

**THE TRADITION OF CELEBRATION**  
**Christmas Traditions, Part 2**  
December 20<sup>th</sup>, 2009

Luke 2:8-20 (NLT) "That night some shepherds were in the fields outside the village, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terribly frightened, but the angel reassured them, 'Don't be afraid!' he said. 'I bring you good news of great joy for everyone! The Savior – yes, the Messiah, the Lord – has been born tonight in Bethlehem, the city of David!'... Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others – the armies of heaven – praising God: 'Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to all whom God favors;'... The shepherds went back to their fields and flocks, glorifying and praising God for what the angels had told them, and because they had seen the child, just as the angel had said."

At Christmas we celebrate Jesus because of the hope. He gives to those who believe in Him Matthew 12:18-21 (NLT) "Look at My Servant, who I have chosen. He is My Beloved, and I am very pleased with Him. I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not fight or shout; He will not raise His voice in public. He will not crush those who are weak, or quench the smallest hope, until He brings full justice with His final victory. And His name will be the hope of all the world."

God saw our hopelessness, and out of love came Christmas

**How To Celebrate My Hope This Christmas**

**1. Open your eyes to those hurting around you**

There is a special place on God's heart for people in the "margins" - orphans, widows, prisoners, aliens, homeless, poor, hungry, sick and the disabled Deuteronomy 10:18-19 (NIV) "God defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the alien, giving him food and clothing. And you are to love those who are aliens, for you yourselves were aliens in Egypt."

The example of Jesus compels us to do good deeds Philippians 2:3-5 (GN) "...be humble toward one another, always considering others better than yourselves. And look out for one another's interests, not just for your own. The attitude you should have is the one that Christ Jesus had."

Acts 10:38 (NLT) "No doubt you know that God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power. Then Jesus went around doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the Devil, for God was with Him."

Good deeds and the Good News can't and shouldn't be separated

Ministering and serving are the normal expressions of Christian living

*"We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give."* Winston Churchill

One of the greatest gifts you can give to anyone is the gift of time

**2. Put together a broken relationship**

The Good News of Christmas is Christ came to repair our broken relationship with God

1 Peter 3:18 (GN) "For Christ died for sins once and for all, a good man on behalf of sinners, in order to lead you to God."

2 Timothy 2:5-6 (GN) "For there is one God, and there is one who brings God and human beings together, the man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself to redeem the whole human race."

When we become Christians God puts a desire & the ability to reconcile with others – to make things right with others

Matthew 5:23-24 (GN) "So if you are about to offer your gift to God at the altar and there you remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar, go at once and make peace with your brother, and then come back and offer your gift to God."

You can't truly celebrate the real meaning of Christmas if there is a broken relationship in your life that you should make better

Most of the relationships in our life that are messed up we can put back together

Human forgiveness and human love run out – that's why you need God's love  
Colossians 3:13 (NLT) "You must make allowance for each other's faults and forgive the person who offends you. Remember, the Lord forgave you, so you must forgive others."

### 3. Enjoy God's blessings

Remember where the good in your life comes from  
James 1:17 (GN) "Every good gift and every perfect present comes from heaven; it comes down from God, the Creator of the heavenly lights, who does not change or cause darkness by turning."

Be grateful for all of the good things in your life and all the ways God has blessed you

Psalms 100:4,5 (NLT) "Enter His gates with thanksgiving, go into His courts with praise. Give thanks to Him and bless His name. For the Lord is good. His unfailing love continues forever, and His faithfulness continues to each generation."

Too often we focus on what we don't have rather than what we do have

Don't feel guilty because God has blessed you but be willing to share with others  
Ecclesiastes 3:13 (GN) "All of us should eat and drink and enjoy what we have worked for. It is God's gift."  
Ecclesiastes 5:19 (GN) "If God gives us wealth and property and lets us enjoy them, we should be grateful and enjoy what we have worked for. It is a gift from God."

#### My Next Step Today Is:

- I will look to help someone who is hurting this Christmas season
- I want to ask God to help me put together a broken relationship
- I will memorize James 1:17
- I want to be in a small group beginning in January