

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

December 19, 2021

Have you ever received a picture from your children that they were so proud of, but it was truly a child's painting? Lots of scratches and various colors that do not match but they were so excited to give it to you because it was their best. You took the picture; you kissed and hug them and put it on the refrigerator and gave them many encouraging remarks. The picture did not matter as much as making sure the child knew you appreciated them, and you wanted them to be self confident about what they did.



Corrie Ten Boom used to tell a story about an old monk who sang a Christmas song every Christmas Eve for his brothers in the monastery, and for visitors who would come from the village for the special services. His voice was very ugly, but he loved the Lord and sang from his heart. One year the director of the cloister said, "I'm sorry, Brother Don, we will not need you this Christmas. We have a new monk who has a beautiful voice."

The man did sing beautifully, and everyone was happy. But that night an angel came to the director and said, "Why didn't you have a Christmas Eve song?" The director was very surprised. "We had a beautiful song," he replied. "Didn't you hear it?" The angel shook his head sadly. "It may have been inspiring to you, but we didn't hear it in heaven." "You see," Corrie would say, "the old monk with the raspy voice had a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus, but the young monk was singing for his own benefit, not for that of the Lord."

Jesus Christ was not wrapped in the best Christmas paper. He was born in a manger; shepherds and wise men came to see Him, not kings, and governors. He was born to a poor carpenter family and grew up in a low-income community. Mankind did not value Jesus, but to God the cost of Christ's life is the greatest gift mankind can ever have.

It is interesting to see how Christ responded when given a gift by a sinful woman (Luke 7:40-50), the widow and her mite (Mark 12:41-44), the love shown by Mary (John 12:1-8), and a crown of thorns given by those who hated Him (Luke 23:34). Not every disciple chosen by Christ was well educated or came from well-to-do families, but because they had willing hearts, He made them great apostles. The value of the gift is not in the price tag, but rather in what it cost the person and the relationship that person has with the receiver (Romans 7:14-25; chapter 8).

When we give a gift or receive a gift this holiday, remember it is not what it cost, but who the person is that makes it special? (Philippians 2:1-5).

UPCOMING Events



Christmas Eve Service Program

DECEMBER 24TH AT 6:00 P.M.

Living Word family join us for a Christmas Program like no other. The LWFC Drama Ministry & Creative Jams Present "Returning to Your First Love" featuring music, dance, and a dynamic story about a family that has lost their way and Christmas brings them back together. Bring the entire family for a Living Word Christmas family tradition.



Urban Missions Team Outreach

Come serve with the U.M.T on Christmas morning to serve the homeless in Downtown Houston near Minute Maid Park by handing out Packs of Love (toiletry items) and praying with them. The event will take place on **Saturday, December 25, 2021**, meet at Living Word at 8 am and we will arrive near Minute Maid Park by 9am. the event will last until 11 am, returning to the church right after. Children & Youth (10 years old and up) and Adults are welcome to join in serving Houston's homeless. Contact Natividad Smith at 832-701-4281 for more information.



Prayer Revival 2022 | Jan 4th—6th 7pm

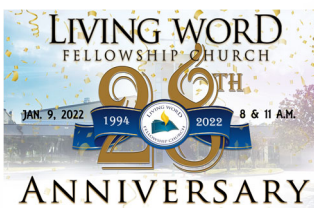
Join Living Word Fellowship Church as we bring in the year of at our annual Prayer Revival! Our special guest will be Pastor Rodney Maiden of Providence Baptist Church of Cleveland.



Parents! Revival at Living Word includes our kids as well. There will be special activities planned for them each night.

January 4th-6th | 7pm

Mark your calendar!



Church Anniversary

Living Word Fellowship Church is proud to celebrate it's 28th Year Anniversary of ministry. God has brought us from a mighty long way and has greatly displayed His favor, glory and grace to us during these 28 years of ministry. We would love for you to celebrate this joyous occasion with us by attending our worship service with special guest speaker, Pastor Rodney Maiden. **January 9th | 8am, & 11am**



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Visitor's Welcome

Worship In Giving

Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses

Special Music

Celebrate

Luke 2:25-38

Full sermon notes available online at www.lwfellowshipchurch.org

Click on the "Resources" tab and click "Sermon Notes"

Call to Discipleship

Please remain seated at this time

Benediction

Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children's wing.

Ages 2—6th grade



S E R M O N O U T L I N E

Celebrate
Luke 2:25-38

A. Be A True Worshipper (v. 25):

- 1. In the midst of all the corruption that took place in the temple, Joseph and Mary still lived righteous. There was another person who the Lord considered to be continuously living righteously; Simeon.
- 2. Simeon conditioned himself to consistently live by the righteous standards of God no matter what was taking place around him. This mindset led him to live a life of faith.
- 3. Simeon's fervent commitment to live in conformity to the righteous standards of God caused him to be considered by God to have a righteous character.
- 4. Simeon was deeply committed to faithfully worshipping the Lord God. This means all Levitical laws were faithfully obeyed.
- 5. In the midst of Roman oppression, disease, low life expectancy, corrupt temple worship, and heavy taxation, Simeon lived believing that the Lord would come and comfort Israel.
- 6. The Holy Spirit did not just impregnate (1:35) Mary, but He was very engaged in the Christmas story and of God strategically redeeming His people.
- 7. Simeon was provided a full divine understanding that he would see the anointed One, the true High Priest of Israel before he dies.

B. Be Spirit Led (vs. 27-28):

- 1. Simeon set his mind to what was revealed to him and presented himself in the temple expecting what God said to come true.
- 2. At this particular moment in Simeon's life, he did not come in the temple in fulfillment of righteous standards of God or because he is a devout worshipper. Simeon came because it was the Holy Spirit's time to fulfill what He had revealed to him.
- 3. This meeting of Joseph, Mary, baby Jesus and Simeon was divinely orchestrated.
- 4. Even though God's place of worship was corrupt the temple was still God's place of meeting. It was also a place that Christ did not just come as a baby but also at age 12 and he had a zeal for it.
- 5. Simeon deliberately made himself take baby Jesus into his hands.
- 6. Because this is a promise provided by God and is fulfilled by God (a Spirit led meeting) Simeon loudly praised God. Simeon did not praise Christ, he praised God. It is God's redemptive program (John 3:16).

C. Gift Exchange (vs. 35-38):

- 1. Simeon viewed the Lord as having "absolute ownership and controlled power and unlimited authority" to do whatever He decides.
- 2. With the fulfillment of God's promise to Simeon and holding baby Jesus in His hands (high rate of babies dying in his day) it is vividly obvious that God is totally in control no matter how chaotic things may seem in Israel and in the temple.
- 3. A devout worshipper and faithful attender of the temple is at the pinnacle of his worship experience.
- 4. Simeon viewed himself as owned by God, a slave (this is the lowest word for a slave) unto to God, willing to do whatever God tells him to do. He has totally given himself over to God.
- 5. Simeon, without seeing everything Christ will do and the day when Israel will be restored, says he has a complete knowledge and full experience of God delivering Israel from the oppression of Rome, the corruption of the temple and all that God has promised to provide Israel. "The just (righteous people) live by faith' (Habakkuk 2:4), and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7-8).
- 6. Simeon, being a righteous man, having Christ in his hands, knew what the Word of God said about the Messiah will be achieved.
- 7. "When Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms, he realized that Jesus was the means of salvation and said that his eyes had seen tó sôtérion sou, thy salvation (Luke 2:30)." [1]
- 8. The understanding and exposure of salvation is unquenchable and will be a full revelation to all the world because Jesus is born.
- 9. Israel will be seen in all that it is supposed to stand for and be as a great nation unto God because Jesus is born.

Post your ugly Christmas sweater pictures on your social media with this hashtag #UglyChristmasSweaterLWFC

Returning
To Your
First Love

CHRISTMAS PROGRAM ~ DECEMBER 24TH AT 6:00 P.M.
A LWFC DRAMA MINISTRY & CREATIVE JAMS PRODUCTION

LIVING WORD
FELLOWSHIP CHURCH

PRAYER
2022 Revival

"..TOGETHER WE PRAY.."

JAN 4-6 @ 7PM
7350 T.C. Jester Blvd. Houston, TX 77088

#LWFCHouston
www.lwfellowshipchurch.org

PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Eunice Johnson & family, Lula Walker & family, Carlton Lopes & family, and Carolyn Hadnot & family.

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Octavia Scott, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Brittany Bullock, Barbara Gordon, Ella James, Pat Crawford, Lisa Roberts, Birdie Williams, Jon Heard, Lakessia Davis, and Rutha Patrick.

CELEBRATE

Luke 2:25-38

WWW.LWFELLOWSHIPCHURCH.ORG | @lwfchouston | f i g t

7350 TC JESTER BOULEVARD HOUSTON, TEXAS 77088 281-260-7402