

The Day After Christmas

Luke 2:17-20

Around our house we start putting up decorations more than a month before Christmas.

For kids their focus is usually on Christmas morning. They wake up and open their presents.

Then it's over.

At the end of the day, when all the gifts have been opened and there's nothing under the tree then Christmas is over.

For many it is anticlimactic.

However, **what comes after Christmas is perhaps the most important part about it.**

Many look forward to the after Christmas sales. The day after Christmas is important for that.

It is still important for many reasons.

Let me ask you a simple question, **what will you do now that Christmas is over?**

This passage says that there are **3 ways that we are to respond to the day after Christmas.**

1. Pondering – vs. 19

After Christmas is good time to reflect on what you have just seen and heard.

How many times have you heard the Christmas story?

I'm sure most of you could come up here today, and tell the story.

You heard enough sermons, prayed enough prayers and have rubbed up against the truth long enough to get a callous on your heart so the real truth cannot penetrate deep into your daily life. Familiarity breeds contempt.

The first way to respond to the Christmas message is to make it fresh in your heart by pondering it in a new way.

Illustr: A chauffeur had driven the chemistry professor to dozens of speaking engagements. He'd heard the same canned speech scores of times. He said on the way to another engagement, "Professor, I believe I could give your speech myself; I've heard it so often." The professor said, "I'll bet you \$50 you can't." "You're on," said the chauffeur. He stopped the car and the two exchanged attire. They came to the banquet and the chauffeur dressed in a tuxedo, sat at the head of the table and was introduced. He stood up and gave the speech exactly as he had heard it so many times before. There was a standing ovation when he was finished. The emcee got up and said, "You know, we are so fortunate to have such a fine resource with us tonight, and since we have a little extra time, let's have some questions and answers." The first question was asked and the chauffeur stood there dumbfounded, clearing his throat in nervousness. Finally with a flash of insight he said, "You know, that's just about the dumbest question I have ever heard. In fact it is so dumb I bet even my chauffeur could answer that question."

If you think about it some Christmas traditions are very strange.

The greeting on one certain Christmas card goes like this: "Christmas is just plain weird. What other time of year do you sit around staring at a dead tree in your living room and eat candy out of your socks."

There are some things about the whole Christmas story that are also pretty weird.

A virgin teenager gets pregnant.

Visits by angels.

Caesar's tax.

The trip to Bethlehem but no room in the Inn.

God born in a stable.

It is all too incredible to believe.

You have heard this story so many times but have you ever stopped to really think about it?

C.S. Lewis said, "we don't need to be told new ideas so much as we need to be reminded of old truths"

This Christmas we remember again the true meaning of Christmas. God gave Himself for us.

He was born as one of us so that each of us might be born again into the family of God.

That baby born in Bethlehem almost 2000 years ago is the savior of all of us.

Lets not forget the real reason for Christmas this year.

Illustr: There was a wealthy European family that decided to have their newborn baby dedicated in their enormous mansion. Dozens of guests were invited to the elaborate affair, and they all arrived dressed elegantly. After depositing their coats on a bed in an upstairs room, the guests were entertained royally. Soon the time came for the main purpose of their gathering: the infant's ceremony. But where was the baby? No one seemed to know. The child's governess ran upstairs and returned with a desperate look on her face. Everyone searched frantically for the baby. Then someone recalled having seen him asleep on one of the beds. The baby was on a bed all right—buried beneath a pile of coats, jackets, and furs. The object of that day's celebration had been forgotten, neglected, and nearly smothered.

*The baby whose birthday we celebrate at Christmas is easily hidden beneath the piles of traditions and cultural observances of the season.

We need to enter every Advent season asking, "Where's the baby?"

2. Praising – vs. 20

The shepherds had witnessed the world's greatest birth announcement. I am sure you have heard and read those words many times but let me just highlight one word and that is the word YOU.

(Lk 2:10-12) – *But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*

The angels said to the shepherds:

I bring **YOU** good news (of great joy for all the people).

A savior has been born to **YOU**.

This is a sign for **YOU**.

YOU will find the baby...

The angel's message to the shepherds was that Jesus is **YOUR** Savior, **YOUR** King, **YOUR** Christ, **YOUR** gift – straight from God.

Just for you.

*Sometimes we focus on the fact that 'God so loved the **WORLD**' that we forget 'God so loved **YOU** that He gave His only Son'.

At our house the girls had a great time going around and finding out which presents were theirs.

They can tell which gift is which because their gifts have their names on it.

The message of the angels is that Jesus is **YOUR** gift this Christmas.

The fact that Jesus came for you means that you need to respond to His incredible gift.

What will **YOU** do with Jesus?

How will **YOU** personally respond?

Don't look at the person sitting beside. Don't look at the worship teams or the pastor.

God's gift is for **YOU** and **YOU** have to determine how you will respond.

You respond through praising Him.

Someone once said, "We have become a generation of people who worship our work, work at our play and play at our worship."

*Our pews are occupied by people who want to be moved, but who don't want to move.

We crave the experience of worship but don't work towards it.

But worship is what we were created for.

*God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in him.

3. Proclaiming – vs. 17-18

The third way we respond to the gift of Christ this Christmas is by proclaiming Him.

*Treasuring Christ is something we do, not by keeping Him to ourselves but, by making Him known to the whole world.

Illustr: Luigi Tarisio was found dead one morning with hardly a comfort in his home, but with 246 exquisite violins, which he had been collecting all his life, crammed into an attic, the best in the bottom drawer of an old rickety bureau. In his very devotion to the violin, he had robbed the world of all that music all the time he treasured them; others before him had done the same, so that when the greatest of his collection, a Stradivarius, was first played it had had 147 speechless years.

Yet, how many of Christ's people are like old Tarisio?

In our very love of the church we fail to give the glad tidings to the world; in our zeal for the truth we forget to publish it.

When shall we all learn that the Good News needs not just to be cherished, but needs to be told?

All people need to hear it.

*Saving knowledge is diffused over the earth, not like sunlight but like torchlight, which is passed from hand to hand. -- James Strachan

Just like the shepherds who went away that first Christmas to tell everyone they met, there are so many who have yet to come and see Jesus.

Like the angels who interrupted the shepherds sleep the world today needs the light of Christ to come and wake us up from our sleep and point us to the one who can truly save.

(Is 9:2,6) *The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned... 6 For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.*

During the American Revolution the Battle of Blue Licks was fought at the stream that bears that name. The battle never should have been fought, for it was fought after the war was over! News traveled slowly in those days. Blue Licks is in Kentucky, and there was no quick communication over the Appalachian mountains. No one knew the war was over.

Christ won the victory over evil at Calvary.

All that is left for us to do is tell the good news

Show mini movie "Christmas really happened"