

Focusing on the Christ of Christmas

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[0 : 00] Good to see you here this morning and so if you have a Bible with you want you to open it to Luke chapter 2 and of course this chapter in the gospel of Luke is I think perhaps one of the most beloved and heartwarming stories in the Bible and we hear at least portions of it if not all of it a number of times throughout this season and if you have a tradition like our family has had over the years may even read it on Christmas morning it's a good tradition to have I think this year by the way we're going to read the story but it's going to be in a out of a children's Bible so that it's much simpler for our two grandchildren who are going to be with us this Christmas so but anyway this is a great great part of the gospel of Luke and I cannot really go through the Christmas season without at least reading it one time and I can't seem to although I have on occasion but I can't hardly seem to get through the Christmas season without preaching from this chapter and so I'm going to do that this morning but first of all let me read it.

the story and I'm going to read the story and I'm going to read verses 1 through 20 Luke chapter 2 and it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria so all went to be registered everyone to his own city.

Joseph also went up from Galilee out of the city of Nazareth into Judea to the city of David which is called Bethlehem because he was of the house and lineage of David to be registered with Mary his betrothed wife who was with child.

So it was that while they were there the days were completed for her to be delivered and she brought forth her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths laid him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

[2 : 29] Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields keeping watch over their flock by night and behold an angel of the Lord stood before them and the glory of the Lord shone round to them and they were greatly afraid.

Then the angel said to them do not be afraid for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord and this will be the sign to you.

You will find a babe wrapped in swaddling cloths lying in a manger and suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying glory to God in the highest and on earth peace good will toward men.

So it was when the angel had gone away from them into heaven that the shepherds said to one another let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass which the Lord has made known to us.

And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger. Now when they had seen him they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this child and all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

[3 : 49] But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. Then the shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen as it was told them.

All right so a beautiful story. Marvelous story. A lot to the story. And we're so grateful. Well first of all to the Holy Spirit for inspiring Luke to write down all of these details.

Without this account we would know very little about the actual event of Jesus' birth and some of the events that took place around it. And so it's a beautiful story. Marvelous story.

Very familiar story. I think to perhaps every single one of us in this room this morning. It's also a story that lends itself to I would say almost an endless number of applications.

That's why you know every Christmas a preacher can stand behind the pulpit and open up to Luke chapter 2 and find some different aspect to the story that would be valuable to us.

[4 : 55] That would be applicable to our lives. And so that's what I'm going to do this morning. Kind of look at this from a little different angle. And draw from this story, this beloved story, something that is very challenging.

I think every time we come to church and listen to the Word of God preached there ought to be some kind of challenge there. And so I want to give that to you this morning. And this challenge pertains to something that every single one of us faces this holiday season.

Something we've already faced and maybe you haven't realized it. Hopefully you have. But here being very near to the actual day, Christmas Day coming up this week.

This is something you're going to be challenged with even over the next several days, these few days before Christmas. And the challenge is or pertains to our focus.

That's always a problem this time of the year. Our focus. The focus of our minds. That is our thought processes. Our thought life. The things that inundate our minds and keep us preoccupied to various things.

[6 : 08] But also the focus of our hearts. Our devotions. And so you see the struggle. It is the struggle between distraction on the one hand and devotion on the other.

Distraction and devotion. And every single one of us without any exception in this room. So if you're thinking this is not about you, better rethink that.

Because every single one of us here today know about this struggle. This struggle between distraction and devotion. And I'm talking to believers here this morning.

Those of us who are followers of Christ. Those of us who are believers in Christ and lovers of Christ. And we struggle with this. This time of the year.

You're going to find yourself. And you've already, I'm sure, found yourself. Numbered either among the distracted or the devoted. And if you're like me, and I'm sure you are.

[7 : 08] It's kind of going back and forth between those two. With perhaps the distracted side being more prevalent, sadly.

And that's true of all of us. And I guess we really could add a third category. That would be true of this time of the year among people. And that would be the disinterested. But I think that would be more indicative of the unbeliever.

And I want to address the believer this morning. The true believer. The Christian. Because when it comes to the right focus in this Christmas season.

Or to put it another way. When it comes to the Christ of Christmas. Are you the distracted? Or are you the devoted? All right, so let's begin with the first of those two.

Because we find both of these in this text. And it's really rather interesting. And when I point these out to you, I think you're going to see them very clearly. Because we have both represented here in the story.

[8 : 09] The distracted as well as the devoted. And then with each of those that represent both sides of that, we're going to find ourselves. We're going to find some of the things that we experience as well.

The struggle that we experience this time of year. Let's begin with the distracted. The distracted. And, you know, when I was reading back over this story this past week. It's interesting when you think about it.

That today, things are not a whole lot different than they were on that blessed day. When Christ was born. And I would say that the days leading up to the actual birth of the Lord Jesus Christ over 2,000 years ago.

The days leading up to that event were similar to these days that we're living leading up to the birth date of Christ.

There's some similarities. And I would say that just like Bartlesville. That's where we live. Well, some of you live in Dewey. Some of you visiting, you live in other places.

[9 : 11] But I'm just going to use Bartlesville. Okay. Just like Bartlesville, Bethlehem was a bustle of activity during this time that comes out of this story. During the time when Christ was born.

And so because of the actions of a king. In this case, Caesar Augustus. Bethlehem was filled with people during this time.

And they were so distracted that they were totally oblivious to the birth of Jesus Christ. Totally missed it.

It was a day of distractions. Distractions. Just very much like our day and in this season today. And so from the story, I think we can identify several sources, common sources of distractions that we ought to be alert to.

That we ought to recognize. We ought to see in our own lives in this day. And there are three of them. First of all, the people were burdened.

[10:16] Secondly, the people were busy. And thirdly and finally, the people were blind. Now we're talking about the distracted here. We'll get to the devoted eventually. Because I want to end on a good note here this morning.

But the distracted. Three sources of the distraction. Burdens. The burdens of life. The busyness of life. And the blindness of life this time of year.

Alright, so first of all, let's take the first of those. On the day that Christ was born, the people were distracted by burdens. They were distracted by burdens.

And I want to read again verses 1 to 3. And it came to pass in those days that, what happened? A decree. A royal decree. Went out from the king of the day.

King of the world of that day. Caesar Augustus. And this decree was this. That all the world should be registered. Or should be census. Should take a census.

[11:20] This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. So Luke gives us kind of a historical connection there. We'll not delve into that this morning. But then finally.

So all went. I mean you go when the king gives a decree such as this. All went to be registered. Every one to his own city.

So that's how the story is introduced. Now historians tell us that the Roman Empire took a census of all of its people every 14 years.

Best we can understand from archaeological records and such. They would take a census of all their people. And that would include both the Roman citizens as well as the people of the many vassal nations under the rule of the Roman Empire.

The great Roman Empire. And the reason is obvious from the passage. Luke tells us. The reason is most likely for taxation. For taxation.

[12:20] Everybody had to be counted. Had to be a part of the census. So that taxes could be levied properly. And very likely so that they could be raised a little bit.

And that would happen every time they had the census. But there might have been another reason. The Roman Empire of course was very imperialistic. They were expanding. In fact they had already conquered most of the known world.

And in order to conquer nations. And in order to keep under your control those nations that you have conquered. Then you need a vast army. And so the census was also taken for.

So it would enhance their continual military conscriptions. To grow their military. And what the Empire mandated was extremely burdensome to the people.

I think we could imagine that. And strictly speaking the idea is that each Jewish male. Would have to return to the city of his father.

[13:23] And to be recorded. And so they would record the name. Their names. Their occupations. Their property values. Their family members. Very much like a census that we take in our own country.

It was a census. And so they would have to actually travel. No matter how far it was. They would have to travel to the place of their father. Or father's birth. Their lineage. So that they could be a part of the census.

And they had no choice in the matter. No choice whatsoever. And so there were no other options. You couldn't do it by proxy. You couldn't send in a census that was taken over the mail.

Or internet. Of course they didn't have that. And so they had to travel to the city of their birth. Their father's birth. Their lineage. And travel in this day.

As you could imagine. Was extremely difficult. And dangerous as well. And on top of that. It always meant that ultimately more taxes would be.

[14 : 24] Would have to be paid. More taxes would be levied by this oppressive Roman empire. That was just gobbling up treasures and funds and money.

And resources within their vast domain. And then even more importantly. And added to all of that. The people. Especially the Jewish people.

The nation of Israel. Were burdened by an oppressive government. The Roman Empire. They despised them for that very reason. So there was a great burden upon the people of the day. Because for a lot of reasons. But at this time of the year. Because of the mandate of this king Caesar Augustus. Let me ask you something.

And here is an application. Isn't it pretty easy to become distracted by the. I guess the many burdens that we face. Not just in this time of the year.

[15 : 24] But burdens that we're facing right now in our lives. And there are many that are common to us. I mean we have an economy that is terrible.

Terrible. And burdensome. We have wars. Rumors of wars. And conflicts. And terrorism. And terrorist attacks.

That we're concerned. And warnings about traveling different places. And we see this. And we read about this. And we understand that it's everywhere. Not just in those countries out there somewhere.

But even in our own country. Burdened by the. By these times in which we live. We have. Let's just be honest. A government that is becoming more.

And more. And more intrusive into our lives. Something that was never intended by the founding fathers of this great nation. We have these things.

[16 : 21] And we have. We have financial difficulties. You know we have rising prices. Rising prices for everything that we purchase. Except maybe gasoline.

Of late. Thank the Lord for that. Unless of course you work for ConocoPhillips. Or Phillips 66. Maybe. Not such a good thing. But these things are burdening us.

And we have a culture. That really is a moral. Has become a moral wasteland. And I don't know about you. But that is extremely burdensome. Extreme burden to me.

And then we have all of the myriad of other personal burdens. That each of us carry around for various reasons. Multiple burdens that each of us have.

And here's the point. How sad that we can be distracted. Especially this time of the year. From focusing upon the one who came to carry all of our burdens.

[17 : 21] And so they were distracted by burdens as we are as well. Also. On the day Christ was born. The people were distracted by busyness.

Busyness. I think we can all identify with this one. Verse 3 says. And so all went to be registered. Everyone to his own city. Now we read behind that little brief statement by Luke.

And it carries with it a whole lot of busyness. And maybe you can imagine this. It's the small town of Bethlehem. I'm just going to focus on Bethlehem. But this was the case throughout the land.

But this small town of Bethlehem. Was inundated with a throng of people in their small little city. And all of them are inquiring about where to go to take the census.

And all of them are looking for lodging. And all of them are crowding into small houses. Visiting extended family members. And all of them are shopping the malls.

[18 : 24] Well not the malls. But the small markets. And other shops. In order to purchase food. And other necessities. And they're all involved. And it's just a bustle of activity. And everybody is busy.

For personal things. And needs. And so forth. It was a difficult time. For everyone who was in Bethlehem. At this time. And so they were distracted. By this busyness.

Distracted from even noticing. A group of shepherds crowding around a baby. Lying in a feeding trough. In a manger.

That would be something that I think would stand out. But everybody was so distracted. They didn't see such a thing. And a little bit later. Distracted. So distracted. That they didn't see that star. That came and just kind of hovered over their city.

And then later. A group of kind of kingly magi. Whatever they were. Visiting a house. In their city. They were totally oblivious. To all these things. If they had not been so distracted.

[19 : 22] So busy. They would have no doubt. Noticed these things. And inquired about them. And understood them possibly. And so they missed the birth of Christ.

Because their lives were consumed. With busyness. We can identify with that. Can we not? I mean Christmas is undoubtedly.

The busiest season. Of the entire year. We have decorations to put up. We have places to go. And parties to attend. And we have people to see.

And Christmas cards to write. And packages to mail. And we have gifts to go out and buy. And we have preparations. A lot of preparations. For visiting family members.

During the Christmas season. And we have allowed ourselves. To become so busy. That we have very little time. If any. To reflect upon.

[20 : 17] The very reason why we celebrate. This time of the year. Until it's all over. I mean listen. What if someone planned a birthday party. For you.

And then they got so busy. In the preparation for the party. That they forgot all about inviting you. Wouldn't that be silly? And then when the party begins. They don't even notice you're not there. And while they're eating the cake. And drinking the punch. And so forth. They didn't even remember at that time. That the party was for you in the first place. You say. That's silly isn't it? Absurd. Be ridiculous. And that would never happen. Would it? And yet. That's exactly what happens at Christmas time. Every single year. We all know that Christmas is.

About the celebration. Of the birth of Jesus Christ. We know it's about that. And yet. We sometimes are so busy. That it won't even take time. To celebrate that. We know that's the truth.

[21 : 15] And we don't celebrate that truth. In fact. We have not even noticed. That we have forgotten about it. Until it's over. And it's his birthday. Now think about that.

And then third notice. As we think about the distracted. On the day Christ was born. The people were distracted by blindness. Blindness.

Verse 7. And she brought forth her firstborn son. Wrapped him in swaddling cloths. And laid him in a manger. Why? Because there was no room for them in the inn.

No room for them. And you know this has always been an intriguing part of the story to me. And I guess every Christmas I mention this. But think about this. Why did God move the world power of that day?

Caesar Augustus and the Roman Empire. Why did God move him to make a decree. That would ultimately move the entire known world of that day.

[22 : 25] For purposes of census taking. Why did God do that? So that his holy family could move from Nazareth. Be forced to go from Nazareth. 90 mile journey to Bethlehem.

Where it was prophesied that Christ would be born. God did all that so that Jesus could be born. In Bethlehem according to prophecy. Why did God move the great power of the day to bring all that about.

And not at the same time move a simple innkeeper. To make sure he had a room to stay in when he got there. I think that's intriguing. Interesting. Now I've got an answer for that.

Has everything to do with the way Christ came the first time. And his humble way of coming. And the hardship of his life throughout his ministry. His life and ministry. But I have another idea here. Except for a handful of people. And I guess that would be about eight people. Mary and Joseph and Elizabeth and Zacharias. Her husband and the shepherds and the wise men. Of course we don't know how many there were.

[23 : 26] Simeon and Anna. Except for just a few people. Relatively few people. The entire world was absolutely blind to the first coming of Christ. They missed it entirely.

They didn't even see it. And if there was an innkeeper. I say that because the Bible doesn't mention an innkeeper. We just assume there was. But if there was an innkeeper.

He looked right at the family. This family. Mary and Joseph. And Mary pregnant with child. Looked right at them. And did not see them for who they were.

And so Mary gave birth to Jesus. In the most crude of surroundings. And no one saw.

No one cared. They were completely blind to Christ's birth. I guess our first reaction is. Well that's understandable. I mean how could they have known?

[24 : 23] And that's true isn't it? How could they have? But it begs the question. What about us? And we know.

Don't we? Is it possible. Is it possible that over the years of celebrating Christmas. Christmas. And we do it every year. That a gradual blindness.

Has been coming over us. Just a kind of a blindness. Not a blindness to the truth about Christmas. But rather a blindness to our.

Neglect. Of that truth. We need to be reminded of this. Every. Single. Year. Replacing the Savior with Santa Claus.

Replacing the nativity with Christmas trees. Replacing the wonder of the incarnation. With the allurements of materialism every year.

[25 : 29] We have to be reminded of that every single year. It's just kind of a blindness begins to set in. We are allured away. We are distracted by all the other elements of this season.

But let's end on a good note. Okay. The story also tells us of the devoted. The devoted. And that's where we need to be.

Obviously. And we need to always be on guard against. The distractions of this. This age. This season. What's the story tell us about the devoted?

Because not all were distracted by. You know. Burdens. And. Busyness. And blindness. Not all of them were.

First of all. On the day Christ was born. Some people were submissive in their devotion to God. They were submissive.

[26 : 28] Verses 4 and 5. And we have to. Kind of. Read between the lines. And behind the lines here. But in verses 4 and 5. Joseph also went up from Galilee.

Out of the city of Nazareth. Into Judea. To the city of David. Which is called Bethlehem. Because he was of the house and lineage of David. To be registered with Mary.

His betrothed wife. Who was with child. All right. So Joseph and Mary are together. They're traveling together. And. As a matter of fact. According to historians.

Mary didn't have to go. But she was with child. And they were betrothed. And Joseph's not going to go anywhere without his wife. Who's pregnant. And very close to giving birth.

And so. Just a simple fact that they're together here. Ought to remind us of something. Because. You see. This phrase. To be registered with Mary. His betrothed wife. Who was with child.

[27 : 26] Tells us a whole lot. About. What we already should know. From other places in the Bible. And what I'm talking about is. Consider. What Mary and Joseph.

Had been through. Just within the month. Preceding their journey to Bethlehem. A few weeks before. Jesus was born. Just consider what they went through.

Individually. And then also together. You have first of all. The angel Gabriel. Visiting with Mary. And giving her a troubling revelation. It troubled her.

It scared her to death. The angel said. You're going to have a baby. And yet she's a virgin. She's never known a man. And so she says.

What is. How can this be possible? And I'm sure that it's going through her mind. She's thinking. Well what will people say. And how will they react? I mean I'm pregnant.

[28 : 21] And Joseph and I are not even. You know. Not even fully married. In the most legal sense. And so they're going to think. I am an adulteress.

She has to be thinking those things. We would be thinking the same thing. But the angel said. Don't be afraid. Because that child. That will be born in you. Is. That is in you.

Is conceived of the Holy Spirit. And Mary believed. Mary believed. In fact. It says. Mary said. In Luke 138. Behold.

The maidservant of the Lord. Now you've just been told. Some earth shattering news. Some news. About a reality. That's going to cause you some trouble. In the very near future.

First of all. She's got to be thinking. That she's going to have trouble. With Joseph. To begin with. And then family. And everybody else. So you've just heard this news. But Mary says. I'm your slave

Lord.

[29 : 18] I'm your slave. Let it be to me. According to your word. You see. How submissive she was. To the will of God. The submission.

Her submissive devotion. And then we turn to Joseph. Of course. And Joseph. According to Matthew. Discovered that Mary. Was pregnant. I mean.

That's not something you can hide. And I'm sure she was honest. With him about it. And he's saying. What to do. You know. They had the laws. The mosaic law of the day. She could be. Taken out and stoned.

Or. Or he thought. Well. There is a provision. Where he could just kind of. Put her away. Quietly. So that nobody would know. And so forth. But remember.

The angel. Comes to Joseph. In a dream. And. And. Gives him. A revelation. About this child. And not just that. He would be born.

[30 : 14] Of the Holy Spirit. But he would be. The Savior. Emmanuel. God with us. And so Joseph. Has a choice to make. At this. At this time.

Is he going to reject this. Be. Be. Repelled from this. Is he going to. Go his own way. Is he going to deny. What the. Vision. And. That obviously.

Came from God. Is he going to. To deny that. No. He's going to believe it. And. Joseph. According to. Matthew 1. 24. Did. As the angel.

Of the Lord. Commanded him. And took to him. His wife. And so that's why. When we get to. Luke chapter 2. And they're on their way. To Bethlehem. He brings Mary. With him.

Submission. A submissive. Devotion. These things. Had to have been. Extremely difficult. For them. Yet they're going to. Believe God. They're going to. Follow God.

[31 : 10] They're going to. Submit. To him. And to his will. And here's the. Point for us. There's always the. Temptation. To make Christmas. All about what we want.

What we want. Whether it's a gift. Or whether it's. You know. A certain way. Of celebrating. Or. Whatever it may be. We have a tendency. To make it. What we want it to be.

And if we don't get it. Then we're not happy. Become depressed. And disillusioned. It's all about. Jesus. It's all about.

Submitting to him. Have you. Thought about giving Jesus. A gift this Christmas. By the way. Here's a good gift idea. Give him.

Your submission. Your submission. In everything. Your submissive. Devotion. Second of all. On the day. Christ was born.

[32 : 07] One person. In the story. Was redemptive. In his devotion. And of course. I'm talking about. Christ. The son of God.

And. And again. Read behind. The lines. Here in verses. Six and seven. So it was. That while they were there. The days were. Completed. For her. To be delivered.

And then Luke. Gives us. Kind of a description. Of how all that happened. What happened. Around that. And she brought forth. Her first born son. Nothing unusual. About that. Wrapped him.

In swaddling. Cloths. And laid him. Where? In a manger. I mean. The story is so familiar.

That we. You know. We're not even. Surprised by it. Anymore. Giving birth. To a child. In presumably. A stable. With all the.

[33 : 05] Barnyard animals there. I. I. I really believe. That that was the case. The hay. The smell. And then. Wrapping him up. In. Cloths. And.

Laying him. In a feeding trough. That's what a manger is. It's a feeding trough. And. Another word. Added here. Because. There was no room.

For them. In the inn. I mean. This is hard. Hard. Hard. Hard. All the way through. I can't. Imagine any woman here. Wanting to give birth. In these kinds of surroundings.

Not to mention. The travel. That Mary had to. Endure. And the effect of that. On the child. In her womb. And. Then the giving of birth.

In these very. Crude. In difficult surroundings. Now. I said. We need to read. Behind the lines. Not between the lines.

[34 : 02] But behind them. That is. We need to read. Behind this part. Of the story. And really. This is a wonderful picture. You see. Of.

The Lord's. Devotion. To us. One picture. Among many. Many. Others. That we have. Reaching all the way. Back into the Old Testament. And the. And those things.

Said about Christ. And the. Things that would take place. Around his birth. All those things. Are foreshadowings. Of something. And really. Think about it. Isn't it interesting. That Jesus. Came into this world.

Wrapped in swaddling cloths. And then. Essentially. Left this world. Wrapped in grave cloths. And isn't it interesting. That Jesus. Came into this world.

Lying in a crude. Feeding trough. In a borrowed stable. And left this world. Before his resurrection. Lying on a cold stone slab.

[34 : 56] In a borrowed tomb. Isn't it interesting. The. The. The parallel there. And Jesus. Came into this world. When he came into this world. He came. Into a world.

That had no room for him. In the end. And he. Really left this world. Initially. In a world. That had no room for him. In their hearts.

And yet. Still many today. Have no room for him. In their hearts. Do you see. What these verses. In Luke chapter 2. Are foreshadowing.

For us. The death of Christ. His death. His cross. God. And listen. You could also add to this. That Jesus. Did not have his beginning.

In Bethlehem. It didn't all start there. He is the eternal son of God. He has got a very God. He has no beginning. No ending. And so we really ought to think of it this way.

[35 : 50] Jesus was not. A son. Who chose to become a savior. He was the savior. Who chose to become a son. It didn't start in Bethlehem.

Do you understand. He is the Lord of glory. And he willingly humbled himself. Left heaven. And came to this earth. And clothed himself in human flesh.

To become a human man. So that. He might redeem us. It's the only way that it would work. Now. There's a lesson here for us.

Maybe a couple. That I could just name briefly. And that is. First of all. Is it possible. That we might return. The same kind of. Devotion to Jesus.

Sacrificial devotion. Not as his redeemer. But as his redeemed. That we would sacrifice. All. In our devotion to him.

[36 : 46] Just as he sacrificed all. In his devotion. To save us. And. Add to that. Is it possible. That we might. Share with others.

The good news. Of his. Redemptive. Devotion. To sinners. I think so. All right. So we're talking about. The devoted. And we.

See the. Submissive. Devotion. In Mary. And Joseph. And others. And we see. The redemptive. Devotion. In Jesus. And then finally. This morning. On the day.

Christ was born. Some people. Were receptive. Receptive. In their devotion. To the Christ. And it comes.

Through the shepherds. Verse 15. And following. So it was. When the angels. Had gone away. From them. Into heaven. That the shepherds. Said to one another. Let us.

[37 : 41] Now go. To Bethlehem. And see this thing. That has come to pass. Which the Lord. Has made known to us. Let's go right now. And they came with haste. And found Mary.

And Joseph. And the babe. Lying in a manger. Just like the angels. Said they would. Now when they had seen him. They made widely known. The saying. Which was told them.

Concerning this child. And all those who heard it. Marvel at those things. Which were told them. By the shepherds. Now this is. Also an interesting. Part of the story. God announced.

The birth of his son. Birth of Messiah. The birth of Christ. To. Some lowly shepherds. And.

They were. Even more lowly. In. In society. Than. You might even know. They were despised. By most Jews. Considered.

[38 : 39] To be the dregs. Of Jewish society. Considered. In a sense. To be outcasts. Of society. And to the. Especially the elite Jews. They were unclean.

Which by the way. Would bar them. From worship. In the temple. And God. Chose. These guys. To be the first. To see the Christ.

Outside of the immediate family. The first. To see the Christ child. They were. The first. To receive. The news. Of his birth. They were the first. To believe it.

And they were. The first. To come to Christ. And see him. They were the first. To worship him. And they were the first. To tell others. About him. These shepherds.

Incredible. See. The shepherds. Were not. Too burdened. And too busy. And too blind. To make room. For Jesus. At Christmas. We could learn.

[39 : 35] A lot from that. Couldn't we? Are you. Numbered. Among the receptive. That's the question. Isn't it? The receptive.

The receptive few. In the day. When Christ was born. You think about our day. Millions. Multiplied. Millions.

Will not. Even consider. Jesus. At Christmas time. Not even consider him. Not even have a thought. About him. And. Also. Many others.

Will be strenuously. Rejecting. Anything and everything. About Jesus. This time of the year. This Christmas season. That is no reason. For me. Or you. To leave him out. Amen. [40 : 32] Thank you.