

Welcome to New Life !

We are very pleased you are here. It is an honor to have you as our guest today! This information is provided to help you feel welcome and "at home."

Worship in Singing & Giving

- We leave how to worship up to you as an individual. During **singing** worship some people remain seated, some stand, others kneel, many clap, and some lift their hands. The outward expression is not the issue - it is what is in your heart that counts. Just relax and enjoy the presence of God.
- If you would like to receive personal **prayer** during worship with singing, you may go to one of the Prayer Teams located at the back of the sanctuary.
- Invitation is given for **tithes and offerings**. If you are our guest, please do not feel obligated to contribute when God's tithes and offerings are received.

Worship in Sharing God's Love

Expressions of greeting and God's love are extended to all, especially to our guests.

Worship in Meditating on God's Word

Teaching from the Bible for about 35 minutes.

We encourage you to use our **staffed Nursery** [which has a private nursing room] and **Children's Churches** during the service. Please ask an usher for assistance in locating the various rooms.

{turn page over}

Pastor Bob Wine

December 21, 2008

WHAT IS CHRISTMAS ALL ABOUT?

"It's all about relationship"

Luke 2:8-10

What is so special about Christmas?

- An angel gave three reasons for celebrating Christmas

Luke 2:8-10 "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.'"

Why We Still Celebrate Christmas Today ...

1. CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT **CELEBRATION**

- Did you know God likes parties? The angel said, "I bring you good news of great joy ..."

- God loves us, for who we are, not for what we do.

John 3:16, "God so loved the world [so much] that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal [or everlasting] life."

- God not only loves you, but He's **with you**. Another name for Jesus is Emmanuel, which means "God is with us."

- God is also **for you**, not against you.

John 3:17 - "God did not send His Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it."

Our role is to point people to the Way, to everlasting life.
It's good news of great joy for everybody.

2. CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT **SALVATION**

Luke 2:11 "Today, in the town of David [Bethlehem] a savior has been born to **you** ..."

- A "savior" is like a lifeguard; they are worthless if you don't feel a need to be saved or rescued.

Matthew 1:21 "Give Him the name Jesus because **He will save** His people from their sin."

Digging Deeper

For personal or small group study

Week of December 21, 2008

“What is Christmas All About?”

Christmas was God’s idea. He planned when it would happen, how it would happen, where it would happen, and why it would happen. And since it was His idea, we should find out what He had in mind. Read Luke 2:8-10.

Group Discussion

1. Briefly share your favorite Christmas memory. Is there anything distracting you from experiencing the joy of Christmas this season?
2. Which of the following statements is the most meaningful to you in this season of your life and why? God loves you. God is with you. God is for you. [John 3:16-17; Psalm 139:7-10; Hebrews 13:5; Romans 8:31] If you believe that God loves you, is with you, and is for you, what is one thought, attitude or behavior that you need to change?
3. Read Romans 8:35-39 and underline or highlight the phrase that means the most to you. Briefly explain why you selected that phrase. Now that you know how much God loves you, how will that affect the way you celebrate Christmas this year?
4. What does it mean to you that your sins are forgiven? How did you first experience God’s forgiveness in your life?
5. Read Ephesians 2:8 and Matthew 5:16. If God saves us by His grace, and not our works, then why are “good works” important? [Ephesians 2:10; Titus 3:4-5, 14; Galatians 6:9-10]
6. A peacemaker is a person who builds people up and compliments them more than he criticizes. Read Romans 5:1, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20 and Matthew 5:19, then discuss what these verses are teaching. Who do we need to make peace with and rebuild broken relationships? How do you make peace with God? with others?

- Sin is an independent **attitude**, not a behavior. The behavior only exposes the wrong attitude.

- Jesus came to set you free from your defeating sin by forgiving you.

- He also saves you **for** a purpose and plan that will bring you the most fulfillment in life.

2 Timothy 1:9 “He saved us and called us to be his own people, not because of what we have done, but because of his own purpose and grace.” GNT

- He saves you **by** His gift of grace.

Ephesians 2:8-9 “It is by grace you have been saved, through faith. And this **not from yourselves**, it’s the **gift** of God. Not of works so no one can boast.”

3. CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT RECONCILIATION

Luke 2:14 “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth **peace**, goodwill toward men”

- Where do you need peace in your life this Christmas? That’s what Christmas is all about.

- If you’re saying to God “*I’m going to run my own life, and do my own thing*,” you’re at war with God. You need a peace treaty.

Romans 5:1 “Now that we have been put right with God through faith, we have **peace with God** through our Lord Jesus Christ.” GNT

- Have you made peace with God? You make peace **by faith**, trusting in God’s undeserved favor.

Who do you need to restore a broken relationship with this Christmas?

It is time to get serious:

You’re not here by accident. God knew that you would be here today so He could get enough of your attention to say to you: “***I can*** replace the frustration in your heart with peace. ***I can*** replace the guilt, resentment and shame with forgiveness. And ***I can*** replace the worry and anxiety in your heart with confidence and faith. And ***I can*** replace that depression or despair with hope. And ***I can*** replace that emptiness with meaning and purpose. And ***I can*** replace that confusion with clarity. But I’m not going to break down the door of your heart. You’ve got to invite Me in.”

God did not send Jesus to give you a religion. He sent Jesus so you could have a personal relationship with God. **It’s all about relationship.**