



Sermon, Friday, December 24, 2021

“My Christmas Story Season 2”

SCRIPTURE: Luke 2:8-14 ⁸ In that region there were shepherds living in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ Then an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: ¹¹ to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a child wrapped in bands of cloth and lying in a manger.” ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, ¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”

Introduction: Intro (Last Story)

Dear Brothers, Sisters and Friends! It is such a beautiful and happy night. Today is Christmas Eve. Let us greet each other with "Merry Christmas"! On Christmas Eve 2019, the four congregations of the church held a united worship service. But due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we haven't been able to get together for nearly two years. Although the pandemic continues, we thank you for being able to worship together again with the help of vaccines, wearing masks, and the grace of the Lord.

Let's take a moment to welcome each other.

Simpson's congregations, please raise your hand. Everyone is welcome.

Congregations in Burundi, raise your hand. Everyone is welcome.

Korean church congregations, please raise your hands. Everyone is welcome.

Today's host Epworth Church congregations, please raise your hands. Everyone is welcome.

Finally, I would like to ask everyone who comes to church to spend the Christmas holidays with their families, raise your hand. Everyone is welcome.

It is a blessing the Lord has bestowed upon us all that we can gather together again to worship. Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

The title of my message delivered on Christmas Eve Service two years ago was, “Room for the Neighborhood.” The text I quoted at that time was Luke 2:1-7. Luke chapter 2 tells the story of Joseph and Mary, who visited Jerusalem for the census at the order of the Roman emperor. Joseph's wife, Mary, was close to giving birth, but she was struggling to find a place to deliver the baby. After all her efforts, Jesus was born in a manger in a stable.

I spoke about my birth in connection with the birth of Jesus in a sermon on Christmas Eve two years ago. I was born as a premature baby after 7 months. It was difficult to find a hospital with an incubator to take care of premature babies in the place where I was born 47 years ago. My father told me it was too hard to find a hospital with an incubator. However, a merciful God prepared a hospital with an incubator. I survived by the grace of God and stand before you as a pastor. But, how did I first meet Jesus? And what did I learn from it? This is my second Christmas story that I would like to share with you.



Body: My Christmas Story Season 2

Today's text Luke 2:8-14 describes the shepherds guarding their flocks at night when they hear from an angel the news of the birth of the baby Jesus. However, in today's text there is joy and praise about the birth of the baby Jesus. The angel announced the birth of baby Jesus saying, **“I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people”(v.10)** And, the angel of heaven praised the birth of baby Jesus with, **“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!”(v.14)**

Dear brothers, sisters and friends! As our text shows, Christmas is a day of joy and emotion for us. As you know, the mystery of the Christian faith is astonishing. The Lord Himself visits us to meet us, heal us. Although we may not immediately understand the providence of the Lord, the deeper our fellowship with the Lord, the more we can experience the joy and thrill of the mystery of faith.

In fact, during my childhood, church was not a familiar place to me. This is because my father is not a Christian and my mother had long since stopped attending church after marrying my father.

However, when I was in elementary school, one of my friends was a pastor's son. My friend said that if I attend the Christmas service, they will give me presents, candy, and snacks, so I attended the Christmas service. In fact, when I recall that time, I can't remember much, except there is one thing I do remember for sure. It is the pastor's voice which was mimicking Jesus' voice as He was calling the chief tax collector Zacchaeus on the tree. (Luke 19:1-10) **“Zacchaeus~~ Zacchaeus~~”**

By the way, after becoming a Christian and serving as a pastor for nearly 20 years, there is something I have always wondered about; why I so clearly remember the pastor's voice mimicking Jesus' voice calling Zacchaeus! After much time passed I realized that the Lord helped me see my inner mind through Zacchaeus.

Zacchaeus had a complex about his physical presence because of his short stature, and he was always lonely because of his status as a tax collector cooperating with Rome. Zacchaeus has a lot in common with me. I was born as a premature baby, physically weak, and always wanted to be the best. So there was no gratitude or satisfaction in me. I wanted to get the best out of school, work, marriage, and everything I do. Furthermore, I had a bad tendency to identify achievement by comparing my life with others. So how tired must I be inside? However, the Lord came to my life like this, called my name, and saved me from the prison I could not get out of on my own.

Of course, I still sometimes go into the prison that I made. However, what is different from me in the past is that no matter where I am, the Lord is with me. I am confident that the Lord will protect and guide me. So, I am so grateful that Jesus came into this world. How about you?

Conclusion: The Joy of Having the Lord in Our Hearts

Now, let's summarize my message. I bless you all with the love of the Lord on this beautiful Christmas Eve. Although we may not be perfect like Jesus, we can experience freedom, rest, and peace in Jesus. Because from the moment we have Him in our hearts to be with Jesus, He takes charge of everything in our lives.

We are people with whom God is pleased as Luke 2:13 says. And the true peace that the Lord gives us has been given freely to us. I hope it will be me with all of you who share this joy with our neighbors.

Let us pray. Thank you God for sending Your Son on one glorious night to be born to a virgin, to live a perfect life and to die on the cross for our sins. Thank you that he rose from the dead three days later and that this Christmas and every Christmas we can celebrate the gift of eternal life through Jesus Christ. Amen.

