

Christmas Is an Announcement

Isaiah 52:7-10

PW Emerson – 12/23/2018 – Ten:27 Ministries

Why are there accounts of Jesus' birth?

After all, he came to die for us – crucifixion & resurrection are certainly important.

Why note his birth?

Let me read you an announcement from the bible:

⁷How beautiful on the mountains
are the feet of those who bring good news,
who proclaim peace,
who bring good tidings,
who proclaim salvation,
who say to Zion,
"Your God reigns!"
⁸Listen! Your watchmen lift up their voices;
together they shout for joy.
When the LORD returns to Zion,
they will see it with their own eyes.
⁹Burst into songs of joy together,
you ruins of Jerusalem,
for the LORD has comforted his people,
he has redeemed Jerusalem.
¹⁰The LORD will lay bare his holy arm
in the sight of all the nations,
and all the ends of the earth will see
the salvation of our God.

I'm sure you recognize lots of pieces about the Christmas event.

However, this piece was written hundreds of years earlier.

It is from Isaiah 52:7-10

It was written in a time when God's people were occupied by the Babylonians.

God's people were living in exile.

Their land had been destroyed.

They could no longer offer sacrifices in the temple.

The people couldn't help but wonder if the promises made to Abraham and Jacob would end.

That piece from Isaiah was written as words of assurance, telling the people that the situation they were in was not permanent.

It said, in verse 7, "how beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news."

- They were bringing the good news that the exile was over!

God will deliver them and there will be great joy!

Fast forward 500 years later

God's chosen people are living under Roman oppression and they are again wondering if they would ever be free ... would they have their own nation again?

The Christmas story was an announcement to reassure the people that God is in control, that God reigns supreme!

Luke 2:10

¹⁰But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

Both the piece in Isaiah & Luke echoed "good news" which is the translation from "gospel"

God is bringing good news to the people.

That same announcement is needed today.

We live in a time and place where Christianity is shrinking.

More and more we wonder, will there ever be a Christian nation?

Christmas is an announcement of Emmanu El – God with us!

Most of us are familiar with the old Popeye the Sailor cartoons. Inevitably, Popeye would find himself in a bad situation. He'd get beat up by Bluto and he'd be worn out and weak. So, he'd turn to his trusted can of spinach. As soon as he'd eat the spinach, his muscles would grow, his strength would be revealed. And it was usually impressive. Popeye's muscles would be pictured as a battleship, or as a powder keg of dynamite. He revealed his strength by showing his arm – his muscle.

Much like Popeye, God reveals his arm for you.

God rolled up his sleeve, revealed his muscle, and went to work to deliver you and I.

God unwrapped his glorious might by allowing himself to be wrapped up as a small child in swaddling clothes and placed in a manger.

The Savior laid bare his powerful arm by covering himself in flesh.

Illustration by Edward Frey on Jan 28, 2003 on Sermon Central

It is announced that **GOD IS WITH US!**

In Genesis, with the creation, God brought order to chaos.

In Egypt, God again brought order to his people, out of the chaos they lived in as slaves.

We are now living in a time and place where there is chaos all around.

You can't hear the news of the country or the world without hearing news of chaos!

Now, more than ever, we need order in the midst of the chaos.

We need God to be with us. Emmanuel!

You and I live in a time and place where we love news.

When your phone vibrates, you are *quick* to check it, to get the message!

Obviously, people don't like bad messages.

We like good messages – good news.

That's what God brings us!

During biblical times, there were two jobs/positions of people who got the news first.

Runners:

If you were a good distance runner, you would often be used as a messenger.

You had the message being brought to a person, town, army, leader, or more.

Watchman:

Watchmen were positioned on the tower or wall to see oncoming people.

They would be the first to meet the runners, to hear the news, before it was passed along to others.

In Isaiah 52, the runners brought the message of deliverance and the watchmen got the message and shouted with great joy!

Runners today aren't used as messengers.

And there are no longer watchmen.

So, who today, who will share the words of God's good news?

Who will tell of God's salvation?

Who will usher in celebrations of God's deliverance?

Once when I was leading a youth group, I used this piece from Isaiah for a youth group activity.

We had a beautiful feet contest.

We decorated everyone's feet ...

- Nail polish
- Rub-on tattoos
- Ankle bracelet

When we were done, people shared why they decorated with what they did.

Then I had someone read John 13:1-5, the piece about Jesus washing his disciple's feet.

While it was being read, I went around and washed everyone's feet

Let me read the last few verses from that piece.

John 13:12-15

¹²When he had finished washing their feet, he returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. ¹³"You call me

'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. ¹⁴Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. ¹⁵I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.

We are to do that for others. That's what Jesus commands of his disciples.
We can't win the beautiful feet contest if we aren't washing another's feet.
We can't win if we aren't following the example Jesus set for us.

So, who today, who will share the words of God's good news?
Who will tell of God's salvation?
Who will usher in celebrations of God's deliverance?

We will.

We do it with our

- Oil changes
- Thanksgiving Baskets

We do it with our ...

- Words
- Hugs
- Smiles
- And our actions of love.

2500 years ago, messengers brought words of good news to the exiles.
2000 year ago, angels brought words of good news to those in captivity.

People today are looking for a savior, looking for someone to provide hope.

People are craving love, someone who ***REALLY*** cares.

And God looks to us to bring the GOOD NEWS of Christ to the people.

Let's do that this Christmas!