

"Four 'R's' of Christmas"

Matthew 1.18-25

FUNDAMENTALS OF EDUCATION - 3 'R's' reading, writing, rithmetic

What is Essence of CHRISTMAS – Basic Message CHRISTIAN FAITH

1. RESPONSIBILITY - God expects us to Do the Right Thing

Joseph is GOOD EXAMPLE of This, Mary Teen / Joseph 20's or More

Young Jewish Kids in NAZARETH – Both from the HOUSE of DAVID

Engagement // Equivalent to MARRIAGE – 1 BIG Exception

They did NOT LIVE Together - SEXUAL Relations were NOT Allowed

During ENGAGEMENT they Made Themselves Ready for Each Other HUSBAND worked to Provide for HOUSE & MEANS of SUPPORT

Nothing Would have been MORE Heartbreaking to YOUNG MAN

His Beloved UNFAITHFUL to him > Knew Another Man > Pregnant!

OLD STORY – Common Occurrence TODAY – MODERN Solutions

1. ABORTION – murder of Little Unborn child

2. LIVE TOGETHER - who needs a piece of paper anyway

3. BABY W/OUT Marriage – GOAL of Relationship, Not GROUNDS

God's Best 4 Kid – Married Mom & Dad LOVE Each Other & Child

1 in 4 Children in America Father @ Home / USA Highest % World

Fathers Parent Differently than Mothers, providing Physically Stimulating Play, influencing Academic Achievement and Gender Identity.

Fatherless Children: more likely commit CrimeS, Substance Abuse

Eating Disorders, Depression, Suicide, and Poverty, Teenage Parenthood

Kids w Fathers Engaged - more likely to be Responsible, Mature, Motivated to Work, Physically Protect Wives

Academic & Behavioral: Children with Fathers Present Perform Better in School, Less Likely to Repeat Grades, Better Social-Emotional Skills, Fatherless Children Higher Risks 4 Behavioral Disorders & Lower Focus

Mental Health: Higher rates of Depression, Anxiety, Low Self-Esteem, and Emotional Insecurity are seen in children with Absent Parents.

Societal Risks: Fatherless kids @ greater risk Poverty, Substance Abuse (70%+ in treatment centers), Teen Pregnancy (7x higher), Prison

What did Righteous JOSEPH do w/ a PREGNANT FIANCÉE?

Righteous: Responsible Moral Agent – Consequences to HIS Actions

LAW of Moses Allowed for Divorce > Joseph wanted Quietly Divorce

Matthew 1.19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

Dr PSYCHIATRY: "Patients w/ problems of humiliation are the most difficult to treat...Humiliation is perhaps the most persistent of all emotions...old humiliations stay with us for life. They wake us out of deep sleep & flush our face w/ shame & anger even when we are alone"

Joseph Humiliated Big Time: Coconut Wireless Buzzing all Nazareth

Christmas / Christianity > is about RESPONSIBILITY

God wants us to Make Things RIGHT > Love God & Neighbor

Cannot LOVE Neighbor CAN See, How can Love God Cannot See?

Christmas & Xianity: God making things Right, Expects Us to do Same Jesus was MOST

Responsible Man to Live on Earth

Came to DIE for IRRESPONSIBLE People like ME

2. REDEMPTION - God knows we Cannot Do the Right Thing

Matthew 1 Long list of Jewish baby boys - Abraham, to David, to Jesus

ALL Fathered by SOMEONE – But One had NO Human Father

Matthew 1.16 Joseph, the husband of Mary of whom Jesus was born Jesus, who is called Christ

JOSEPH had NO ADVANCE WARNING Matthew 1.18 before they came together, Mary was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit

Matthew 1:20 LATER an angel of the appeared to him in a dream, saying Joseph son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

On Mission of Redemption – Came into the WORLD to SAVE SINNERS

Matt 1.21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

High Born Hindu Woman in India realized she was NOT Right w/ GOD

"I need a very great prince to stand between my soul and God"

Asked a Servant to READ her the NEW TESTAMENT

Opened Matthew 1 Began w/ GENEALOGY, SHE THOUGHT: "what a very great prince this must be, to have such a long line of ancestors"

When she HEARD vs. 21 "he will save his people from their sins"

She EXCLAIMED "this is the Prince I want! this is the Prince I need!"

Luke 19.10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.

Romans 5.8 God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

1 Timothy 1.15 Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance:
Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners

Sad Reality: Military VETERANS – Risked LIVES, Many WOUNDED, Many saw CLOSE
FRIENDS DIE, Some Lost their LIMBS

Return HOME - CRITICIZED - REJECTED – Some even SPAT UPON

FEW THANKED THEM - FEW APPRECIATED THEIR SACRIFICE

For Many Today the Sacrifice of Jesus is Despised and Ignored

Tragic POSSIBILITY that Christ's REDEMPTION is Not for YOU

1829 GEORGE WILSON convicted of murder in Pennsylvania

Sentenced EXECUTION – Pardoned by President Andrew JACKSON WILSON Refused, Insist
NO PARDON unless Wins Case Supreme Court

Chief Justice John Marshall: "a pardon is a paper, the value of which depends upon its acceptance by the person implicated. It is hardly to be supposed that one under the sentence of death would refuse to accept a pardon, but if its refused its no pardon. George Wilson must be hanged" & He was HANGED

3. REMAINS God knows How We Are & Still Wants to Be With Us

ALL this Fulfillment of God's PROMISE to ISAIAH-700 yrs before 7.14

Virgin will be w child & will give birth to a Son & will call him Immanuel

God NOT COMING for a CHRISTMAS Visit - BUT to BE WITH US

Most of our LIFE we Try to HIDE WHO we REALLY ARE -

Ritual of Dating: Find Out who Spend Rest of Life With > Hide Real Self!

spend great amounts of time and money preparing ourselves
 Wear CLOTHES we've Never Worn - EAT in Places NEVER Eaten
 2 People spend TIME Together - HOPING NOT to be FOUND OUT
 GET MARRIED – Surprise!! - HAD YOU FOOLED, DIDN'T I!!

Not So with GOD - HE KNOWS US - Inside AND Out

Better than we Know Ourselves > HE IS OUR MAKER

"you're very person, I care about, just like you are, I want to be with you"

Angels said to Shepherds 2.10 "bring you" GOOD NEWS/ GREAT JOY

NOT Caesar, King of JEWS – High Priest - Shepherds/Sinners Outcasts

WORK PREVENTED THEM FROM GOING TO TEMPLE

Perhaps Drinking to Keep Warm: Planning Crimes? Who Knows? GOD!

DAYS of TRANSCONTINENTAL Railroad ACROSS AMERICA

Bottle Neck > Stop for Water to COOL ENGINES: DELAY Schedule

Problem Solved: Place Metal Trough ¼ mile long in Middle of Track

Train Kept Full Speed & Scooped up Water > Cooled Train as Raced On

Many of Us Tonight > Christmas Rush > Need God in our Busy Lives!

Some think this HOUR will Carry You through until NEXT YEAR

Have you come to Know the Joy of a Relationship with Christ?

Do you Know the Lord as MORE than a Force but HEAVENLY Father?

Jesus MORE than ANCIENT HISTORY - Savior, Healer, Friend

HOLY SPIRIT brings the Power, Presence, and Comfort of God

Some Feel Come to Church = Grandpa in Rest Home/ Dentist Root Canal Don't LIKE to GO -

BUT FEEL GUILTY IF YOU DON'T SEE HIM

RC's: "cannot have God as Father, unless have Church as your Mother"

Agree > Not JUST Roman Church > THEY DO > True Church of Jesus

John 1.12 to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God

4. REJECTION Doing RIGHT Thing for God is Never Popular

No Bachelor PARTY for Joseph > No BRIDAL SHOWER for Mary

God Explained 2 Them: Coconut Wireless Buzzing, Tongues Wag

Rejected from any Comfortable LODGING in Bethlehem

Rejected by King Herod > who Killed All Baby Boys in Bethlehem

NO Baby Shower at Their Homecoming in Nazareth: Illegitimate Child

Isa 53.3 He was despised & rejected by men, man of sorrows & familiar w/ suffering

Being Righteous NOT bring this 1st Family any REWARDS

World returns our LOVE with HATRED > Follow CRUCIFIED Master

Psalms 118.22 "The stone the builders rejected has become the capstone"

Lk 9.22 Jesus "Son of Man must suffer many things & be rejected...he must be killed & on 3rd day be raised to life"

Serene Moment of CANDLELIGHT Service > Warm Feelings: NICE!

Jesus NOT Against WARM FEELINGS > But Speaks TRUTH in LOVE

1. RESPONSIBILITY - God expects us to Do the Right Thing

Strive to BE Standard of Righteousness in an Unrighteous World

2. REDEMPTION - God knows we Cannot Do the Right Thing

Blood & Sweat, Life & Death, Heaven & Hell Bears Sins upon Cross

Christ removes our SHAME and Takes Away our GUILT

3. REMAINS God Knows How we are & Still wants to Be with Us

Warts

and All > He has made a Covenant Promise to be Faithful

4. REJECTION Doing God's Right Thing is Never Popular

Bonehoeffer "when Jesus calls a man, he calls him to come and die"

IF Really want Merry Christmas > Follow Tonight & Rest of LIFE

Matthew 1.18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Luke 1.46-55 Song of Praise: The Magnificat

Mary said, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant.

For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;

for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.

And his mercy is for those who fear him

from generation to generation.

He has shown strength with his arm;

he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts;

he has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate;

he has filled the hungry with good things, and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy,

as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever." Amen and Amen.