

December 24, 2005 – Christmas Eve Service
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene
“Where Can We Find ...the New Born King? In Witnessing.

(DVD: “Brief History of Christmas”)

We have to be careful to not crowd Jesus out of Christmas. It has become such a busy, hectic, commercialized time. The over-crowded malls, the traffic, the pushing and shoving in the stores. People jammed together waiting in the cashier line. It can lead to “Santa-Claustrophobia!”

Luke 2:8-20 NLT

Angels are everywhere, especially at Christmastime. One may be floating atop your Christmas tree, while a small chorus of angels may appear on your fireplace mantel or on your favorite table. Your child may bring home a handmade angel from school (I doubt it, but maybe). Angels must love to shop, because they always seem to be hanging in department store windows this time of year.

Angels were hanging all around on that very first Christmas, too. First, the angel Gabriel appeared to a young girl named Mary, proclaiming the good news that she would be the mother of the Messiah, God’s Son. An angel also appeared to Joseph, Mary’s future husband to assure him that this unexpected baby Mary was expecting was part of God’s good and perfect plan.

Nine months later, a whole sky full of angels delivered a living birth announcement to a startled group of shepherds keeping watch over their sheep in the fields. A single angel could easily have delivered the message, but the joyful Father chose to send an army of them. So the night sky became bright with the light of heaven which poured over the land, as angels declared the good news that, after generations of hopeful expectation, the Messiah had been born!

The shepherds ran to the village and told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished. What was the Good News they were telling everyone? “Today your Savior was born... He is Christ, the Lord.”

During Advent this year we have been answering the question the wise men asked, “Where can we find the newborn King? He is found...”

1. In you. Jesus is found in our hearts as we turn from what we know is wrong in our life, believe in Jesus as our Savior and invite Him into our hearts. He lives in our hearts by His Holy Spirit giving us power to live a holy life, a life that pleases God.
2. In others as we minister to them in Jesus name. Jesus said when you feed the hungry, you are feeding Me. When you give a drink to the thirsty, you are giving me a drink. When you invite a stranger into your home, you are inviting Me into your home. When

you give clothing to the naked, you are giving me clothing. When you care for the sick, you care for Me. When you visit someone in prison, you visit Me. (Matt 25:35-36)

3. In worship. As we retell the salvation story, we not only remember Jesus, He is worshipped and Jesus Himself is present.
4. In the Church as the Believers unite in love, using their spiritual gifts for the good of the church (also called the Body of Christ).
5. In telling others about Him. Jesus said when He is living in us we will be His witnesses with our lips and with our lives. (Acts 1:8 NLT) "But when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, you will receive power and will tell people about me everywhere--in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

We, like the angels on the night He was born, become the messengers of God's Good News, "The Savior--yes, the Messiah, the Lord--has been born!" Why do we share this news? Because it is "good news of great joy for everyone!" And we must not, we can not keep it to ourselves. It would be like discovering the cure to cancer and not telling anyone about it.

Why did God send a Savior? Because God knows that our greatest need is forgiveness. If we are honest, we would have to admit that we all do things that we know are wrong. Sometimes we do things for which we are deeply ashamed. More than that, there is a self-centeredness about our lives which spoils them. Jesus said, (Mark 7:21-23 NLT) "For from within, out of a person's heart, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, eagerness for lustful pleasure, envy, slander, pride, and foolishness. All these vile things come from within; they are what defile you and make you unacceptable to God."

Our greatest need is for forgiveness. Just as a person who has cancer needs a doctor whether they realize it or not, so people need forgiveness whether they realize it or not.

At Christmas we remember the fact that Jesus entered our world in order to restore our relationships with God and with others. In this way, He supplied the answer to our deepest need. Some people will say, "I have no need of God." What they usually mean is that they are happy without God in their life. What they fail to realize is that our greatest need is not "happiness" but "forgiveness." It would take a very proud person to say they have no need of forgiveness. We all need to be forgiven. Without it we are in serious trouble. For God is not only our loving Father, He is also a righteous judge. If someone does not accept what Jesus has done for them on the cross, one day they will have to pay the just penalty themselves for the things they have done wrong. God does not want that, He does not want anyone to perish...and neither do we and so we share the Good News with everyone, "A Savior has been born for you!" Sharing this message brings meaning to our lives. When we share the message Jesus is present by His Holy Spirit.

How do we share the message? Besides telling people they must ask God to forgive them for all the things they have done wrong and turn from everything that they know is wrong

in their life; and to believe that Jesus died for them on the cross, to be grateful for that; and to accept His gift of forgiveness, freedom and His Spirit; besides telling people this you also share the message by letting people see Jesus in your life you:

1. Because you have asked Jesus into your heart and you are live a holy life empowered by His Spirit.
2. Because you minister to the needs of others in the name of Jesus (feeding the hungry, giving a drink to the thirsty, inviting a stranger into your home, clothing the naked, caring for the sick, visiting someone in prison).
3. Because you worship Jesus.
4. Because you are a faithful member of a church, having love for other Believers, using your spiritual gifts for the good of the church.
5. Because you tell others about Jesus.