

"Seasoning the Season"

Seasoning Our Glorifying

12/19/21

Discussion Guide

Read the sermon text as preparation for your discussion. Share what new insights you picked up on from the message on this passage. Did you learn something new that you never saw before?

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" ⁴⁶ And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, Luke 1:39-47

1. Share how your holiday has gone so far. What tidbit of teaching has had the most impact on your Advent season? How have you been "seasoning the season?"
2. Growing up, how did your family celebrate Christmas? What part did the true meaning of Christmas play in your celebrations? Was there a clear tie between Christmas and your Christmas preparations and celebrations?
3. How did your family (You, your wife and kids) bring out the real meaning of Christmas? Do you worship at home or tend to keep worship as something you do only at places of worship?
4. Do you think most Christians are too secular in their observance of Christmas or too religious? What is the right mix for you? Should Christians include the American version of Santa Clause, Frosty, Rudolph and Santa's reindeer, etc. with their Christmas celebrations? Some Christians believe that telling children about Santa is paramount to lying to them. What is your position on the inclusion of secular elements in your religious observance of Christmas?
5. Share a God-moment that you experienced within the context of a place of worship.
6. Share a God-moment that you experienced outside a place of worship. (Home, work, at a store, visiting a stranger etc.)
7. Share how you celebrate the true meaning of Christmas.

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8. What is your favorite Christmas song that celebrates the true meaning of Christmas and why?
9. What is your favorite Christmas movie that celebrates the true meaning of Christmas and why?
10. What is your favorite Christmas tradition that celebrates the true meaning of Christmas and why?
11. Walk around your house, or if you are not in your house walk through it in your mind, if your home décor was the only thing people had to go on as to the meaning of Christmas, what story does your décor tell? What can you do to spice up your décor so it emphasizes the true meaning of Christmas?

Try this new Christmas tradition. Drive around the area and enjoy the Christmas lights. While enjoying the lights see who can find the most manger scenes. At the end of the drive, whoever has the most sightings wins a prize. Determine ahead of time what the prize is. (Idea: an extra gift at Christmas, a white elephant gift, they get to pick the movie for the night, they get to pick the snack for the night, they get a back rub, etc.)

12. Read the story written by Tolstoy and share a time when you ministered to a stranger and were blessed as a result.

One night, the cobbler had a dream that the next day Jesus was coming to his humble shop. He got up early the next morning and went to the woods to gather green boughs to decorate his shop in order to receive so great a Guest. He waited all morning, and the only thing that happened was that an old man shuffled up, asking to rest. Conrad, the cobbler, saw that his shoes were worn through, so he brought the man in, "I'll give you a new pair," he said, and put on the the old man the sturdiest shoes in the shop before sending him on his way.

He waited through the afternoon, and the only happening was that an old woman under a heavy load of firewood came by. She was weary, and out of compassion, Conrad brought her in and gave her some of the food he had prepared for the Christ Child. She ate with relish, for she was very hungry. And refreshed, she went her way.

Then as the shades of night began to fall, there came into his shop a lost child, crying bitterly. Conrad was annoyed because it was necessary to leave his shop in order to take the child home. Returning, he was convinced that he had missed the Lord.

Sadly, he lived through the moments as he had imagined them: the knock, the call, the latch pulled up, the lighted face, the offered cup. He would have kissed the hands where the nails had been, he

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would have washed the feet where the spikes had entered. Then the Lord would have sat with him, would have broken bread.

Conrad cried, "Why is it Lord, that your feet delayed? Have you forgotten that this was the day?" Then soft in the silence a voice he heard: "Lift up your heart, for I kept my word. Three times I came to your friendly door. Three times my shadow was on your floor. I was the beggar with the bruised feet. I was the woman you gave to eat. I was the child on the homeless street.

13. Final thoughts.