

December 2019

The Trumpet

“The trumpet shall sound...and we shall be changed”
(I Corinthians 15:52)



Volume 13 Issue 12

Pastor's Pen

It's Christmas time. Grab a cup of hot chocolate, pull up a chair, and join me by the fire. While the frost gathers outside, let's consider the significance of this wonderful season. There are so many choices when deciding upon which event to focus. For instance, there are the wise men that came bearing gifts, the shepherds who hear the angelic proclamation, the bright shining star, the innkeeper's role, Mary, Joseph, and so much more. There are also many questions that one can ponder regarding the events, the announcements, the characters and the location. In light of all these options, I still come back to the question, "Why?" Not, why did God come to earth in the first place? I know that answer and have experienced His saving touch. But, why did He choose a peasant woman, an old barn and a feeding trough? I don't pretend to know the mind of God, but I believe we can know His heart. Let me share with you what I think. I pray it blesses and encourages you.

It seems to me that once you see God in a stable, you quickly learn He will go anywhere in His pursuit of man. The embarrassment of the King of Kings having a manger for a bed, tells me that He is willing to go to ludicrous depths of humiliation to rescue the perishing. If you stand gazing into the face of the newborn child, you cannot help but see God's glory, holiness, and majesty. This tells me there is no place on earth so cold, so dark or so distant that God's glory cannot

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penetrate; That means there is no place we can go to escape God's presence. But it also means there is no place we can go where God cannot minister to us. There is no place where the power of God cannot break into and reclaim our lives, re-create in us a new heart and redeem us from states of loneliness and despair. God showing up in an old barn, a rundown stable and a feeding trough tells me He can show up anywhere. He can show up when we least expect it and in the places we least imagine. His entrance into our lives can

follow a spectacular event, like a heavenly proclamation (as Paul said about his Damascus road experience), or it can be meek and lowly.

As you reflect on Christmas, pick one single event or character and contemplate its meaning. I'm sure you will be thrilled at the significant truths God reveals to you.

"And the angel said unto them. Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people." (Luke 2:10, KJV?)

Merry Christmas to all,
Pastor Jim

Note: Portions of the foregoing article contain excerpts from *Pulpit Helps*, sermon illustrations.

Usher's Report

The ushers of our church are dedicated to serve the congregation and all visitors in a professional and Christian manner. We endeavor to meet and greet new people as they arrive with a smile and a Christian hand of welcome. Welcome packets are available in the new foyer.

We are currently short of four volunteers. We need young men who are members of the church to come forward to serve in this capacity. If you are interested, please contact me at dellis875@gmail .com, or call me at 208-590-3577.

Dave Ellis, Head Usher



Operation Christmas Child

Operation Christmas Child is a ministry formed by Franklin Graham that takes Christmas gifts and the Gospel to underprivileged children all over the world. We are collecting items to fill shoeboxes in November. Each month we will highlight a different item to bring in. But, please remember we will take all types of donations at any time! For December please pray for the shoeboxes and their recipients.



PUTTING ON THE FULL ARMOR OF GOD

APOLOGETICS - FROM BOB NEUBAUER

Christmas – Tradition and Scripture

Christmas is without question the most celebrated holiday in the year. The genesis of its celebration is the birth of Jesus, but it has become encrusted with things that are not only not Christian but often anti-Christian. However, there are also those traditions that are either part of scripture or are consistent with the Bible. As believers we want to rejoice in everything about our Lord's birth that we find in God's Word. We are also free to include in our celebration those things that while not found explicitly in the text are harmonious with it. For example, Christmas trees are an acceptable part of Christmas. They were first used in what we now call Germany in the seventh century. The basically triangular shape with its three points were meant to symbolize the trinity. However, Santa Claus is completely unacceptable for Christians because he is a pseudo Christ. Omniscience, a quality that is unique to God, is ascribed to Santa Claus when as the song says, *he knows when you are sleeping, he knows if you're awake*. Tradition also gives him a near omnipresence since he is all over the world in one night. And of course, with Santa Claus salvation comes because you are good – *he knows if you've been good or bad, so be good for goodness sake*. But Christians recognize that our goodness never merits salvation for even our best deeds are filthy rags before a holy God. The problem is not so much recognizing that Santa Claus has no legitimate part in our celebration, rather it is the struggle against our culture which exalts Santa Claus, making him the ultimate symbol of all that is good. The traditions that surround Santa Claus are very powerful so that at every turn we find our culture aligned against the true worship of the birth of Jesus. For example, those businesses that are using Christmas to sell their products do everything they can to avoid the mention of Jesus and even the word Christmas. How many cities have holiday parades rather than Christmas parades?

A question that should be asked is whether any Christmas tradition that is not explicitly Christian is acceptable. There is not universal agreement on this point among conservative believers. This writer thinks that we have Christian liberty in these matters as long as the tradition does not oppose or undermine Christian beliefs. But, this is one of those areas where we need to allow other Christians to disagree with us without condemning them for their choice. All of us have traditions in many areas of our lives as individual Christians - as do all churches. For example, both the elements of worship services and their order differ from church to church. If we had an explicit order given in the Bible then we would all follow it, but since we do not we are free to include anything that is God honoring in whatever order we deem best. There certainly are some things that should be

part of church services such as preaching, prayer and singing but even there we find wide variance in the length of sermons, the music style and the types of prayers.

There have been extended times in church history where the prevailing opinion was that Christmas should not be celebrated at all since there is no explicit command to do so in scripture. The contrast between that view and today when Christmas takes precedence over the celebration of the resurrection is extraordinary. But because there is also no command not to celebrate Christ's birth, and because His birth is one of the two most important events in history and because we have Christian freedom where an activity is not forbidden in the Bible either plainly or by implication, it does seem that we can celebrate Christmas as long as we keep the celebration in balance. Each church, each family and each person should take time to examine either its corporate or individual traditions to make sure they align with scripture. To follow a tradition without such examination can result in either a church or a person dishonoring God with our practices.

One thing we should all do is read and study the stories about Christmas in the Bible. Nativity scenes that portray the shepherds and the wise men together reflect an ignorance about the timing of those events. The shepherds visited Joseph, Mary and the Christ child at the manger shortly after the birth announcement by the angels. The wise men did not see the Lord until about two years later. We know that because they found him in a house - Matthew 2:11. And, of course, Herod ordered that males two years of age and under be killed.

The power of tradition is very strong even in light of the clarity of God's Word. It is very difficult even for Christians to change their beliefs and practices. One reason for that is that our traditions go back to our childhood and seem therefore to have always been a part of us. The singing of Christmas carols evokes very powerful memories in all of us. It is difficult for anyone to examine a carol to see if it corresponds with scripture. The one line in *Away in a Manger* that says, *no crying He makes*, is gnostic in its origin. Jesus was fully human and like every baby He cried. Gnosticism, a second century Christian heresy, borrowed from Greek philosophy the idea that the spiritual is good and the physical is evil. The apostle John was dealing with proto-Gnosticism in his first epistle when he wrote (I John 4:2), "By this you know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God." The proto-Gnostics said it only seemed as if Jesus had a body. As Christian we must remember that Jesus was fully God and fully man.

So, enjoy the celebration of the birth of the Lord Jesus. But examine your traditions to make sure that they are either derived from scripture or consistent with the Bible and do not contradict the historic faith.

MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AT FSBC

- 1-8 Lottie Moon Week of Prayer
- 2 Church Council (6:30 p.m.)
- 3 Ladies' Leadership Team Meeting(6:30 p.m.)
- 4 Awana (6:00 p.m.) Prayer Meeting (6:30 p.m.)
- 8 Q & A Session Proposed Budget (5:30 p.m.)
- 11 Awana (6:00 p.m.) Prayer Meeting (6:30 p.m.)
- 12 Ladies' Christmas Party (6:00 p.m.)
- 15 Business Meeting (5:30 p.m.)
- 18 Awana (6:00 p.m.) Prayer Meeting (6:30 p.m.)
- 24 Christmas Eve - Offices Closed
- 25 Christmas Day - Offices Closed
- 29 Benevolence Fund Offering
- 29 5th Sunday Sing
- 31 New Year's Eve - Offices Closed
- No Awana No Prayer Dec 23rd to Jan 7th

Remember

The scripture often uses the word remember; God often calls for us to remember. What is important about that word is that its meaning is not just recollection of information or persons. There are numerous examples in the Bible.

In II Peter chapter three Peter tells his readers that he wants them to remember the words spoken by the prophets and the commandment of the Lord spoken by His apostles. He says he is reminding them to remember and that this is the second time he has done so. In other words, they didn't listen the first time which forced Peter to say it again. When he says they didn't remember he is not saying they didn't recall his words. He is saying that they failed to allow his words to affect their actions. In the original language the word does not refer to a mental act. It is not just a recollection of events. It is not a passive word but an active one. Beginning in Genesis here are some ways the word is use. Genesis 8:1, "But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided." Notice that the word remember is connected with an action, in this case a creative action.

NOMINATING NEWS

The Nominating Committee has completed its report for the upcoming year, and it was approved, by the church body, during the October business meeting. On behalf of the committee, I would like to say thanks to all of you who have volunteered to use your talents and skills in the various ministries and committees of our church. Your dedication and commitment to serving in the church is greatly needed and appreciated.

The Nominating Committee serves the church by recommending people to fill the vacancies in various committees and ministries. These are the positions that are filled by volunteers and not the paid positions. If you are a ministry or committee chairperson we value your input on who you recommend, and you can work in partnership with the committee to help you fill the vacancy. As a general rule, leadership positions and certain non-leadership positions, must be filled by church members. You can check with the Nominating Committee if you need guidance in that area.

The goal of the Nominating Committee is to provide every person the opportunity to use their God given talents and skills in serving in the church. So if you are interested in serving on a committee or a ministry of the church, please let us help. Our committee members are Sharon Siebenberg, Shannon Crowe, Sarah Gregory, Eric Nagel and Patrick Holt.

Patrick Holt
Chairman Nominating Committee

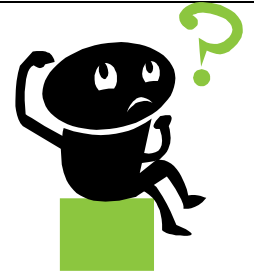
During the months of November and December you have the opportunity to meet and elect who will be the leader or chairperson of the committee or ministry. Since the new year will start in January 2020, this gives you plenty of time to schedule and have your meeting. Once you elect a chairperson or leader, it's very important that you let Nicole Clark know and she in turn will notify Pastor Jim and the Nominating Committee. Also, if you need a copy of the Church Volunteer Report, let Nicole know and she can get you a copy. This report lists the current names of our volunteers for the church committees and ministries.

Thanks again and I look forward to serving with you in the coming year.

Lord bless you all - Brother Patrick



Joke of the Month (Comedy) Corner



Teacher: "If I gave you 2 cats and another 2 cats and another 2, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Seven."

Teacher: "No, listen carefully... If I gave you two cats, and another two cats and another two, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Seven."

Teacher: "Let me put it to you differently. If I gave you two apples, and another two apples and another two, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Six."

Teacher: "Good. Now if I gave you two cats, and another two cats and another two, how many would you have?"

Johnny: "Seven!"

Teacher: "Johnny, where in the heck do you get seven from?!"

Johnny: "Because I've already have a cat!"

December Birthdays and Anniversaries

7 Elijah Grohs
7 Samantha Simler
13 Roman Grohs
13 Linette Randolph
20 Omayya Simler



Happy Birthday

27 Patti Clark
27 Chris Pentico
29 Diane Noland
30 LeRoy Damke

15 Vincent & Raedena Brooks
17 Osi & Stephanie Osgood



29 Eric & Mary Grohs