

## **Life Church Message 2011-12-25 - Christmas Exhortation**

- **Christmas Exhortation**

**Pastor Rocklyn Clarke - Sunday December 25, 2011**

**© 2011 Life Church Ministries, Inc.**

**<http://www.LifeChurchBoston.org/>**

- **New Material**
  - **Christmas Exhortation**
    - **Preparation - Luke 1:26-38**
    - **Standing Issues**
      - From a word Bishop gave me:
        - Make sure people do something with God's message.
        - Make it plain:
          - Use accessible language.
          - Use modern day parables based on every day occurrences:
            - Sitting at a stop light
            - Driving through a green light
            - Approaching a yellow light
            - Being cut off in traffic
            - Going shopping
            - Going to a mall
            - Going to school; sitting in class
            - Going to work; sitting in your office;
        - Keep it simple.
        - Use illustrations of truth out of my own experience.
      - Impart faith to obey the Word and receive God's promises.
  - **Introduction**
    - Welcome to another service at the Hampton Inn & Suites.
    - Welcome Cards -
      - “I want to call your attention to the Welcome Card that you were given on your way into the auditorium”
      - These cards do two things for us:
        - They help us get to know our new visitors better.
        - They also give anyone (visitors or members) a chance to express a need or to give us feedback.
        - By filling it out you will help us to better serve you.
      - We're going to provide time for you to complete the cards at the end of our service, but we encourage you to start filling them out now.
        - **Please use this card:**
          - if you're a **first time visitor** or if you've **never** filled one out before,

- to tell us about a **decision you made** today,
- to ask us for more information, or to give us **feedback**.

**Please include your contact information** unless we already have it. At the **end of service** we'll ask you to complete the card and then place it in the designated box or give it to someone from our staff on your way out.

- Transition

- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 
- 

- **Read the Passage - Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

- **Exegetical Idea**

God sends an angel to tell Mary she will give birth to Jesus, the Son of God.

- **What does this mean?**

- Jesus of Nazareth was actually God's son, born to a virgin named Mary.

- **Is it True? Do I believe it?**

- Yes!

- **What difference does it make? So What?**

- It makes all the difference in the world. If Jesus is really God's Son, I need to respond to him.

- **Homiletical Idea:**  
Announcing - the virgin-born Son of God.
- **Purpose of the Sermon (what listeners should do)**
  - Acknowledge the birth of Jesus that we celebrate on Christmas.
  - Reflect on the true meaning of Jesus' birth and life.
  - Examine their lives in the light of Jesus' birth.
- **Conclusion**
  - ?
  - 
  - 
  -
- **Altar Call / Welcome Cards / Communion ?**
  - Welcome Cards - refer to script
  - We're almost ready to close this portion of our service, but first we want to give you a chance to respond to what you've heard.
  - Earlier in the service we mentioned the welcome cards and we encouraged you to begin filling them out.
  - Right now we want you to complete your welcome card. We especially want you to use this card if:
    - if you're a first time visitor
    - if you've never filled one out before,
    - if you want to tell us about a decision you made today,
    - if you want to ask us for more information, or to give us feedback.
  - Please be sure to include your up to date contact information unless we already have it.
- **MC & Worship Team continue with tithes, offerings, and worship**
- **Benediction - Numbers 6:24-26**  
““The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.””
- **Men's Prayer**
- **Life Group Material**

- **Life Group Word Material**

These are sample discussion questions / topics. Your life group leaders may choose to adjust these questions, substitute new ones, or spend the Word section of the meeting in a different way altogether.

Scripture taken from the [HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION \(NIV\)](#).

Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 [International Bible Society](#). Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

- **Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

- **Discussion Questions / Topics:**

- What stands out to you as you read this passage?
- How do the circumstances of his birth affect the way you view Jesus?
- Examine their lives in the light of Jesus' birth.

- **Hebrews 1:1-4**

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

- **Discussion Questions / Topics:**

- What stands out to you as you read this passage?
- How does this passage affect the way you view Jesus?
- Based on this passage, how does Jesus fit into the big picture of God's communication to humanity?

- **Scriptures For 12/25/2011 Life Church Sermon**

Unless otherwise indicated scriptures are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV) Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

**Matthew 1:18 - 2:23**

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” — which means, “God with us.”

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, “Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him.”

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people’s chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born. “In Bethlehem in Judea,” they replied, “for this is what the prophet has written: ““But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will be the shepherd of my people Israel.””

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and make a careful search for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold and of incense and of myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled: “A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning,

Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more.”

After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, “Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child’s life are dead.”

So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

### **Luke 1:26-38**

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God.”

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

### **Luke 2:1-20**

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to his own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 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. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.”

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

### **Hebrews 1:1-4**

In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.

### **Understanding The Bible**

Unless otherwise indicated, scriptures are taken from the HOLY BIBLE, NEW INTERNATIONAL VERSION (NIV) Copyright © 1973, 1978, 1984 International Bible Society. Used by permission of Zondervan Bible Publishers.

Here, for your convenience, are the Bible passages for today's sermon at Life Church. We use mostly the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible so that you can read it in modern English. You may have been accustomed to reading or hearing the King James Version of the Bible, which uses older English (with words like "thee" , "thou", "thine", "believeth", etc.). Don't be alarmed - the passages are really from the Bible!

The Bible was originally written in three ancient languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. None of the people in the Bible, and none of the people who God used to write it spoke English. In fact, English did not even exist as a language when the Bible was written. The King James Version, first published in 1611, was a translation of the Bible from it's original languages into the every day English that people used back then - almost 400 years ago! They didn't just speak that way in church - they spoke that way with everyone. The King James Version was "modernized" in 1769, but, even so, English has certainly changed a lot since then! **We believe that if you're reading an English translation of the Bible it ought to be up to date - written in the English you speak every day. God wants you to understand his Word so that you can put it into practice!**

**Life Church Web Site: <http://www.lifechurchboston.org/>**