

The Best Christmas Ever? Part 4: The Purpose

Luke 2:8-20; 1Cor. 5:17; 1 Cor. 5:15

I. Me

A. Best Christmas Ever... 4th week

1. Xmas so hyped up... right in thick of it now
2. But ends up being so normal... even disappointing
3. Disappointment can bring cynicism, resentment, anger, depression

B. Review

1. Realistic expectations... hope isn't in the day... it's in Jesus
2. The magic hype of xmas is hard to believe...
 - a. The miracles of the 1st xmas are hard to believe.
 - b. But the hardest to believe is actually the most important... we don't have to do anything to make God love us... his love is a free gift we just have to open.
3. Ordinary will always destroy the extraordinary if we let it... but if we play our part (giving to others) we will experience the extraordinary.

C. Me last week.

1. Leaving parents' kids are crazy...AGAIN!
2. Dad- "Don't let the ordinary destroy the extraordinary" Grrrrrr. :)
3. So hard to keep that Christmas cheer.
4. Especially when it feels like the same thing just keeps happening over and over.

II. WE

A. Christmas Groundhog Day

1. Same songs and movies
2. Same stresses- shopping, cards, procrastinating, parties, end of year deadlines
3. Same activities (traditions!)- foods (green bean casserole w/ cheesits), dinner time (3 pm!!),
4. Same conflicts- same people, personalities, fights
5. Same hurts- loss, loneliness, dealing with divorced parents or ex-spouses.
6. Same thing over and over year after year... after a while it just seems so pointless.

B. Rest of the year

1. Ever have those days, weeks, months where it just feels like you're doing the same thing over and over?
2. 9-5.
3. School
4. Turn to relationships... same fights and conflicts over and over... might be different people but still same thing always happens.
5. Keep making the same mistakes
6. Turn to entertainment but that gets repetitive... superhero movies? 8 Star Wars?
 - a. Have the most entertainment in the history of the world and we're bored.
7. Just going through the motions of life... nothing ever changes.
8. Just seems so pointless.
9. Addictions?

C. Turn to religion?

1. But that gets old and repetitive too.
2. Same songs, same prayers, same sermons, same fights?
3. Just going through the motions while others seem so into it?
4. Just seems boring... pointless.

D. We all want meaning and purpose to our lives (such a strong desire at Christmas) but often we just settle for keeping things routine... at least they haven't gotten worse right?

E. Life doesn't have to be that way.

1. In fact that's what the first xmas was all about.
2. Christmas is about the hope of purpose.
3. **Jesus came to give our lives purpose.**
4. To transform the ordinary into the extraordinary.
5. **The best xmas ever is full of purpose.**

F. And it all started with a bunch of shepherds.

III. GOD

A. Luke

B. Read Luke 2:8-20

C. Shepherds

1. Not "Precious Moments" shepherds.
2. Stereotype- thieving, lying, incompetent
3. Could not be legal witness
4. Bottom rung socially w/ tax collectors and dung sweepers
5. Were not allowed to worship at temple b/c they were always ceremonially unclean... ostracized from religion
6. Labeled "sinners"
7. Rabbinic saying, "Don't feel obligated to rescue a shepherd who had fallen into a pit."
8. Were told their lives had no purpose to God.
9. Had the same life over and over.
 - a. Usually youngest son tended the sheep or they were hired hands.
10. Not a lot of purpose.
 - a. Sheep don't change the world. Such body breaking work just to make a living so you can feed a family you never see.

D. But God had different opinions about these shepherds.

1. He chose this group to be the first people to hear about the Savior coming into the world.
 - a. God the Son being born.
2. Why them?
 - a. B/c they had earned it? Nope
 - b. B/c they were poor and God favors poor people? Not necessarily.
 - c. Luke doesn't tell us why.
 - d. But maybe it's the same reason God chose Joseph and the same reason God chose Mary... He wanted to.
 - e. He wanted to transform the lives of these nobodies and give them purpose and meaning.
 - f. Not b/c they deserved it but b/c that's what He likes to do.
 - g. **God loves to transform lives.**

E. So God pulls out all the stops.

1. Like a proud new dad he goes over the top and sends thousands of angels to celebrate and tell the shepherds what has happened.
2. And the significance of it.

F. A savior... the messiah

1. The rescuer that was promised to the most famous shepherd, who was also from Bethlehem... David.
2. These shepherds probably idolized David. A shepherd from their town, maybe a distant relative, who had become the greatest king of the entire nation.
3. No doubt they knew the promise that a descendent of David would become king again.
4. But the promise was even bigger than they probably expected.

5. This savior, the descendent of the shepherd king, was coming not just for Israel but for the world.
 6. To bring joy and peace for everyone everywhere.
 7. And now, the angel said, that savior king has finally been born in the nearby town.
- G. So they go and see.
1. It's just like they were told.
 2. So they see the baby, say, "That's cool." And turn around and walk away." -NO
 3. **V. 17** When they had seen him, they spread the word about what they had been told.
 4. They told everyone what had happened to them... anyone within earshot that night heard about this group of shepherds who had seen angels and what they had said about the baby lying in the feed trough.
 5. And the result? Everyone was amazed!
- H. The shepherds are transformed from outcasts with no purpose in life... to the first ambassadors of the newborn king of the universe. Giving everyone they see a new hope for the future.
1. They wouldn't be seen the same way ever again.
 2. Not b/c they did something amazing or were really good people or really good at shepherding.
 3. But b/c God chose them and transformed them.
 4. And they were used to start something that hasn't stopped since... transformed people telling others about what the angels told those shepherds 2000 years ago.

IV. YOU

- A. Maybe you've been feeling like a rejected shepherd
1. Same thing over and over.
 - a. No real point to the day to day
 - b. Entertainment is getting boring
 - c. Church is even boring...
 - d. Maybe you're at this church hoping something new will change that... it won't.
 2. The only thing that can change that is what changed the shepherds.
 3. Accepting that God wants to transform your life and give you purpose.

B. When you follow Jesus you are transformed.

1. 2 Cor. 5:17

2. If you are a Jesus follower you have been transformed and given a purpose.
3. You just have to accept it and ask for opportunity.
4. It's not to stoically face a life of 9-5 only to come home every night and watch the same shows
5. It's not to fill your life with one ultimately pointless activity after another.

- C. A Jesus follower has an eternal purpose.
1. To love God and through that love, love others.
 2. The best way to love others... is to share what God has done for you with those you come into contact with.
 3. To be used to serve others and be used to bring others into this transformed community of Jesus followers.

4. A life lived for Jesus has the most purpose

5. 1 Cor 5:15

6. You wake up every morning asking God to show you who needs his love.
7. Every conversation has a purpose, every situation, every interaction has a purpose to it.
8. And you are used to transform your home, neighborhood, city, today and for eternity.

V. YOU and JESUS

A. Maybe you haven't found this purpose. The reason is you haven't found His peace yet.

1. You can't know your purpose until you know His peace.

B. V. 14 Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth PEACE to those on whom his FAVOR rests."

1. God was offering peace and his favor to the world.

2. Peace and favor with God... perfect relationship now and forever

a. No guilt. No hoping your good outweighs your bad, no terror in those quiet moments that you just don't measure up or that life is just a pointless cycle.

b. No need to be angry with God or fearful, or ambivalent...

c. God wants to give you his peace... comfort, security, and purpose.

d. Free to be who you were created to be

3. Jesus grew up and died to heal our brokenness, take the punishment we earn by hurting those around us.

4. He offers this peace with God if we will simply choose to trust him to make that peace.

C. The shepherds had a choice.

1. Choose to ignore or not believe, explain away, the angel.

a. Stay out in the field, stay with the sheep, keep on doing their regular routine that they were comfortable with.

b. Never be anything more than they already were...

2. Or choose to believe the angels' message and take the time, energy and effort, to see this baby for themselves.

G. You have the same choice.

1. We don't always get an angel helping us decide.

2. But you have the chance to choose between staying comfortable, safe, and bored.

a. Doing the same thing over and over with the same results.

b. Hurting the same people over and over

c. Trying to fix what's broken with the same quick fixes that just fail over and over.

3. Or you can choose to go and see for yourself.

a. Choose to trust the angels' message... "Today in the city of David a savior has been born

b. Like the shepherds, "take the time, energy and effort to see this savior for" yourself.

c. And what will you find there what will you see?

1) A savior who will take you sin away

2) A creator who spoke the universe into existence... And can speak into YOUR life too

3) A Father who will never leave you and love you unconditionally forever.

4. A friend who will take your life and your brokenness, monotony, your day-to-day routine and give you hope and purpose.

- H. Choosing to follow Jesus will transform your life.
1. Give you purpose every morning, in every situation, in every relationship.
 2. When we find the Savior. He gives each of us the same purpose he gave those lonely shepherds in the field.
 3. From that point on, they lived for Jesus and told everyone they could about Him.
 4. Once you find the Savior you're not living just to get by or to get a better life that will just end at some point anyway...
 - a. You have eternal purpose
 5. You're living for the Savior King in order to bring the message of his love to every place you find yourself.
 6. Are you in sales? Live for Jesus and share His love with others?
 7. Are you in construction? Live for him and share his message of love
 8. Are you a stay at home parent? Live for Him and share his message of love.
 9. Whoever you are and whatever you do... once you've found the Savior, you've been invited into the eternal purpose.

A. The best life ever is full of eternal purpose.

- B. Imagine waking up everyday knowing you will be used to make an eternal difference
- C. Imagine how you would be transformed.
- D. Imagine how your family, neighborhood, city would be transformed if they knew their purpose was to love God by loving others and telling them about him?
- E. Let this Christmas be the best ever and the beginning to the best life ever. Full of purpose and the love of God through Jesus Christ.