

## The Price of Christmas

### Introduction:

I love the Christmas season:

- It was at Christmas concert, I first saw Margaret. "Lord, I want that one right there!"
- We were married at Christmas, 52 years ago this December 27. Someone said to me, "Why does she look so young and you, so old?"

Since we are called to celebrate a **Christian** Christmas, we need to remind ourselves of an important truth, namely, that there was a price to be paid by all those connected with the Christmas event.

Matthew 1:18-25 (NASB)

18) "Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. 19) And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. 20) But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21) She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.'

22) Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: 23) 'Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which translated means, 'God with us.' 24) And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, 25) but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus."

Luke 2:1-8

1) "Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. 2) This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. 3) And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city.

4) Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, 5) in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.

6) While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. 7) And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."

### Six (6) Observations:

Notice the price paid by 1) Mary, 2) by Joseph, 3) the price paid by the Shepherds, 4) by the Wise Men, 5) the price, the sacrifice, paid by God the Father; and 6) the Lord Jesus Christ. Let us look at these **six (6) events** in the lives of these people, and observe the sacrifice paid for the glory of God at Christmas:

#### 1. The Price Paid by MARY - The Shame Mary Endured.

Luke 1:26-28 "Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, 27) to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28) And coming in, he said to her, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.'"

Luke 1:34, "Mary said to the angel, "**How can this be**, since I am a virgin?"

The angel explained the miraculous incarnation, God in the flesh! The virgin birth.

Luke 1:37, "For nothing will be impossible with God."

Luke 1:38, "And Mary said, "Behold, the **bondslave** of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her."

**This is the key.** Mary said, "Behold **the bondslave (handmaiden)** of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word."

Instead of "Why me?" she said, "Why not me?"

God has promised the Messiah through a virgin. "Why not me, Lord? I am willing 'may it be done to me according to your word.'"

This was the cost of Christmas!

## **2. The Price Paid by JOSEPH - The Stigma that Joseph Carried.**

Matthew 1: 24-25, "And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the **Lord commanded him**, and took Mary as his wife, 25) but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus."

This simple godly man in an obscure Galilean village, chosen by the sovereign God, to be the adopted father of God in the flesh, the Lord Jesus Christ! (the **birth right** came through **Mary, the royal line** through **Joseph**.) Joseph possibly simply desiring a simple life and caring for a family **suffered with Mary the stigma, shame, slander, embarrassment, gossip, ridicule, and total loss of reputation—all** in obedience to the command of God. "Joseph did as the angel of **the Lord commanded him!**"

This was the cost of Christmas.

## **3. The Price Paid by the SHEPHERDS – Their Lives Were Dramatically Interrupted.**

### **A. They Saw the Light.**

Luke 2:8-14:

8) "In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. 9) And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened.

10) But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; 11) for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12) This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13) And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, 14) "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased."

Shepherding was a **despised profession** and required work seven days a week. They were considered dishonest, unreliable, and thieves. They didn't have the rights of a citizen and could not testify in court. They were considered just above the status of a leper in society!

And yet, it was to a group of lowly dirty, smelly, despised shepherds that the heavenly announcement of the most glorious event in all of history came!

### **B. They Found Him – Christ the Messiah.**

Luke 2:15-16, “When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, ‘**Let us go straight** to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.’ 16) So they came in a hurry and **found their way** to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger.” They acted on the message – they sought the baby – this thing – this act of God.

### **C. They Believed in Him and Declared the Good News!**

Luke 2:17, “When they had seen this, **they made known** the statement which had been told them about this **Child**.”

Luke 2: 20, “The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.”

They "made known" the glorious good news of the "Savior, who is Christ the Lord," a Savior for all people!

Many of us have had this glorious message declared to us by our parents, or a friend, a taxi driver, a barrio pastor, a manager at work, and perhaps even a janitor.

**ILLUS:** Overseas Foreign Worker (OFW), a janitor, hired to clean the CR's, the restrooms, and mop the floors of the Vatican in Rome, shared the gospel with an educated, prestigious Filipino priest studying for his doctorate degree! He heard and believed the gospel shared to him by a janitor! **FOR THE GOSPEL IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION!**

As many of us have found the Messiah, Christ the Lord; as we have turned from sin in repentance and received salvation from sin by grace through faith alone, WE NOW, AS THE SHEPHERDS, NEED TO DECLARE IT TO OTHERS, TO ALL PEOPLES!

### **THE GOSPEL**

The gospel is very simply Jesus Christ. He is the Son of God, the Son of Man, sent into this world to be born of a virgin that He might be sinless, that He might be born under the law, to keep the very law that you and I break day after day after day.

The perfect sinless Son of God has met all the requirements of God's law and is ready to give His righteousness to us that we would have a perfect standing before God.

The Gospel is that He went to a cross. There upon that cross the **sins of everyone who would believe in Him** were transferred to Him; to Him who knew no sin God made to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God.

The great exchange of the cross – the worst about me laid upon Him, the best about Him to be laid upon me.

As He shed His blood upon that cross, He reconciled sinful **man to holy God**.

**It was as if** He took sinful man in one hand and holy God in the other hand and brought the two together through His death.

It was by that death that Jesus Christ has provided salvation free for all who will call upon His name.

Just before He died He said, "It is finished," – not "I am finished" – "It is finished." He had completed the mission of salvation that He had come into this world to accomplish.

And whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. To call upon the Lord Jesus Christ is to look away **from yourself**, to look away from **religion**, to look away from your **church**, to look away from your **denomination**, to look away from your **baptism** and your **church membership** and all of your **good works**, and to look exclusively to the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Lord Jesus says, "Him who comes unto Me I will in no wise cast out." He loves to save sinners. He is the friend of sinners. He came to seek and to save that which is lost. He came to save sinners like you and me.

If we will call upon Him, He will give us His righteousness. It is a free gift. There is nothing we can do to earn it.

He says, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but through Me." "There is one God and one mediator between God and man – the **man Christ Jesus who gave Himself a ransom for all...**"

This is the cost, the price of Christmas.

What more is there to say? Listen everybody, the gates of Paradise are swung open to us and we may enter through salvation by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone.

The Price was paid by Mary, by Joseph, the shepherds, now #4

#### **4. The Price Paid by the WISE MEN - They Gave of their Time and Treasure.**

Matthew 2:10-11, "When they (the Wise Men) saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. 11) After coming into the house they saw the Child with Mary His mother; and they fell to the ground and worshiped Him. Then, opening their treasures, they presented to Him gifts of **gold, frankincense, and myrrh.**"

##### **A. Their Time.**

These kings of the East traveled for up to two years to find the "King of the Jews," the Messiah.

We always have time for what is important to us. Even in simple things.

**ILLUS:** For example, I arranged my appointments and schedule so that I would be near a **Tropical Hut** for my favorite **Classic hamburger**. "It was so good I almost forgot my name!"

As we Christians have found the Messiah and have become His followers, **how do we spend our time for Him?**

In worship, the Word, work and your witness –

**1. Worship** – the book of Hebrews teaches us to not forsake the assembling of ourselves together – to sing **hymns** and spiritual songs, prayer, partake of the **Lord's Supper** (communion), **baptism**, and especially to **hear the Word of God!**

##### **2. The Word of God.**

- Peter says, "To grow in grace and in the knowledge of Christ. How? By hearing, reading, studying, memorizing and mediating in the Word of God.

- Always have a copy of the Bible or New Testament with you.

- Have a motto, "No Bible,, No Breakfast!"

As an old man, I cannot sleep, up at 5 am, a mile walk, then time in the Word of God with a fresh cup of coffee and a fresh "pandasal."

### 3. Work.

The Bible says, "Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with **all your might**, do it to **the glory of God.**"

As a student, mother, housewife, father, politician, lawyer, soldier, or businessman ...

### 4. Witness.

Not all are evangelists, but all are a witness. Jesus said, "And you shall be witnesses of Me."

**ILLUS:** With cancer, sharing the gospel in the middle of the night. "I am dying, but going to Heaven, where will you go?"

**ILLUS:** By our actions, our dress, our manners, living as a witness, a testimony so others can be drawn to the Savior.

Manners – the kindness of Christ in action.

The Wise Men gave their time ...

### B. They Gave Their Treasures.

God does not need our treasures, but we need to give that which important to us to prove that Christ is more important to us than things, our treasures.

In worship, the Magi gave gold, frankincense and myrrh to the Lord Jesus. The Bible gives no indication the exact significance of gold, frankincense and myrrh but some have made suggestions:

**GOLD** for *royalty*. Jesus was King **as** the wise men knew and acknowledged. He was the King of Kings.

**ILLUS:** The great black preacher Shadrach Meshach Lockridge describes this King:

"My King was born King. He's a **seven** way King. The Bible says ...

He is the King of the Jews,

The King of Israel,

King of Righteousness,

King of the Ages,

King of Heaven,

King of Glory,

The King of Kings!"

**FRANKINCENSE** for *Deity*.

This incense was used in worship in the temple. This points to Christ as our Great High Priest. Frankincense spoke of the perfection and **holiness** of Christ. How do you live and approach God?

**MYRRH** points to the *Suffering and Death of Christ*.

Myrrh was used in embalming. On the cross Christ refused wine mixed with myrrh to deaden the pain as he desired to **suffer the full extent of death for us**.

Someone wrote, " Gold for a King, Frankincense for a Priest, Myrrh for One that was to die - these were the gifts of the wise men, and, even at the cradle of Christ, they foretold that He was to be the true King, the perfect High Priest, and the Savior of the world."

The Wise Men gave years of their time and treasure to worship the Messiah.

This was the cost of Christmas.

## 5. The Price Paid by **GOD** the **FATHER** - God Provided the Price for Sin.

### A. God's Love **GIVES**.

John 3: 16-18, "For God **so** loved the world, that **He gave** His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17) For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 18) He who believes in Him is not **judged**; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

### B. God's Love is **GREAT**.

Ephesians 2:4-5, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of **His great love** with which He loved us, 5) even when we were **dead in our transgressions**, made **us alive together** with Christ (by grace you have been saved)."

Corrupt government officials!

The enemies of Christ could not have taken Him, **if God had not given Him**. As wicked as the world was, and as it is today, Christ could not have been hung on the cross by the power, wickedness and vileness of humility if God had not given Him. **GOD'S LOVE GIVES!**

God gave His Son – His all.

This was the cost of Christmas.

## 6. The Price Paid by the Son, The Lord Jesus Christ - The Self-Abasement of the Son.

Philippines 2:5-7, "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, 6) who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, 7) but **emptied Himself**, taking the form of a **bond-servant** (the same word that Mary used), and being made in the likeness of men."

The Price Paid by Christ: In His Birth, in His Life, and in His Death.

### A. In His Birth

He was born in a barn, laid in a manger (a feeding trough), and was surrounded by poor, despised shepherds.

"The message of Christmas is not the proclamation of a holiday or the declaration of a season. It is about the proclamation of a **person** and the declaration of **salvation**. The birth of the child in the manger was an event that prophets **had written about**, the people of Israel **had spoken about**, the patriarchs **had wondered about**, and the angels of God **shouted about** on the glorious night when Christ was born." – Ray Lessin.

### B. In His Life.

He went from place to place, driven out by the religious and political leaders, despised by many. He said, "The Son of Man has **no place to lay His head**" (Luke 9:58).

**ILLUS:** 33 street children in one jeepney! P600 for a two-day, one-night camp. At camp they all had to sleep on a mat on the floor, but it is more than Jesus had!

### **C. In His Death.**

Philippians 2:5-11, "Being found in appearance as a man, He [Christ] **humbled Himself** by becoming obedient to the **point of death, even death on a cross.**

Beaten, stripped, naked before the world, dying as a criminal, dying with the sins of world heaped upon Him.

Burning, hanging, and stoning were acts of mercy compared to the **crucifixion.**

Crucifixion was the greatest **suffering.**

Crucifixion was the greatest **shame.**

All for you and me.

#### ***There Never Was Another***

- **There never was another** Who was God but became man.
- There never was another Who was a human child but also a divine Son;
- Who was wounded by Satan and Who, at the same time crushed Satan;
- Who was appointed the Savior of men, yet was crucified by men;
- Who was Judge of men, yet was led out to suffer and die as a criminal;
- There never was another Who died and was buried and yet lived;
- Who saved others and Himself could not save;
- Who had no sin in Him, yet all the sins of the world were on Him;
- Who was the King of Glory, yet wore no crown but a crown of thorns;
- There never was another Who was the Prince of Life, yet died on Calvary;
- There never was another Who created all seas, all lakes, all rivers with just a Word, yet on the cross said, "**I thirst.**"

NO, there never was another!

Yes, this was the **price** our Savior paid. **This was Christmas!**

As Christ is "the reason for the season," let's be careful that we keep Him the Center of the Season.

**ILLUS:** Margaret's father's **90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Forgotten on his birthday.** We forgot the Guest of Honor at His own birthday.

Yes, Christmas time is a wonderful time with family and friends, especially with the family of God, the church gathered around the Word of God, to the glory of God with praise and worship of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Let's make sure He is kept in the "**Center of the Season!**"