

Friday

Read Luke 2:8-20 & 1 Corinthians 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?

Ask God to help you respond as the shepherds did and "spread the word" — hey, maybe you could invite others to the Christmas concert at church this weekend! Please pray that the concert will be used of God in great ways!

Saturday

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."

MIRACLE**Don't Miss The Miracle**

*René Schlaepfer
December 6 & 7, 2008*

Think of the people who were close to the first Christmas miracle — yet missed it completely! Can I miss the miracle for any of these same reasons?

Four reasons I might miss the miracle:**1. _____ (The Innkeeper)**

"She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn." *Luke 2:7b (NIV)*

2. _____ (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.'" *Matthew 2:1b-3*

3. _____ (Chief Priests)

"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 ...'" *Matthew 2:4-5*

4. _____ (Town of Nazareth)

"Isn't this Joseph's son?' they asked ... They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him down the cliff." *Luke 4:22b,29*

See the Parable of the Great Banquet (Matthew 22)

What's the solution?

"I pray that you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ." *Philemon 1:6*

Moments to Enjoy Christmas

Daily meditations based on this week's message

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?

Can you relate? 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

Could fear distract you from the message of Christmas this year?

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 even today 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! Please pray for those involved with the Christmas concerts this coming weekend, and invite some people today!

Wednesday

Read Matthew 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 actually blind some people to the truth about Jesus?

Has this ever happened to you? Explain.

Read 1 Samuel 15:22 and Hosea 6:6. What do these verses say about God's perspective on religion and religious ritual?

Pray about the problem of religion sometimes obscuring Christ. Ask God to help you see the stunning truth of the incarnation this season and not allow even religion to hide this truth.

One of the best ways to experience Christmas is to play the part of the angels and invite people to meet Christ! A wonderful starting point is an invitation to the concert this weekend. Invite someone today!

Thursday

Read Luke 4:16-30. Why do you suppose Jesus' own townspeople who had known him since childhood didn't accept him as Christ?

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?

Perhaps you've been raised in church. Ask God to help you see Christmas with fresh, wondering eyes this season! Please invite some people to the concert (which starts tonight! Please pray for us!). They will love it!



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 (NIV)*