

## A CHRISTMAS STORY

And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” 13 And suddenly there was 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 those with whom he is pleased!” Luke 2:12-14

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 5:1

### **THE PLAN, THE PEOPLE**

God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, 29 so that no human being might boast in the presence of God. 1 Corinthians 1:28-29

But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not look on his appearance or on the height of his stature, because I have rejected him. For the Lord sees not as man sees: man looks on the outward appearance, but the Lord looks on the heart.” 1 Samuel 16:7

**The Wise Men:** Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, 2 saying, “Where is he who has been born king of the Jews? For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him.” Matthew 2:1-2

**Simeon:** Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. Luke 2:25

**Anna:** And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, 37 and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. 38 And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. Luke 2:36-38

**Zachariah and Elizabeth:** And they were both righteous before God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and statutes of the Lord Luke 1:6

**Mary:** In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” ... And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her. Luke 1:26-28 and 38

**Joseph:** Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly... When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus. Matthew 1:18-19 and 24-25

**Shepherds:** When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us.” 16 And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. 17 And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. Luke 1:15-17

*What set these people apart are the qualities and character they all have in common... they were faithful, walked righteously before God (obeyed Him), they were humble and willing to be used by Him and they were seeking Him.*

For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him. You have done foolishly in this, for from now on you will have wars.” 2 Chronicles 16:9

“I the Lord search the heart and test the mind, to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his deeds.” Jeremiah 17:10

In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. Matthew 5:16

### **HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS – GOD CRAVINGS**

“Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied. Matthew 5:6

Oh, taste and see that the Lord is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him! Psalm 34:8

### **OBSTACLES**

As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches choke the word, and it proves unfruitful. Matthew 13:22

### **“What consumes our mind, controls our life”**

Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth. Colossians 3:2

But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you.

Matthew 6:33

### **DAILY FAITHFULNESS AND RIGHTEOUS LIVING**

Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. 4

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. Philippians 2:3-4

For you were called to freedom, brothers. Only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another. 14 For the whole law is fulfilled in one word: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” Galatians 5:13-14

### **Striving for unity in marriage and parenting**

submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ. 22 Wives, submit to your own husbands, as to the Lord. Ephesians 5:21-22

Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, Ephesians 5:25

Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it. Proverbs 22:6

### **Striving for peace with others/ Loving our enemies/forgive**

Repay no one evil for evil, but give thought to do what is honorable in the sight of all. 18 If possible, so far as it depends on you, live peaceably with all. Romans 12:17-18

To the contrary, “if your enemy is hungry, feed him; if he is thirsty, give him something to drink; for by so doing you will heap burning coals on his head.” 21 Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Romans 12:20-21

For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, 15 but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses. Matthew 6:14-15

### **Giving of our time, money and resources to reach out to others and serve in the church – because God has already blessed us.**

I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Romans 12:1

As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: 1 Peter 4:10

### **FAITHFULLY Continue to SEEK HIM! (satisfied)**

And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. Hebrews 11:6