



Emmaus Of The Midlands Messenger December 2006

A Pastoral Message

How have we managed to transform the Christmas season from an awe-filled consideration of *O Holy Night* into a discordant rendition of *O Holy Nightmare*? Isn't it time we reconsidered the real Christ of Christmas? Isn't it time we journeyed again to Bethlehem to kneel, bow, and pray before the Christ who came, as the old-time revival saying went, no to "see through you," but to "see you through?" I hope the following prayer, taken from an old issue of *Homiletics* magazine, will help you turn your heart, mind, and soul toward Bethlehem and the Babe of Christmas:

If we have spent so much time shopping that we have had little time to spend with those whom we are shopping for...Forgive us and give us sensitivity.

If we get so busy practicing for the Christmas programs that we forget to think about what they mean...Forgive us, and give us understanding.

If we decorate our houses but neglect the inner beauty of our homes...Forgive us, and grant us love.

If we are worried about how much Christmas is going to cost us, but have given little thought to how much Christmas cost God... Forgive us, and give us perspective.

If we are so consumed with thinking about Christmas 2006, that we have little consideration for the meaning of the first Christmas...Forgive us, and give us insight.

In the Name of our Savior, Christ the Lord, Amen.



Reason for the Season

Now as the Men's and Women's Walk # 29, Halloween and Thanks Giving have passed, we all need to focus on the best time of the year. As we are praying for the upcoming Men's and Women's Walk # 30, we all need to celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

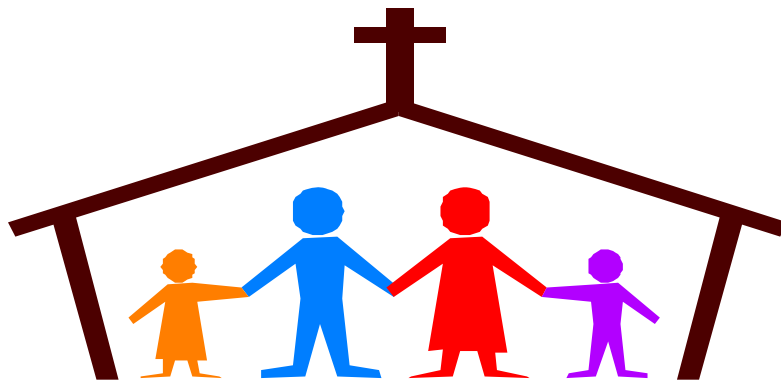
The Birth of Jesus Christ, in Matthew 1: 20-23, But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" – which means, "God with us."

As you read these verses, the greatest part of life we could be given is Jesus Christ, the son of God, being born as a child into this world to save us of our sins forever. What a wonderful gift and we all should take time to celebrate this beautiful beginning of a new life. I know we all are so thankful for many things of life and God made it happen by sending a child, called Jesus, into this world.

The next Gathering will be at Camp Agape on December 9th at 6:00 pm. Let us all make plans to attend this Christmas Gathering, bring food, prepare to sing songs and celebrate the birth of our Savior, Jesus Christ.

Merry Christmas

Ken Clarke



Christmas -- A Love Letter From Jesus

Dear Children,

It has come to my attention that many of you are upset that folks are taking My name out of the season. Maybe you've forgotten that I wasn't actually born during this time of the year and that it was some of your predecessors who decided to celebrate My birthday on what was actually a time of pagan festival. Although I do appreciate being remembered anytime.

How I personally feel about this celebration can probably be most easily understood by those of you who have been blessed with children of your own. I don't care what you call the day. If you want to celebrate My birth, just GET ALONG AND LOVE ONE ANOTHER.

Now, having said that let Me go on. If it bothers you that the town in which you live doesn't allow a scene depicting My birth, then just get rid of a couple of Santas and snowmen and put in a small Nativity scene on your own front lawn. If all My followers did that there wouldn't be any need for such a scene on the town square because there would be many of them all around town.

Stop worrying about the fact that people are calling the tree a holiday tree, instead of a Christmas tree. It was I who made all trees. You can remember Me anytime you see any tree. Decorate a grape vine if you wish: I actually spoke of that one in a teaching, explaining who I am in relation to you and what each of our tasks were. If you have forgotten that one, look up John 15: 1 - 8.

If you want to give Me a present in remembrance of My birth here is my wish list. Choose something from it:

1. Instead of writing protest letters objecting to the way My birthday is being celebrated, write letters of love and hope to soldiers away from home. They are terribly afraid and lonely this time of year. I know, they tell Me all the time.
2. Visit someone in a nursing home. You don't have to know them personally. They just need to know that someone cares about them.
3. Instead of writing George complaining about the wording on the cards his staff sent out this year, why don't you write and tell him that you'll be praying for him and his family this year. Then follow up. It will be nice hearing from you again.
4. Instead of giving your children a lot of gifts you can't afford and they don't need, spend time with them. Tell them the story of My birth, and why I came to live with you down here. Hold them in your arms and remind them that I love them.
5. Pick someone that has hurt you in the past and forgive him or her.
6. Did you know that someone in your town will attempt to take their own life this season because they feel so alone and hopeless? Since you don't know who that person is, try giving everyone you meet a warm smile; it could make the difference.
7. Instead of nit picking about what the retailer in your town calls the holiday, be patient with the people who work there. Give them a warm smile and a kind word. Even if they aren't allowed to wish you a "Merry Christmas" that doesn't keep you from wishing them one. Then stop shopping there on Sunday. If the store didn't make so much money on that day they'd close and let their employees spend the day at home with their families.
8. If you really want to make a difference, support a missionary-- especially one who takes My love and Good News to those who have never heard My name.
9. Here's a good one. There are individuals and whole families in your town who not only will have no "Christmas" tree, but neither will they have any presents to give or receive. If you don't know them, buy some food and a few gifts and give them to the Salvation Army or some other charity which believes in Me and they will make the delivery for you.
10. Finally, if you want to make a statement about your belief in and loyalty to Me, then behave like a Christian. Don't do things in secret that you wouldn't do in My presence. Let people know by your actions that you are one of mine.

Don't forget; I am God and can take care of Myself. Just love Me and do what I have told you to do. I'll take care of all the rest. Check out the list above and get to work; time is short. I'll help you, but the ball is now in your court. And do have a most blessed Christmas with all those whom you love and remember o?=??

I LOVE YOU, JESUS

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December 9, 2006 Gathering Camp Agape 6:00pm

January 13-15, 2007 Chrysalis Girl's Flight

January 19-20, 2007 Emmaus Team Training Walk 30

January—Gathering TBA

February 1-4, 2007 Epiphany Boys # 37

February 17-19, 2007 Chrysalis Boy's Flight

February 22-25, 2007 Emmaus Men's Walk # 30

March 8-11, 2007 Emmaus Women's Walk # 30

March 15-18, 2007 Epiphany Girls # 21

March 23, 2007 Gathering Wrightman UMC

June 7-10, 2007 Epiphany Boys # 38

August 17-18 2007 Emmaus Team Training Walk 31

September 6-9, 2007 Epiphany Girls # 22
