

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

December 10, 2023

The Cost

Have you ever received a picture from your children that they were so proud of, but it is truly a child’s painting? Lots of scratches and various colors that did not match, but they were so excited to give it to you because it was their best. You took the picture; you kissed and hugged them; you put it on the refrigerator and gave them many encouraging remarks. The picture did not matter as much as making sure the child knew that you appreciated them and 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 monastery brothers and visitors who would come from the village for the special services. His voice was horrid, 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 sang 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 amazed. “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, not kings and governors, came to see Him. He was born to a poor carpenter family and grew up in a low-income community. It is interesting to see who Christ was highly appreciative of gifts such as those given by a sinful woman (Luke 7:40-50), the widow and her mite, a Jewish coin (Mark 12:41-44), the love shown by Mary (John 12:1-8), and a crown of thorns given by those who hate Him (Hebrews 12:2). Not every disciple chosen by Christ was well-educated or came from well-to-do families. Some of them were from the lower class, but He made them great apostles because of their willing hearts. The value of the gift is not in the price but in the cost. It is what it costs the person and the relationship that person has with the receiver. The widow’s mite meant a lot to Christ because of the cost. God’s gift to man was born poor, and it cost God His Son’s life. Man would not value Jesus, as a carpenter’s son, as much, but to God, the cost of Christ’s life is the most incredible gift man can ever have.

When we give or receive a gift this holiday, the question is, what did it cost you, and what makes it unique? The answer to this question makes the season an accurate representation of the perfect gift, Christ (Philippians 2:1-5).



UPCOMING Events

CHRISTMAS Connection SUNDAYS
DECEMBER 10TH
DECEMBER 17TH
DECEMBER 24TH

CONNECTION SUNDAYS 12/10, 12/17, 12/24
Don't miss Connection Sundays in December. Starting today we will have **Christmas Color Sunday** and **candy in the foyer**, the following Sunday, December 17th we will have **Hot Chocolate and Donuts**, and December 24th join us for our Christmas Extravaganza. Wear your **Ugliest Christmas Sweater!** Can't wait to connect with you on our December Connection Sundays!

BOOKSTORE
Get ahead of your Holiday Shopping
Visit the Living Word Bookstore for the perfect gift for Christmas!

HOLIDAY SHOP AT THE LWFC BOOKSTORE!
Get ahead of your Holiday Shopping. Visit the Living Word Bookstore for the perfect gift for family and friends! From books, to jewelry, to Living Word apparel and other items, the Bookstore has so many gift ideas for this season. **VISIT THE BOOKSTORE TODAY!**

Christmas TOY DRIVE
Church-wide donations are now being accepted through Dec. 15th
Toys will be distributed on Dec. 16 at our Community Christmas Party
For more info contact Mrs. Sylvia Edwards at sedwards@lwfellowshipchurch.org or the Church Administration Office at (281) 260-7402

TOY DRIVE FOR LWFC KIDZ
Living Word Family, we need you! LWFC Kidz is accepting unwrapped toy donations for the Annual Kids Community Christmas Party on Saturday, December 16, 2023 from 10 am - 12 pm. Bins will be placed in the main foyer and the Children's Wing, so please donate toys for the kids in the community and join us on December 16th! For more information contact **Mrs. Sylvia Edwards at sedwards@lwfellowshipchurch.org**

COMMUNITY Christmas PARTY
GAMES
TOY GIVE-AWAY
SATURDAY
DEC. 16TH 10AM-12PM
For more info contact Mrs. Sylvia Edwards at sedwards@lwfellowshipchurch.org

PACKS OF LOVE
CHRISTMAS DONATIONS
DONATE NOW - DEC. 17
CONTACT YOUR DEACON FAMILY FOR DETAILS ON SPECIFIC ITEMS TO DONATE.
FOR MORE INFORMATION ON PACKS OF LOVE, CONTACT NATIVIDAD SMITH AT nds_smith@yahoo.com

URBAN MISSIONS TEAM PACKS OF LOVE
The Urban Missions Team Is now accepting Packs Of Love donations to serve and be distributed to the unhoused population in downtown Houston on Christmas Day. Donations will be collected at the end of Life Application on Sundays and Tuesday Nights. Donation bins will be available for collections. For more information contact **Natividad Smith at nds_smith@yahoo.com**



ORDER OF WORSHIP

Announcements

Communion

Visitor's Welcome

Worship In Giving

Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses

Special Music

“Wonder: The Testimony of the Shepherds”
Luke 2:8-20

Click “Sermon Notes” on the Website

Call to Discipleship
Please remain seated at this time

Benediction

LWFC KIDZ

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

Infants—6th grade

LEGACY
EFFECTING TODAY FOR TOMMORROW
youth ministry of LIVING WORD FELLOWSHIP

MIDDLE SCHOOL - HIGH SCHOOL

2:30 4:00 & TUESDAY NIGHTS
SUNDAY
6:30 PM

Wonder
The Testimony Of The Shepherds
Luke 2:8-20

I. The Shepherds Were Doing What They Had Done Before – v. 8

- In the same country
- Living out in the fields
- Keeping watch over their flock
- By night
- a. Who are these shepherds?
- b. These shepherds who were ceremonially unclean, were responsible for raising sacrificial lambs for the temple in Jerusalem
- c. These shepherds were not respected or included
- d. These shepherds’ names are not known
- e. These shepherds were just doing their job – taking care of the sheep

II. The Shepherds’ Lives Were Changed Forever – v. 9

- a. The angel of The Lord stood before them
- b. The glory of The Lord shone around them
- c. They were greatly afraid
- d. The shepherds were completely unprepared for what they witnessed

III. Encouraging Words From The Angel – v. 10

- a. The very first thing that the angel said to the shepherds was – “Do not be afraid”
- b. Why should the shepherds not be afraid – they were receiving some “good news”
- c. The “good news” was not just for the shepherds but for “all people”

IV. The Message of The Angel – vs. 11-12

- a. For there is born to you – (referring to the shepherds, which also includes you and me)
- b. This day – at this very moment (the night of Jesus’ birth)
- c. In the city of David – Bethlehem, the town where David was born (not the City of David, which was on the southern slope of Mount Zion – II Samuel 5:7-9)

V. The Heavenly Host Praising God – vs. 13-14

- a. A multitude of angels joined the Angel of The Lord – “suddenly there was with the angel”
- b. Glory to God in the highest
- c. And on earth – peace, goodwill toward men
- d. The glory of The Lord had not been seen in Israel for 100 years until, in the presence of the shepherds, the glory returned!

VI. The Shepherds’ Response – vs. 15-20

- a. Let us now go to Bethlehem – no discussion – no debate – no delay - v. 15
- b. To see this thing that has come to pass
- c. Which The Lord has made known to us – notice, the shepherds did not say the angel but The Lord! THE SHEPHERDS WERE CONVINCED OF THE RELIABILITY OF THE MESSAGE
- d. They made known the saying which was told them concerning this Child (Jesus)
THE SHEPHERDS COMMUNICATED THE REALITY OF THE MESSAGE

VII. The People Who Had Heard The Testimony Of The Shepherds Were Amazed – v. 18

- a. The shepherds were the first to hear of the birth of Jesus
- b. The shepherds response was to worship Jesus
- c. The shepherds were the first to tell the story of the birth of The Savior (Jesus)

VIII. Mary’s Response – v. 19

- a. She kept all these things – made it a matter of private meditation and reflection
- b. She pondered them in her heart – as she had left it up to God before, she will now do the same

IX. The Shepherds Returned – v. 20

- a. Glorifying and praising God
- a. For all the things that they had heard and seen
- b. As it was told to them – THE SHEPHERDS CELEBRATED THE REVELATION OF THE MESSAGE



PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Michelle Lee & family, the family of Joseph Guillory, and the family of Wanda Turk.

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Cici Sharpe, Margaret Baptiste, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Eric White, Pat Crawford, Lisa Roberts, Birdie Williams, Jon Heard, Rutha Patrick, Betty Goode, Latifah Brown, Tanisha Collins, Eric Prichett, Rufus Hadnot, Pat James, Kevin Carey, Lori Lee, Jessie Austin, Sherri Love, Elizabeth Clark, Clara Williams, Betty Cunningham, Dorothy Price, Anthony Thomas, Beverly Austin, Kathryn Ford-Cheatham, Joshua Williams, Ruby Hunter, Elizabeth Bean, Patsy Gatterson, Joyce Newsome, Arleatha Housley, and Patrina Johnson.

