

December 22nd

Advent 2019

—A SEASON OF HOPE—



“My little plans are crumbs scattered on the ground. This is all I have learned about living here, plodding along, and finding God. My well-laid plans are no longer my foundation.”

—Kate Bowler, Everything Happens for a Reason and Other Lies I've Loved

“HOPE FOR THE POOR IN SPIRIT”

Introduction: The “Christmas Spirit” & the “Poor in Spirit”

- During this time of year, it's common for people refer to “the Christmas Spirit.” The expectations associated with this season can often lead to sadness and disappointment because we do not find ourselves to be “in” the Christmas spirit. For some, a sense of loss, disappointment, and even emptiness can characterize us during this season, and for most, feelings such as these are often interspersed among the more traditional feelings associated with Christmas.
- As a season of reflection, Advent is a time when we should not seek to minimize or avoid these sorts of feelings but should instead seek to understand them in light of the coming of Christ.
- During His First Advent, the Lord Jesus spoke to and of those whose situations in life had made them aware of their deepest needs, and He promised them that He had come to meet those needs.

Matt. 5:3-6—³ “Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. ⁴ Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. ⁵ Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. ⁶ Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.”

Key Point: We must recognize that the negative feelings and emotions that are associated with life in a fallen world are meant to _____ us to receive the Lord Jesus and to _____ us that our only true and lasting hope is found in Him!

The Poor in Spirit in the Birth Narratives: Mary & the Shepherds

Galilee Considered

Mary's Song - Luke 1:46-56

- The words of Mary in “The Magnificat” demonstrate her understanding of her own situation as well as that of her people, Israel, in light of God's promises.

Some Observations:

- (1) She recognized that, although she was a humble peasant girl, the Lord had set her apart for His purposes.
- (2) She recognized that God's promises have _____ benefit for those who fear Him.

Luke 1:49-50—⁴⁹ “For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name. ⁵⁰ “AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM. (NASB)

- ⇒ These verses include a quotation from Psalm 103, where David speaks of the personal blessings of knowing the Lord and recounts God's love for His people.
- ⇒ In 103:15-19, the context from which the quote (103:17) is taken, a contrast is made between men in general and those who fear the Lord.

- (3) She recognized that God alone _____ the longings of the souls of His people.

Luke 1:53—“HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; And sent away the rich empty-handed.” (NASB)

- ⇒ This verse includes a quotation from Psalm 107, the beginning of the 5th Book of the Psalms, where the psalmist recounts how the redeemed of the Lord respond in faith to the Lord in the midst of their difficulty, and experience the blessings of His salvation.
- ⇒ Psalm 107:10-16, the context from which the quote (107:9) is taken, describes how the longings and desires of God's people are satisfied as they dwell with Him.

Key Point: When we experience the _____ of life in a fallen world and are overcome by the _____ of our hearts, we must remind ourselves of all is ours in Christ.

Shepherds Considered

The Angels' Proclamation to the Shepherds - Luke 2:8-20

- The message of the birth of the Redeemer-King was proclaimed not to royalty, but to those of lowly estate.

Some Observations:

(1) This message came to the shepherds along with a revelation of God's glory.

⇒ Throughout Scripture God's glory is representative of His presence among His people (Exod. 40:34-35; 1 Kings 8:10-11).

(2) They responded with reverence and were encouraged and exhorted by the angel.

Luke 2:10-12—¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

⇒ The angel's message was that Messiah, the Lord had come! (Isa. 40:9)

(3) The heavenly hosts of God then appeared and proclaimed the _____ that God had accomplished through Jesus.

Luke 2:13-14—¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

⇒ Through Christ, sinful men and women can have _____ with God! (Micah 5:4-5a)

(4) The shepherds responded with _____ faith, and went to find the child.

⇒ Upon finding the child, they proclaimed what they had heard, and worshiped the Lord together.

Luke 2:16-20—¹⁶ And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

Key Point: The gospel is _____ to us when we are poor in spirit because it reminds us that God has not forsaken us, but has sought and found us through the coming of the Lord Jesus.

The Incarnation & Hope for the Poor in Spirit

1. The Lord Jesus offers _____ to those who are poor in spirit!

John 8:37-39—³⁷ On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, "If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink. ³⁸ Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, 'Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.'" ³⁹ Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

2. The poor in spirit are _____ in Christ!

Eph. 1:7-14—⁷ In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, ⁸ which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight ⁹ making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

¹¹ In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.