

CELEBRATING CHRISTMAS THE ORIGINAL WAY

Luke 2:17-20

Introduction: Ever get tired of the "same old thing?" Or the "same old way of doing things?" What about Christmas? How different are you treating Christmas this year than you did last year, or the year before that, or the year before that? Do you celebrate Christmas the same way every year? Do the same things the same way? Have you ever celebrated Christmas the way it was celebrated when God started it? Read the Christmas story over again and this time take note of how it was celebrated. There is an example for us:

I. LET US CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS BY TELLING WHAT WE HAVE SEEN AND HEARD!

1. The Shepherds had something to tell:
 - The world had been waiting for centuries for their news.
 - Their news was far superior to what was "news" in their day.
 - They had seen angels, heard Heaven's music and had seen the God-Child.
 - THEY COULD NOT BE SILENT!
 - We, too, have something that demands to be told: Jesus' birth, the Cross, the Grave, the Resurrection, Salvation.
2. What the Shepherds Told, They FIRST Got From Heaven.
 - They did not learn it from books or tradition.
 - What they told was revealed to them by God's own angel.
 - It was revealed for them to go tell others.
 - We, too, have a message that like the Shepherds' that came to us from above, from Heaven!
3. The Shepherds Saw as Well as Heard.
 - They were told, then they saw for themselves, the babe. Proof that what they heard was true.
 - Our message must come from our hearts also before crossing our lips proving that we believe what we are saying.
 - Who among us has not tasted the work of God or been recipient of His favor? We also know "first hand."
4. The Shepherds Were Not Prophets.
 - They were unlearned men.
 - God can and wants to use everyone.
 - Everyone CAN be used: preachers, teachers, choir, at jobs, at dinner tables, in class rooms, everywhere.

II. LET US CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS WITH HOLY WONDER, ADMIRATION AND ADORATION

1. Many just wonder and are content to hear, enjoy, be happy, accepting, joyful, amazed, but stop there.
2. Something is missing. Think! God's love, His death, His resurrection, His appeal to "whosoever would believe" should bring deep thought. Cause us to try to avoid sin, to move us to live a life of gratitude, worship, love and confidence.
3. More than just a "respectful" wonder but a wonder that produces a changed life.
4. It is so easy and it has been the "traditional" way to show all this just at this time of the year and maybe Easter. Let us celebrate Christmas with Holy wonder, admiration and adoration throughout the entire year, let us make it a way of life.

III. LET US CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS BY PONDERING AND PRESERVING

1. Mary remembered what she had experienced. She pondered them over and over in her mind and heart. She thought about the experience and was deeply touched, never to be the same again.
2. We can tell others about what we have received from God and we can sit still with Jesus, honoring Him in quiet peace. We can love Him, praise Him, study Him, and imitate Him.
3. We can be like Mary and treasure up everything about Jesus we have heard, read and experienced.

IV. WE CAN CELEBRATE CHRISTMAS BY GOING ABOUT OUR EVERYDAY LIFE

1. The Shepherds returned to their regular way of life.
 - You don't have to be an evangelist, pastor or missionary.
 - Go about your regular way of life but celebrate Christmas every day, not just once a year.
2. The Shepherds honored God by Praising Him.
 - Songs, Hymns are a wonderful way to express what is in your heart. Sing to and about the Lord Jesus.
3. They praised God for what they had seen and heard.
 - We, too, have experienced much from God that is worth praising Him about. Think about your own life. What can you praise God about? Start with His saving you.

CONCLUSION:

1. Make this Christmas different from all the rest. Celebrate it like it was first celebrated.
2. You know things about God that the world needs to hear about, now go and tell.
3. Be like the Shepherds, they were excited about what they had been told and what they had seen, what they had experienced and hurried off to tell everybody who would listen.