

Life Church Message 2012-12-23 - God In A Feeding Trough

- **God In A Feeding Trough**
Rocklyn Clarke Sr. - Sunday December 23, 2012
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<http://www.LifeChurchBoston.org/>
- **God In A Feeding Trough**
 - **Preparation**
 - **Introduction**
 - Welcome to another church meeting 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.
 - Regularly Invite People To Join Life Church
- **Transition**
 - Recent Facebook discussions.
 - People often use Jesus' most general remarks in ways that contradict his genuine intent.
 - Present the Ladder of Abstraction
http://www.rijnlandmodel.nl/english/general_semantics/abstraction_ladder.htm
 - Wealth

- Assets
- Farm Assets
- Livestock
- Cow
- Bessie
- Outsiders aren't familiar with most of what Jesus said, so they refer to his words at a high level of abstraction.
 - Love God, Love your neighbor.
 - Do not judge.
 - Love one another.
 - Love your enemies.
- If we don't familiarize ourselves with his words we'll do the same thing.
- Review what it means to be a Christian.
 - What does it mean to be a Christian?
 - "Christ" = "anointed one" - effectively "king".
 - The Disciples were first called "Christians" at Antioch - Acts 11:19-26

Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. **The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.**
 - "Christian" = "belonging to Christ".
- Christians follow Jesus
 - Jesus' people know his voice and follow him - John 10:22-30

Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not

my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."

- Remind them of how we illustrated "following" with "Simon Says".
- As followers of Jesus, we gather on Sundays (The Lord's Day) to celebrate him.
- This Sunday is special because it precedes the day when we celebrate Jesus' birth.

- **Read the Passage**

- **Matthew 1:18-25**

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.

- **Exegetical Idea**

Jesus is God with us.

- **Purpose of the Sermon (what listeners should do)**

- Recognize that Jesus reveals God to us.
- Acknowledge the self-sacrificial love that God reveals in Jesus.
- Rely on Jesus for your understanding of God.

- **Recognize that Jesus reveals God to us.**

- Jesus is God's agent - **Colossians 1:13-20**
- God speaks through Jesus - **Hebrews 1:1-4**

- **Acknowledge the self-sacrificial love that God reveals in Jesus.**

- Jesus came in vulnerability (God in a feeding trough). - **Luke 2:8-15**
- Jesus didn't take advantage of his divinity. - **Philippians 2:1-11**

- Jesus' sacrificial love reveals God's sacrificial love.
- Crucifixion was a dishonorable death.
 - It was used for people who were not Roman citizens.
 - Roman citizens were executed by beheading.
 - The cashiering scene from "Branded" is an example of public dishonor.
 - Wikipedia entry:
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Branded_%28TV_series%29
 - Internet Movie Database entry:
<http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0058792/>
 - Cashiering Scene:
<http://www.fiftiesweb.com/tv/branded.htm>
- **Rely on Jesus for your understanding of God.**
 - Jesus believed it - "I and the Father are one" - John 10:30
 - Jesus uniquely reveals God to us. - **Matthew 11:25-30**
 - Put Jesus' words into practice. - **Matthew 7:21-27**
- **Discussion Questions & Topics**
 - Did any items from the passages above jump out at you? Discuss.
 - Now that you've read these passages, what will you be working on?
- **Conclusion**
 - What did you learn?
 - How are you going to keep this conversation going?
 - Where will you keep this conversation going?
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- **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 \(NIV\)](#).

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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.”

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Luke 2:8-15

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.”

Philippians 2:1-11

If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death — even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Colossians 1:13-20

For he has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

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.

Matthew 11:25-30

At that time Jesus said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure.

"All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Matthew 7:21-27 - Put Jesus' Words Into Practice

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

Discussion Questions & Topics

- Pick one of the above passages that you found particularly striking.
- What did you learn about Jesus from this passage?
- What did you learn about God through this passage?
- In what ways did you experience God's sacrificial love this past week?
- In what ways did you demonstrate God's sacrificial love this past week?
- What is God saying to you right now?

- **Scriptures For 12/23/2012 Life Church Sermon**

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Life Church Mission Statement

Our mission is to teach people:

to enjoy knowing Jesus without fear, inadequacy, guilt, or shame,
 to follow him together as his family,
 to function together as his body,
 and to work together to expand his kingdom.

Understanding The Bible

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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!**