

## Morning Worship

December 16, 2018

Hymn # 88 *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing* Don/People

Worship Prayer Allan Lane

Welcome and Fellowship Allan/People

## Chorus # 82                    *Emmanuel*                    Don/People

## Missions Moment

## Hymn # 100 *Angels We Have Heard on High* Don/People

Hymn # 91      *Silent Night, Holy Night*      Don/People

## Offering Prayer John Lewis

Offering Music Alva Lou Schottel

Children's Worship (Children are dismissed)

## Message Allan Lane

Hymn # 320 *Turn Your Eyes Upon Jesus* Don/People

Prayer Concerns Allan/People

Closing Chorus #427 *For He Alone Is Worthy* Don/People

# The Gift of a Sign

Luke 2:8-20

Signs are a part of our daily lives. They give us direction, instruction, information, and even warnings. Sometimes those signs are clear, sometimes not so much.

-- On a helmet mounted mirror used by US cyclists - *REMEMBER, OBJECTS IN THE MIRROR ARE ACTUALLY BEHIND YOU.*

-- On a Sears hairdryer - *DO NOT USE WHILE SLEEPING.*

-- On an American Airlines packet of nuts - *INSTRUCTIONS - OPEN PACKET, EAT NUTS.*

-- On a packet of Sun Maid raisins - *WHY NOT TRY TOSSING UP YOUR FAVORITE BREAKFAST CEREAL?*

-- On a Taiwanese shampoo - *USE REPEATEDLY FOR SEVERE DAMAGE.*

-- On a Korean kitchen knife - *WARNING: KEEP OUT OF CHILDREN.*

On that first Christmas night the angel's instructions to the Shepherds were very clear. God gave these men a great gift that night - the gift of a sign that would change their lives forever.

God still gives us signs today. He gives us signs through the witness of His Word; The witness of His Spirit; The witness of His Servants; The witness of His Supernatural Power; the witness of Creation – just to name a few. Unlike some of the things you may find under your tree this Christmas, God's gifts always have a purpose. Through the experience of the shepherds, we discover the great purpose behind the signs that God gives to us. God gives us signs ...

### **1. So we can Find Him. Verse 16**

If it were not for the sign that the angel gave them, the shepherds might have missed Jesus. After all, if you didn't know what you know now, where would you look for a Savior? In a manger? Doubtful!

Having an entire host of angelic beings fill the sky could have been confusing. They might have been tempted to think that was the sign. Except that wasn't the sign. The actual sign from God is just a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in manger.

Some people think the same. God shows up in a spectacular way in their lives. He might come in the form of a blessing, a healing, or a mountain top experience. He might have just saved their lives from a deadly danger. But is that the sign? Perhaps it's not. The sign is always that God is able to reward those who diligently seek Him. The sign for us is that He will never leave us nor forsake us. The sign is that we are to follow His commands and obey.

The shepherds did indeed seek and find a humble Savior, born in humble surroundings, that the most humbled of humans could find Him and draw near to Him.

There are things about Christ that are a mystery to our finite minds but He has not made Himself too mysterious to be found by those who earnestly seek Him. Jeremiah 29:13 tells us "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." If you have a heart that seeks after Christ, you will find signs all around that will tell you He is nearer than you think.

### **2. So we can Follow Him. Verses 17, 20**

As with anyone who seeks after Jesus with an open heart, I'm inclined to believe these shepherds were transformed as they stood beside His manger. The shepherds became the sheep who, from that point on, would follow the "Good Shepherd." Their behavior alone bore witness to such a transformation. Their probable exchange of idle gossip and filthy jokes was transformed into shouts of praise and of glorifying God.

In the same way, God gives us signs that help us to discover His will for our lives. There are things in our lives we must change as well as areas where we must remain faithful and steadfast.

### **3. So we can strengthen our Faith . Verse 20**

The shepherds went on their way with a confidence that the God whom they had encountered that night was true to His Word. They found everything in fact to be consistent with what they had been told.

This does not imply that our faith is dependent **only** upon what we see. For that is not faith at all. In fact Jesus confronted those who demanded signs to affirm His authority because they asked out of a spirit of doubt. However, God has a long history of affirming His authority to those who ask out of the desire to truly know Him and who follow Him by faith.

Take Moses as an example: He believed in God when he asked "...show me your glory..." (Exodus 33:18).

Or the Israelites when crossing the Red Sea: After all the events that happened through the plagues, when God struck down the first born of all living things whose homes were not covered by the blood of a sacrificial lamb, they believed in God enough to leave their homes in Egypt. The Scripture tells us "...when the Israelites saw the great power the Lord displayed against the Egyptians, the people feared the Lord and put their trust in Him..." (Exodus 14:31).

When Jesus turned water into wine it says: "This, the first of His miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed His glory, and His disciples put their faith in Him" (John 2:11).

When you place your faith in Christ, He rewards that faith as He confirms His Word in your life over and over again.

## **Conclusion**

A few years ago, while at the mall with his mother and grandpa, a four-year-old boy watched as children lined up excitedly to see Santa Claus.

Having been taught as a toddler that Christmas is the holiday when Christians celebrate the birth of God's Son, with the innocence of a child, he asked his mom, "Where's the line to see Jesus?

Overhearing, his grandpa was so proud that little Spencer understood the true meaning of Christmas at such a tender age. But both mother and grandfather - Becky Kelly and Steve Haut - were so struck by the profoundness of this little boy's question and the message inherent within it that they collaborated together to write and record a song based on the experience.

The Title appropriately is: *Where's the Line to See Jesus?* Out of the mouths of babes sometimes come profound truths that many adults cannot fully understand. (Pause) On that first Christmas morning, the line to see Jesus was long shepherds and angels all gathered to see the newborn King lying in a manger. (Pause) As Christmas is approaching, impatient shoppers stand in line at the checkout aisles, children line up to see Santa, but as little Spencer so poignantly asked, where's the line to see Jesus?

Consciously or subconsciously, most people this time of the year are truly trying to catch a glimpse of God. Christmas is that one time in the year when many make an extra effort to find real meaning, to find real joy in their lives. This is when many people make an effort to look into the heart of God.

Maybe this is the year. Maybe this year I will find real joy and meaning to my life. Maybe this year I will be able to finally understand.

## ***Maybe This Is The Year!***

## **From Heaven's Point of View**

Has it ever occurred to you to think of Christmas as an invasion? How does that change your perspective on Advent? Does it help you remember that we're living in the most epic Story as it unfolds all around us in every day life? The following is an excerpt from *Restoration Year* by John Eldredge, from a Devotionals Daily email dated December 10, 2018.

*Her child was snatched away from the dragon... Then there was war in heaven. — Revelation 12:5, Revelation 12:7 NLT*

*I would pay good money to have a nativity scene with Revelation 12 included. Not only would it capture the imagination, but it would also better prepare us to celebrate the holidays and to go on to live the Story Christmas invites us into.*

*Your vision of the nativity was shaped by classic Christmas cards and lovely crèche displays. And while I still love those tableaus very much, I'm convinced they're an almost total rewrite of the story. I understand this traditional imagery is probably dear to you, but friend, it's also profoundly deceiving by creating all sorts of warm expectations — many quite subconscious — of what the nature of the Christian life is going to be like.*

*But war in Heaven the instant Jesus was born — this is an essential part of the Story. Yes — Christmas is the glow of candlelight, and a baby sleeping in a manger. It is starlight, shepherds in a field. But Christmas is also an invasion. The Kingdom of God striking at the heart of the kingdom of darkness with violent repercussions. And victory.*

*Christmas is meant to remind us each year of the Great Story we live in. Not something cute and quaint from time gone by, but the most epic Story unfolding right now, all around us. What will help you remember that this year?*

**It Worked!** The angel was joined by a vast host of others — the armies of Heaven — praising God and saying, "Glory to God in highest Heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased." — Luke 2:13-14 NLT

*As I reflect upon the mystery of the incarnation, and the great invasion of the Kingdom that began under cover of darkness in a remote village in the Middle East, so many wonders flood my heart. The wild plan of God to come the way He did, where He did, when He did, as He did. The great battle in the heavens. The immense cost. The staggering series of events that began to unfold. It really is breathtaking, more than any other story ever told.*

*But above all, what I wanted to offer you this Christmas is this one simple thought: It worked.*

*God came for you, and all that He planned and all He intended in Jesus Christ has come true. The rule of evil has been broken. You are ransomed. Your life is now filled with the life of God. The Kingdom of God has broken through. Redemption is unfolding all over the earth, and will come to a glorious climax with the return of Jesus. Sin no longer reigns over you. Restoration is yours, now. And so many other glories. It worked. Hold on to that truth this Christmas, dear friend. This glorious victory needs to be celebrated! How can you celebrate this wonderful truth today?*

God Bless You!  
Bro. Allan ☺

## Opportunities For Service

Living out Your Spiritual Commitment . . . and Fulfilling Christ's Divine Plan

**Sunday, December 16, 2018**

Sunday School ..... 9:15 am

Morning Worship.....10:30 am

Nursery: Volunteers as needed

Ushers: John Lewis, Joseph Coats,

Gary Yarbrough, ? ? ?

Alternate: Larry McKahan

Monday, December 17

Workers Meeting.....6:30 pm

**Wednesday, December 19**

Prayer / Bible Study.... 6:30 pm

Worship Team ..... 7:30 pm

Thursday, December 20

## Food Pantry Day

Sunday, December 23, 2018

Sunday School.....9:15 am

Morning Worship.....10:30 am

Nursery: Volunteers as needed

Ushers: ?, ?, ?, Ken Kirkpatrick,

Larry McKahan, Bill Schottel

Alternate: Ken Nice

Diversicare.....2:30 pm

**Wednesday, December 26**

Prayer Warriors.....10:00 am

Prayer / Bible Study ...6:30 pm

Worship Team ..... 7:30 pm

## Up-Coming Events .....

## December 17 — Workers Meeting 6:30 pm

**December 23 — Diversicare 2:30 pm**

**December 24 — Christmas Eve Service 6:30 pm**

December 25 — Merry Christmas! (office will be closed)

## December 30 — Mission Study—NOON

## **GROW Team**

Commit to **GROW!** **Everyone make a contact!** Invite someone to Bible Study and Worship this week. ☺

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## **Sunday Night**

We **will not** have Sunday night service tonight. Plan to join us next time we meet. Don't miss it!

## **Wednesday Night Prayer and Bible Study**

Prayer is such a vital part of everything a church does. Please come as we pray for the direction of our church.

**The Case for Christmas** by Lee Strobel has been very interesting. See you this Wednesday at 6:30 pm.

## **Address Additions**

Doris Richardson is now home.

LoLeta Middleton  
2306 F Village Drive  
Saint Joseph, MO 64506  
816-279-9139

Also ...

Switch birthdates for Pam and Joe Battreall.

Pam—June 26 Joe—April 4

## **The Christmas Card Mail Box**

is in the hallway (where the bulletin boards were). If you would like to share cards with your church family, place them in the box throughout the month of December. We suggest you use the money you save on postage to contribute to the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering. Our church goal is: \$1,500.00

## **CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE**

**MONDAY,  
DECEMBER 24, 2018  
6:30 PM**

## **REFUGEES**

**International Mission Study  
December 30th at NOON**

We'll have a lite lunch after morning worship, followed by the mission study. Soup (or something) will be provided. Please bring other foods to complete the meal.

### *For the Record-*

#### *Prayer Requests ...*

#### **Today's Prayer Requests ...**

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#### **Our Nation and our Leaders ...**

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#### **Five More New Families...**

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