

He Came At Night *Like He Usually Does*

The Well-Worn Story

Luke 2:1-40

Three Things We Don't Want To Miss

- (1) These were incredibly dark days for **ISRAEL**.
Luke 2:1-2
- (2) These were incredibly dark days for **JOSEPH & MARY**.
Luke 2:4-7 Luke 2:22-24 & Leviticus 12:6-8
- (3) When God finally did **SHOW UP**,
he seemed to immediately **DISAPPEAR** again.
Luke 2:11 Matthew 1:20-21 Matthew 2:16 2 Peter 3:3-10

Four Things We Don't Want To Forget

- (1) God works in the **SHADOWS**.
Isaiah 55:8-9
- (2) He shows up **IN** the **CRISIS**.
Psalm 34:19 1 Peter 1:6-7 Acts 14:21-22
- (3) He always follows his own **TIMETABLE**.
Proverbs 3:5-6 2 Peter 3:8
- (4) If we **BAIL OUT** we'll **MISS OUT**.
Psalm 73 Hebrews 10:36-39 1 Peter 4:12-19 Hebrews 11:6 Romans 8:28

Food for Thought for the week of December 3, 2017

(Questions and Scriptures for further study)

1. This weekend we were reminded of how significant Jesus' birth was in a time of seeming silence from God. The same can be true for all of us when the challenges and confusion of life can cause us to lose hope and view God as absent. As you read Ephesians 3:14-4:6, what hope are we given for times when life is confusing and God seems nowhere to be found?

Ephesians 3:14-4:6 *New International Version (NIV)*

A Prayer for the Ephesians

¹⁴ For this reason I kneel before the Father, ¹⁵ from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. ¹⁶ I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, ¹⁷ so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, ¹⁸ may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, ¹⁹ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Unity and Maturity in the Body of Christ

^{4:1} As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. ² Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. ³ Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. ⁴ There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; ⁵ one Lord, one faith, one baptism; ⁶ one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.

2. None of us wants to miss out on God's blessing. But as we heard this weekend, at times we want to bail out on what God is calling us to do, losing sight of the blessing we'd receive in the long run. Below are a number of directives Jesus calls his followers to put into action. Jot down the command in each verse and the potential blessing in the long run.

Matthew 5:38-42 *New International Version (NIV)*

Eye for Eye

³⁸ "You have heard that it was said, 'Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.' ³⁹ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹ If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Matthew 5:23-24 *New International Version (NIV)*

²³ "Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother or sister has something against you, ²⁴ leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to them; then come and offer your gift.

Matthew 18:21-35 *New International Version (NIV)*

The Parable of the Unmerciful Servant

²¹ Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?"

²² Jesus answered, "I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times.

²³ "Therefore, the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ As he began the settlement, a man who owed him ten thousand bags of gold was brought to him. ²⁵ Since he was not able to pay, the master ordered that he and his wife and his children and all that he had be sold to repay the debt.

²⁶ "At this the servant fell on his knees before him. 'Be patient with me,' he begged, 'and I will pay back everything.' ²⁷ The servant's master took pity on him, canceled the debt and let him go.

²⁸ “But when that servant went out, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a hundred silver coins. He grabbed him and began to choke him. ‘Pay back what you owe me!’ he demanded.

²⁹ “His fellow servant fell to his knees and begged him, ‘Be patient with me, and I will pay it back.’

³⁰ “But he refused. Instead, he went off and had the man thrown into prison until he could pay the debt. ³¹ When the other servants saw what had happened, they were outraged and went and told their master everything that had happened.

³² “Then the master called the servant in. ‘You wicked servant,’ he said, ‘I canceled all that debt of yours because you begged me to. ³³ Shouldn’t you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?’ ³⁴ In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed.

³⁵ “This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart.”

Matthew 5:13-16 *New International Version (NIV)*

Salt and Light

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. ¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Matthew 6:19-21 *New International Version (NIV)*

Treasures in Heaven

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

Matthew 7:6 *New International Version (NIV)*

⁶ “Do not give dogs what is sacred; do not throw your pearls to pigs. If you do, they may trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

As you look at the list above, are there any you need to focus on to make sure you’re not “bailing out”? Are there any blessings you’ve already received that you need to thank God for?

3. Our worship of God is a response that makes sense when we really understand the sacrifice he made through his son, Jesus. Yet when we forget the significance of this sacrifice, we can make our worship more about what we do, than what he did. Read Isaiah 53 and write down anything that is a good reminder of the incredible sacrifice Jesus made for us. Note anything that adds to the significance of living a life of worship and obedience to our Creator.