G. What does that mean? What is the GOOD NEWS message to each of us this morning?
- II. **(Slide #4) BECAUSE OF JESUS COMING, WE ARE OFFERED THE GIFT OF LIFE.**
- A. Jesus begins this proclamation with the seemingly simple words: *"I have come that you might have life. . . ."*
- B. To the average person, this may seem like a ridiculous statement because it appears that we can have life without Jesus at all, and many of us live as if this is true:
1. We seem to be conceived without God's help.
 2. We appear to be born without God's help.
 3. We seem to grow up without God's help.
 4. We seem to be able to order our lives without God's life-giving help: We get our jobs, we build our families, we buy our homes and food, we buy our cars, we do our things, and life goes on without a seeming need for God at all.
 5. For the average person this may seem like a silly statement and that Christ's coming has very little to do with life giving.
 6. But the truth be known, if Christ had not come, we would not be sitting here this morning with true life in our possession.
- C. The challenge for many is coming to grips with what life really is:
1. Many of us define life as who we are: our build, our personality traits, our temperament, etc.
 2. Some of us chose to define life by what we do: our employment, our activities, our entertainment, etc.
 3. Still others of us chose to define life by who we know, or who we influence/control, or who we marry, or several other variables.
- D. The life that Jesus is talking about goes far beyond all of these external things; it is a life that is foundational and defines our eternal nature.
1. In this proclamation, Jesus is telling us that He has come to offer to us life that changes the very core of who we are.
 2. He has come to offer us a life that changes our standing before God and man for the rest of eternity.
 3. He came to offer us a life that literally transforms all meaning and outlook on life.
 4. Jesus has come to offer to us real, life changing, life transforming, life impacting life.
 5. It is a gift of infinite value that we must have, and once we receive it, we should never take for granted.
- E. When Jesus declared that He has come that we might have life, the life He was talking about is the life of forgiveness from sin and a resulting walk a person redeemed by God's love.
1. Jesus came to declare "I forgive you for all your sins."
 2. Jesus came to declare, "I have an offering for you; one of living free from the condemnation of sin."
 3. Jesus came to offer to us a clean slate, white as snow, void of any sin and it's resulting punishment.
 4. Oh, it is no ordinary offering but the greatest gift the world has ever known; completely undeserved and yet freely given.
 5. It should stir within us a feeling of gratitude so deep that every day is lived in honoring of the gift of forgiveness.
 6. If Jesus had not come, what a mess our lives would be.
- F. How well the words of the song speak of the wonder of the gift of life when the song writes states: *"I will serve thee, because I love thee. You have given life to me. I was nothing, until you found me. You have given life to me. Heartache, broken pieces, ruined lives are why you died on Calvary. Your touch*

is what I longed for. You have given life to me."

- G. I want to call us as a church to celebration in light of the gift of life that Jesus has offered to us at His coming.
- H. But in our celebration, I want us to consider Jesus' further statement and consider its meaning.

III. **(Slide #5) BECAUSE OF JESUS COMING, WE ARE OFFERED THE GIFT OF ABUNDANT LIFE.**

- A. Jesus does not only say, *"I have come that you might have life,"* but He continues by saying, *"and have it to the full" or "have it abundantly."*
- B. The question that goes through my mind as I read those descriptive words is this: What is the abundant life?
- C. I am certain that there are as many answers to that question as there are people.
- D. I am also certain that it is impossible for one person to in one sermon try to in any way try to describe in complete detail what the abundant life is like.
- E. But this morning I want to at least give to us a taste of what I think this abundant life is all about.
- F. Let me preface it by stating that we must come to understand that God's greatest gift is salvation from sins, but that only marks the beginning of all He longs to do for us.
- G. The question to be answered is this: **(Slide #6) What is the abundant life?** What is it that Christ longs to offer to us as the redeemed? What are the added benefits available to us if we will lay claim to it? Let me give you a taste of what it looks like:
 - 1. **(Slide #7) The abundant life is provisional.**
 - a. Jesus proclaims in *Matthew 6:33, "Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all other things will be added unto you."*
 - b. I believe friends that in addition to salvation, Christ longs to offer to us all that we need for daily living.
 - 2. **(Slide #8) The abundant life is directive.**
 - a. John tells us in *John 1:4* and again in *John 5:26* (and there are a multitude of other references) that Jesus has come to be the light of the worlds.
 - b. What does that mean? It means that as a part of the gift of life, if we will lay claim to it, is the offering of direction for all of life.
 - c. What do I mean by all? I mean ALL!!!! Jesus longs to get personally involved in absolutely every decision we make if we will allow Him.
 - d. Jesus provides us with light for life.
 - 3. **(Slide #9) The abundant life is eternal and preserving.**
 - a. Repeatedly Jesus proclaims, "I am the resurrection and the life."
 - b. Jesus is declaring that as a part of the gift is a guarantee that the gift can last for a lifetime and beyond if we will remain in Christ.
 - 4. **(Slide #10) The abundant life is filled with promises.** You might call me insane, but as I read the miracles and the actions of Christ, I have come to believe that they are not written merely to make us wish Jesus would do the same thing for us. Walk with me through Jesus' life and let me tell you what I believe Jesus includes in His offering of abundant life:
 - a. As Jesus changed water into wine, He was demonstrating His desire to be our provider.
 - b. As Jesus led the Samaritan woman at the well into a salvation experience, He was demonstrating His inclusiveness - that all might be saved.
 - c. As Jesus healed the ill - the blind, the lame, the paralytic, the crippled, the leper, etc - He was demonstrating that included in the abundant life is the offering of healing.
 - d. As Jesus cleansed the demoniac, He was offering to us inner healing and release from the grip of Satan.
 - e. As Jesus feeds the 5,000, he is telling us that He will "give us our daily bread."

- f. As Jesus walks on the water, He is telling us that even nature is under His control.
 - g. As Jesus forgave the woman caught in adultery that the pharisees wanted to stone, He is telling us that included in the abundant life is unconditional love.
 - h. As Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He guaranteeing victory even over our final foe, death.
 - i. As Jesus prayed His priestly prayer for us, he was offering unity and peace.
 - j. As Jesus prepared to die, he promised to send the Holy Spirit, and in so doing was offering to us unending companionship.
 - k. As Jesus died, he offered forgiveness.
 - l. As Jesus rose again, he offered eternal life.
 - m. As Jesus ascended into heaven, He offered an advocate.
 - n. As Jesus baptizes us in the Holy Spirit, He provides us with cleansing, empowering, and directing.
 - o. I could go on and on and on, but let me simply say this: The life that Jesus came to offer is abundant and filled with promise and possibility and we have not even begun to touch the tip of the iceberg of what He longs to provide for us if we will but claim it.
5. To add victory on top of victory, listen to this unbelievable words of Jesus in *John 14:12-14* - ***"I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name and I will do it."***

H. Are you catching the miracle of Christ's coming?

- 1. He has come that we can have life - life in the spirit.
- 2. He has come that we can have abundant life - life without limits if we will but believe and ask.

I. But one last thing needs to be mentioned that is truly amazing.

IV. (Slide #11) **BECAUSE OF JESUS COMING, WE ARE OFFERED ABUNDANT LIFE ABSOLUTELY FREE!!!**

- A. Jesus says, ***"I have come that you might have life, abundant and free."***
- B. The miracle of the gift of abundant life made available to us because of Christ's coming is that He offers it to us absolutely free.
- C. We have heard the words of Christ in John 3 so often that we have perhaps grown numb to it's meaning, but it is miraculous in describing this free gift.
 - 1. It is a gift - "For God so loved the world that He GAVE His one and only Son.
 - 2. It is a gift to every one - "That WHOEVER would believe in Him."
 - 3. It is releasing - "Would not perish."
 - 4. It is eternal - "But have everlasting life."
 - 5. It is freeing - "For God did not send His Son into the world to CONDEMN the world, but to save the world through Him."
- D. Can you imagine the awe of Isaiah as He penned the words of God: ***"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters; and you who have no money, come, buy, and eat! Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost."*** (Isa. 51:1)
- E. The miracle of this abundant life is that it is free and available to absolutely every one of us, if we will but claim it.
- F. Where can we find the claims department - In Jesus alone.

V. CONCLUSION.

A. (Slide #12) Illustration: Unclaimed Inheritance.

1. TRUE STORY: many years ago there was a father and son who had a serious falling out – a major argument that escalated to a very heated level.
2. At the end of their fight, the son blurted out to his father: “I hate you. From this time on, you are no longer my father and I am no longer your son.” At that, he walked out of the house and out of the life of his father.
3. The father, of course, was filled with regret and often tried to find his son, but to no avail.
4. As the years passed, the father ended up becoming a very successful business man and accumulated a small fortune.
5. One day, to his shock, the doctor spoke the words everyone dreads hearing: Sir, you have cancer. Your cancer has progressed to an advanced degree and I’m sorry to tell you that you only have a few months to live.
6. On that day, the father set out on a mission to accomplish one last thing before he died: to find his son and to give to him everything that he owned. How he longed for a restored relationship.
7. Using his vast resources, the father hired the best of lawyers, but even with the very best it took them considerable time to find the son.
8. When the father was notified that his son was located, the father sent this message to his son: “Son, I’m so sorry for the way I have behaved. I am asking for your forgiveness and I offer to you mine as well. I am dying. Before I die how I long for peace between me and you. I have accumulated a large amount of money and possessions. As my son, please receive them from me as a final gift and expression of my love for you.”
9. The father waited anxiously for the detective to return with a response.
10. Finally the detective arrived and with great anxiety the father asked, “What did he say?” With head bowed the detective delivered the son’s response: “Tell that man, I have no father.”

B. As I think about the gift of abundant life that Jesus has come to offer, I am reminded of the story of the unclaimed inheritance:

1. There is a Father in heaven that loves us so very, very much, even those who may be gathered here today that do not even know God.
2. His love is so great that He sent His one and only Son to the world to make an offer to all who would receive it: Abundant Life
3. And the truly amazing thing is this: If you were to walk up to this gift of Abundant Life and look at the price tag it would say, ABSOLUTELY FREE.

C. (Slide #13) It occurs to me this morning that we need to claim the inheritance. After all, a gift not received is a wasted gift.

- D. We need to claim it and begin to live the Abundant Life that God has to offer in Christ.
- E. Will you claim it today?