

child's humble birth and to shepherds in their fields. Think about the humble beginnings of Jesus' life on earth and the relatively small band of followers who carried on his mission and ministry. Still, Jesus is considered the most influential person in history. What do you think? Write your ideas here praying for God to humbly reveal himself to you that you may celebrate the true meaning of Jesus' birth.

Thursday, December 28

Read Luke 1:26-38. This scripture is one of those humble announcements about the birth of the world's savior. Mary, the mother of Jesus, was perplexed by the greeting of the angel, Gabriel. Actually, it seems that Mary was very composed considering that an angel was visiting her! Certainly the news that she was going to bear a child before her marriage was finalized and she was a virgin was not necessarily welcomed news. Our desire to control our lives leads to fear when we begin to lose control over our lives. The more afraid we become, the harder we try to maintain control and the more desperate and afraid we become. It can be a vicious cycle. What emotions do you experience and what thoughts go through your mind when you're trying to exert control in your life? Meditate upon that question and write your response here.

Friday, December 29

Read John 1:1-14. As the Gospel of John puts it, when we receive Christ and believe in his name, we are given "power to become children of God, who were born not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13). The true meaning of Jesus' birth is that we become children of God, whole and healed of our human frailties through faith in God and Jesus the Christ. Celebrate your life that is meaningful in God's eyes as we look forward to a bless New Year!

Message Notes – December 24, 2023

Fully Human, Fully Divine ***- The Best Baby Reveal Ever!****

- I. "_____ parties have been around for a decade and a half.
 - A. Most people agree this began with a simple post on social media in _____, when a woman named Jenna Karvunidis and her husband cut into a cake revealing pink icing for a girl.
 1. She posted about it on her blog, and the idea soon went _____.
 2. But since social media makes everything a _____, gender reveal parties have really gotten out of control.
 3. We now tend to over-script and over-celebrate most things in life to impress _____.
 - B. The same tendency applies to _____, too.
 1. Bob Kaylor, writes, "Christmas is about celebrating the birth of a baby, but we're so scripted and overzealous in our celebration that we miss the real _____ of the event."
 2. Many of the people who celebrate Christmas in our culture have only a vague notion that it has to do with a _____.
- II. When God reveals the coming arrival of his Son, it isn't at a _____, nor is it a _____ event.
 - A. The reveal takes place in some _____ places.
 - B. God isn't interested in making the _____ of Jesus a media event.
 - C. Luke makes this clear and, in a way, sets up a contrast between Jesus and _____.
 1. Caesar Augustus didn't do _____ without making it a media event!

*Luke 2:1-20

2. Augustus had coins minted announcing that he was a “son of _____”
3. “_____” was a title reserved for Caesar, as was “Prince of _____.”

III. Luke makes it clear in telling these announcement stories that Jesus is the _____ Son of God, the world’s _____ Lord, and the _____ bringer of peace.

- A. The announcement appears in _____ places to people who are _____ – at least in the world’s eyes.
- B. And the announcement of Jesus’ birth isn’t just, “It’s a boy!” It’s an announcement about his _____.
 1. Paul wrote, “For the grace of God has appeared, bringing _____ to all. (Titus 2:11)
 2. In Jesus, God has fully identified with humanity broken by sin and offered us new _____, new _____, made possible in his _____ over sin in his death and resurrection from the dead.
- C. As the Gospel of John puts it, we are given “power to become _____ of God, who were born not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13)
 1. The Savior of the world has been revealed and laid in a _____.
 2. We, too, can be revealed as people made new by his sacrificial and forgiving _____.
 3. Now that’s worth celebrating! No _____ required.

Daily Devotional Guide

The following is a daily devotional and study guide meant to enhance your understanding of the message and grow as a Christian.

It is offered for your personal reflection or to share with others.

Monday, December 25

Merry Christmas!! Pastor Jack often shares the tradition of his family to read the Christmas story from the Bible (Matthew 1:18-25 or Luke 2:1-20) before opening gifts. We’ve talked about how Mary surrendered her will to God’s will in order for Jesus to be born. We need to understand that surrender is never partial and it is not a onetime event but rather a daily decision and discipline. Ponder these ideas as you enjoy your celebration of Christ’s birth. Be blessed and be safe! Merry Christmas!

Tuesday, December 26

Read Luke 2:1-20. The beginning of the message was all about Gender Reveal Parties and Events. People tend to go “overboard” on these gatherings all for the sake of social media and we tend to go overboard on Christmas also. Pastor Jack suggested that you “Google” Gender Reveal Events and you will find no shortage of failed reveals from stuff blowing up to the wrong reveal! Thankfully, with one known exception, there is no loss of life; just embarrassment and perhaps some bumps and bruises. Do we over-script the events in our lives all in the hope of media fame? Do we tend to make more of the events of our lives than we should?

Comedian, Tig Notaro, does a routine in which a mother posts that her five year son is going into kindergarten. The mother ends the post by writing, “Can you believe it?” Notaro comments, “Yeah. What is he? About five years old? Seems right. I can believe that.” Think about this idea of over-scripting our lives and write your thoughts here.

Wednesday, December 27

Read Luke 2:1-20. As mentioned in the message, God isn’t interested in grand gesture announcing the birth of his Son, Jesus the Christ. Jesus’ birth is announced to rather obscure people in nowhere places. News of the birth was revealed to a young woman in a small town, through prophets who foretold of the