

First Edition

December 2017



First Baptist Church of San Mateo 2801 Alameda de las Pulgas San Mateo, CA 94403 650-345-1965 www.fbcsanmateo.org

Jesus, the Greatest Gift of All

By Pastor Marc Heinz

In Luke 2:8-10 we read: *“In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people;”*

These verses remind us that the announcement, Jesus the Messiah and Savior had been born, was good news for all of mankind and it was intended to produce great joy. His coming brought hope and help to our fallen and broken world. Jesus came to remove our alienation and to take our place, paying the debt we owed and could never ever repay so that we might become part of the family of God.

Of course what was true at the time of the angels’ announcement is just as true, just as significant today. You know this reality can and should be producing great joy in every believer’s life. In a very real sense, every day can be Christmas, because the heart of Christmas is the fact that a Savior has been born. Love provided a way for us to be delivered from our sin. Love stepped into the picture and provided a gift, Jesus, God’s only be-

gotten Son, *“that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.”* Friends, we shouldn’t need a holiday to remind us of God’s great gift, especially when we recognize that this is a never-ending gift. And if we choose to live in the reality of God’s gift and His amazing love for us we can find great joy and peace no matter what we may be up against.

During this special season it is my hope that you will be encouraged by God’s incredible love for you, and that you will be reminded of the true meaning of Christmas. I know you will be busy and many things will clamor for your attention and time. But amidst the flurry of activities in which you find yourself, I encourage you to make time to think about that holy night that changed the world. Take time to reflect on the fact that the One who came long ago as a baby will one day return to take you home. Above all, make time to remember and thank God for the fact that He so loved the world that He gave and that He came.

Finally, as you celebrate Jesus’ birth may you remember the hope that is yours because He lives! May your Christmas be blessed in a multitude of ways by Him who is worthy of all our praise and adoration! Have a joyous and most blessed Christmas!

My Prayer

I knelt to pray when day was done,
And prayed, “O Lord bless everyone
Lift from each saddened heart the pain;
And let the sick be well again.”
And then I woke another day,
And carelessly went on my way.

The whole day long I did not try
To wipe a tear from any eye
I did not try to share the load
Of any one along the road;
I did not even go to see
The sick man just next door to me.

Yet, once again when day was done,
I prayed, “O Lord, bless every one.”
But as I prayed, into my ear,
There came a voice that whispered
clear;
“Pause friend, before you pray,
Whom have you tried to help today?”

God’s sweetest blessings always go;
To hands that serve him here below;
And then I hid my face and cried,
“Forgive me, God, for I have lied;
If you will let me live another day,
I will try to live the way I pray.”

(Anonymous
Copied from “Beyond the Veil”
by Boyce Mouton

**Special Offering for
December will go to
the Needy Fund.**



*Women's Ministry
Christmas Tea
Dec. 16 1:00pm
in Fellowship Hall
Family and friends are welcome.*

*Cost is \$15.00
Tickets are available on the courtyard.*

 *Christmas Carol Singalong* 

Wednesday night, Dec. 13th,
7 p.m. in the
Chapel. Come, sing the carols, old
and new.

Humbly Preparing Your Heart for CHRISTmas

By Doug Andrews

For the last several weeks, Pastor Marc has been teaching out of Matthew 5. At the beginning of Jesus' presentation on the qualities and characteristics of a Kingdom person, Jesus says that it is those who are poor in spirit, humble, and meek who are truly participants.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted."

"Blessed are the humble (meek), for they shall inherit the earth."

We learned that the fundamental and key characteristic of a member of God's Kingdom is a humble recognition of one's own need for God, a willingness to mourn their own sin and truly seek to be changed. It inescapably starts with humility. There isn't room for pride, self-promotion, stubbornness or self-interest in His Kingdom. These characteristics get in the way of God's work in our own life, and in the work He wants to use us for in others, and His church.

As we prepare for this Christmas season, it's always so good to revisit the account in Matthew and Luke for lessons that the Lord wants to remind about.

In Luke's account, he directs our attention to two women: Elizabeth and Mary. Their reactions to their circumstances and the work that God chose to do in and through them were truly remarkable, and are amazing examples for us. John Piper writes about them in his advent devotional "Good News of Great Joy,"

"Mary and Elizabeth are wonderful heroines in Luke's account. He loves the faith of these women. The things that impress him most, it appears, and the thing he wants to impress on Theophilus, his noble reader, is the lowliness and cheerful humility of Elizabeth and Mary.

Elizabeth says (Luke 1:43), "And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord would come to me?" And Mary says (Luke 1:48), "He has looked on the humble estate of His servant."

The only people whose soul can truly magnify the Lord are people like Elizabeth and Mary--people

who acknowledge their lowly estate and are overwhelmed by the condescension of our magnificent God."

Have you ever thought of the condescension of the Son of God becoming man? Philippians 2 highlights Christ's humility seen in the incarnation.

"...Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself (laid aside His privileges), taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. (Phil 2:5-9)

As amazing as it is that Jesus went to the cross, we should also not overlook His incarnation. He who was infinite, beyond time and space, transcendent over the universe, and yet He entered into it willingly and humbly. Not just to manifest Himself in a temporary form that we could see or interact with for a short period of time, but to become fully human. Born to a mother in every way that we are: messy and dirty. Dependant on another human for food and shelter. Enduring hardships like hunger, growing pains, cold, poverty, and manual labor. To then go on and be rejected by the very ones He came to save. To be falsely accused, sentenced, beaten, spit on, mocked, scorned, and even crucified. And this all began in such humble beginnings. Born to a poor teenage couple who couldn't even find a place indoors to stay, and so He was placed in a feeding trough. Visited by dirty shepherds, the lowest of society. Even though popular depictions today may romanticize the manger scene, it was the lowest of lows. And so from this all this, we learn about the value our God places on humility.

Paul's challenge in Philippians 2 is for us to be humble

"Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others. Have this attitude in yourselves which was also

in Christ Jesus..."

He tells us our supreme example of how to be humble, was the One who was the most humble to ever exist. The greatest act of humility ever to be performed was the incarnation, leading to the crucifixion. These two acts of immeasurable humility are powerfully linked right here in these verses as the great example for us.

What is your heart and mind filled with this Christmas season? Are you preoccupied with yourself? Your issues, needs, agenda, and longings? Are you approaching this season with dread and a sense of obligation?

Make this year different! Start with the Lord. Commit to spend quality time with Him each day. Be reminded of His greatness, power, and majesty, and yet His humility and love for you. When we really do come into His presence each day, He reorients us to see more clearly who He is and what He is doing in our lives and in those around us. Then we'll be able to see beyond the lights, gifts, and events to our wonderful, humble Savior King who came to be with you.

Before Christmas for the last few years, I've read two 25-day Advent devotionals by John Piper called, "Good News of Great Joy" and "The Dawning of Indestructible Joy." It's been wonderful to take a deep and fresh look at the true purpose of Christmas, which has led to experiencing Him in new and more powerful ways. This year I'd love to share them with you again to help you prepare to worship and thank the Lord this Christmas season for coming to earth to bring about His Kingdom and to save us into it.

If you'd like to read more and join me on this Advent devotional journey, then go to:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/great-joy>
and:

<https://www.desiringgod.org/books/the-dawning-of-indestructible-joy>

Download the devotional in pdf form. Also, if you are currently using the Bible app on your phone from YouVersion, you can find this devotional under "Reading Plans." May God powerfully and richly bless you with more of Himself as you seek Him with all your heart this Christmas!!!

A Note of Thanks from Franklin Graham

11-16-17

DEAR FRIENDS AT FIRST BAPTIST

FRANKLIN HAS ASKED ME TO THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROUS DONATIONS TOWARDS THE HUMANITARIAN AID KIT. THE TENTS ARE ALL STILL WORKING IN AREAS AFFECTED AND ARE SUPPLYING SHELTER, REBUILDING DAMAGED HOMES AND PROVIDING HOUSEHOLD SUPPLIES.

SEVERAL OF THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LOST SO MUCH ARE DISORIENTED, CONFUSED AND AFRAID, AND YOUR MEMBERS ARE PRIVILEGED TO BE ABLE TO POINT THEM TO JESUS CHRIST, WHO ALONE CAN WIN THEM, HEAL AND PROVIDE HOPE & SALVATION.

SOME THANKS AND THIS BLESSING IS:

SINCERELY YOURS

Alvin L. Stewart

Dear Friend,

I was unable to reach you by telephone, but want to thank you on behalf of Franklin Graham for your generous support of Samaritan's Purse. We are deeply grateful that you stand with us as we care for the suffering, meeting physical needs and offering spiritual hope through the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Through your gifts and prayers, you are a part of this eternal work.

May God bless you.

In Christ's service,

Alvin L. Stewart FOR
FRANKLIN GRAHAM

OUR MISSIONARIES AT WORK

A Letter from Alan and Audrey Dianich

We are so grateful for your support and prayer! Thank you so much for praying for our Fall Camp for International Students. The weather was beautiful and generally things went pretty well. 36 people came to Fall Camp including students from Reno and UC Davis! Praise God!



However, our Sacramento group was a bit smaller this year. This might be due to some changes we have made to our Friday night Leaders Meeting in Sacramento. We have changed locations for these meetings and have made it more focused on Bible Study. At our Friday night Leaders Meeting, we have dinner, praise and prayer time. Then we split up into three groups for Bible Study. One group is for Christians new to our group and new Christians. This group is led by me and lasts one semester. We are covering basic things like assurance of salvation and how to witness for Christ. The next group is for students that have finished my group. They are looking at the book of Acts. The third group is for non-Christians, and they are learning about God's plan of salvation. At first, non-Christians seemed reluctant to come to this kind of Bible Study, but last Friday a Japanese, a Chinese, two Vietnamese and a Malaysian student came to this Bible Study! Please pray that they will come to know Christ soon! Thank you for so much!

Prayer Requests:

- Praise God for Fall Camp!
- Pray that non-Christians coming on Friday nights will come to know Christ.
- Pray for our next big event: November 3rd Sacramento International Students Dinner featuring a former Intel Vice President as guest speaker.

Thank you so much!
Alan and Audrey



*Glory to God in the highest,
And on earth peace among
men with whom He is pleased.*

Luke 2:13

FBC Youth

Fall Youth Regular Events:

FBC YOUTH Service- Sunday Mornings 11:00 - 12:15

pm Games, fun, worship, and our next teaching direction for our Sunday youth group meeting is going to focus on Exploring God's word and integrating knowing Christ into our daily lives.

College/Career Fellowship - Sundays 12:30-2:00 pm

Part 3 of our "True University Series" - Who is Jesus? As always, we have great discussions together about the topic we are discussing but are relating it to our own personal relationship in knowing Jesus. Lunch provided.

FBC YOUTH Mid-Week - Combined CAD and TNT (High/Jr. High) - Tuesday Nights 7:15 - 9:00 pm

Our teaching direction for our mid-week youth group meeting focusing on "Walking with the Lord" in our lives.

Nov.-Jan. Youth Special Events

Turkey Bowling - Tuesdays, Nov. 21 @ 7:00-9:00pm

Fun night of games, food, and thanksgiving, worship, and message. Great event to bring your friends.

SM Ice Skating in Central Park - Tues, Dec. 5 @

6:30-9:00pm (Part of FBC Youth Tuesday)

Eucalyptus St. Christmas Lights - Tues, Dec 12 @

6:30-9:00pm (Part of FBC Youth Tuesday)

Youth Christmas Party - Tues, Dec 19 @ 7-9:00pm

Bring a friend and a \$5 funny gift for exchange. Christmas games and celebration with worship and message.

(Part of FBC Youth Tuesday)

Youth Winter Retreat - Jan 3-6 - Cost TBA

Fun in the snow, sledding, ice-skating, snowy adventures, games, and growing in God. This 3-day retreat that will be tons of fun and change your life!!!



Men's Breakfast

December 2, 8:30 a.m.

In the Chapel

ALL MEN are welcome.



Have you ever considered honoring a loved one by providing a bouquet of flowers for the sanctuary? Several dates are available.

Sign up in the notebook on the counter in the narthex. We ask and appreciate a \$40 gift for each arrangement.

The office staff will order your bouquet to be delivered -- so convenient, and so appreciated by your loved ones.

*"For unto us a child
is born, unto us a son
is given;
And the government
will be upon His
shoulders;
And His name shall
be called Wonderful
Counselor, Almighty
God,
The Everlasting Fa-
ther, the Prince of
Peace."*

Isaiah 9:6

**Decorating for Christmas
December 2,
10:00 a.m.**

**Come, help,
and enjoy, and
anticipate
the holiday!**



Celebrating
THE BIRTH OF
Christ

*Christmas Eve Service
December 24, 11:00 p.m. in the Chapel*



First Baptist Church
2801 Alameda de las Pulgas
San Mateo, California 94403

Daily Bible Readings

The following Bible readings are provided by biblegateway.com for our use.

December

Fri.	01	Galatians 1-3
Sat.	02	Galatians 4-6
Sun.	03	Ephesians 1-3
Mon.	04	Ephesians 4-6
Tues.	05	Philippians 1-4
Wed.	06	Colossians 1-4
Thurs.	07	1 Thessalonians 1-5
Fri.	08	2 Thessalonians 1-3
Sat.	09	1 Timothy 1-3
Sun.	10	Timothy 4-6
Mon.	11	2 Timothy 1-4
Tues.	12	Titus 1-3
Wed.	13	Philemon
Thurs.	14	Hebrews 1-3
Fri.	15	Hebrews 4-6
Sat.	16	Hebrews 7-9
Sun.	17	Hebrews 10-13
Mon.	18	James 1-3
Tues.	19	James 4-5
Wed.	20	1 Peter 1-5
Thurs.	21	2 Peter 1-3
Fri.	22	1 John 1-3
Sat.	23	1 John 4-5
Sun.	24	2 John 3 John & Jude
Mon.	25	Revelation 1-3
Tues.	26	Revelation 4-6
Wed.	27	Revelation 7-9
Thurs.	28	Revelation 10-12
Fri.	29	Revelation 13-15
Sat.	30	Revelation 16-18
Sun.	31	Revelation 19-22



A Reminder from the Grapes

By Doris Waddell

Have you ever noticed how God sometimes reminds us of a truth from His Word in the everyday things of our lives?

I was eating grapes the other morning right after my devotions and noticed that the larger grapes were harder to remove from the vine than the smaller ones.

And the thought came to mind: "This is like us!" The tighter we cling to the Vine, the more we grow!

"I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him he bears much fruit, for apart from Me you can do nothing."

Jesus, John 15:5

