



Think of the people close to the first Christmas -- but missed it completely! Why? They fell victim to the same thieves of Christmas joy we fight today!

The people who missed Christmas:

1. _____. Grinch: _____
"...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." Luke 2:7

2. _____. Grinch: _____
"After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews...?' When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him." Matt. 2:1-3

3. _____. Grinch: _____
"When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. 'In Bethlehem in Judea,' they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written." Matt. 2:4-5

The people who found Christmas:

1. _____. Key: _____
"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. 'May it be to me as you have said.'" Luke 1:38

2. _____. Key: _____
"The Magi... asked, 'Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews... We have come to worship him.'" Matt. 2:1-3

3. _____. Key: _____
"When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, 'Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.' ... When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child..." Luke 2:15, 17

"He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God--" John 1:11-12

Moments to Enjoy Christmas

Daily meditations based on this week's message

This week's memory verse:

"He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—" John 1:11-12

Monday

Read Luke 2:6-20. The city of Bethlehem was apparently extremely crowded -- certainly a newborn baby could have been heard by many of the inn's guests -- and yet nobody came to see except shepherds from out of town. Why do you think the innkeeper and his guests missed this first Christmas?

Do people today miss Christmas for the same reasons? Do you?

Read Luke 10:38-42. How can you apply this Scripture to your Christmas celebration?

What can you simplify this year to spend more time contemplating the Christ of Christmas?

Ask God to help you focus on Him this season! Ask Him for wisdom to know what activities to trim back.

Tuesday

Read Matthew 2:1-3. Why was Herod afraid?

Are there people today who don't accept Christ for the same reasons?

Read Revelation 19:16. This is a description of a vision of Jesus. What name does he bear in this vision?

Why are people willing to accept Jesus as a great teacher, or religious leader, but not as king, or lord, over their lives?

Ask Jesus to be the one true Ruler over everything in your life. Give your will, your heart, your thoughts, your life, completely over to Him as your gracious King!

Wednesday

Read Matt. 2:4-6. The religious leaders and the people of Jerusalem were very devoted to their faith. They even knew by heart the Scriptures prophesying the Messiah! Yet they themselves didn't personally go and see this baby. When he grew to be man, most of them rejected him. How can deep devotion to religious ritual and actually blind some people to the truth about Jesus?

Has this ever happened to you? Explain.

How can familiarity actually dull our sense of joy and discovery at Christmastime, as it did for these religious leaders?

Were you familiar with the claims of Christ while growing up in the church, but somehow found them boring? Do you know of anyone for whom this is the case? If so, why?

How can you prevent this from happening to your own family?

Ask God to help you see past any religious traditions that may hide the truth of Christ.

Thursday

Read Luke 1:26-38. What can we learn from Mary's response in verse 38?

How is this different from our common response to unexpected difficulties and surprises?

Read also Luke 2:1-19. What can we learn from Mary's response to all this in verse 19?

How can we better treasure the little unexpected moments of Christmas this year?

Today, notice some "treasurable" moments.

Ask the Lord to help you appreciate the beauties and joys of life; to treasure the moments God sends you today!

Friday

Read Luke 2:8-20 & 1Cor. 1:27-31. The shepherds are outcasts. They were looked down on and shunned by society, yet God chose to reveal the birth of Jesus to these people! What do you learn about God from this?

What impresses you most about the shepherds and their response to the news of Christ's birth?

What application can you make to your own life?

Thank God today that He doesn't judge you by how you look on the outside but by what is in your heart. Ask God to help you respond as the shepherds did and "spread the word" – perhaps by inviting others to the Christmas musical at church this weekend!

Saturday Review

First, please pray for our services this weekend and next, as we bring the message of Christmas to many who may never otherwise come to church! Second, please review the memory verse for this week. Have you received him? If not, why not do so today by praying a simple prayer like this: *Lord, I admit my need for you. I believe you came that first Christmas as God in human form, and that you died for my sins. I give you my life.*