

Intro: All of the world is divided: Christmas people...and NON Christmas people.

- When I got married I didn't realize that I married a Christmas person.
- Problem: We moved to Dallas middle of Dec. Only 3k in our pockets: Apartment, Live, Get job, Survive til paid!
- Meant: Only essentials: Ex: To a Christmas person...a Christmas tree...essential...to me...Not at all!
- No tree...Yes tree...no tree...Yes tree...No tree...So we went to get a tree!
- K-mart: Giving away free trees! Took the money for a tree, bought ornaments...Everyone happy!

Many people this Christmas can identify with that. Something is "missing" from their Christmas.

~Could be finances, like it was with us

~Could be family

~Could be relationships

~Could be direction

Whatever it might be, however it is being lived out in their life...Something is missing, there is a hole, gap, void

BUT: Here is the Good News! The Good News is that God works through our Christ-mess to provide what we need! You don't have to be in the picture to have a wonderful Christmas. Great Christmas regardless of the mess in our lives.

When you realize this: *"God is Works in Unexpected Way To Provide What We Need!"*

That's what He did that first Christmas. They were missing a LOT of things. In fact, almost everyone in the story was either missing something...or an answer to what was missing in someone else's life.

Look with me at that first Christmas, and lets watch as God Works in Unexpected Ways to Provide What is Needed.

Six Areas God Moved To Meet Needs That First Christmas

1. Unexpected Peace: He Provided Peace of Mind To Mary and Joseph In Unsettled Times.

- Mary: *Upset because she was expected to bear a child*
- Joseph: *Upset because he was expected to keep Mary and raise the child as his own!*

Both of them were totally caught off guard, totally confused and totally upset:

Yet, God provided the peace of mind they needed to go forward.

He sent an angel to speak to them...and comforted them through His word!

Luke 1:26-38 Joseph Mt 1:18-21

Both times: *"Do not be afraid!"*

Applic: He can do that for you if you need peace of mind this Christmas:

Philippians 4:6-7

"Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus"

Whatever has you unsettled, upset, confused and concerned Take it to Him in prayer...and He can give you peace!

2. Unexpected Joy: He Provided People To Celebrate When Family Was Not Present.

- They were away from their immediate family, so there was no one to come say how beautiful the baby was!
- Seems that Joseph's extended family didn't step up *No place to stay, certainly not coming to celebrate!*
- Yet, God sent the Shepherds: *God saw the need of a young mothers heart...and met it!*

Applic: He can do that for you too. That is one of the best parts of being in a Church family

You can do that through the church, you can do that through Lighthouse, Food Kitchen, Angel tree

Instead of being alone and isolated, YOU be the answer to someone else's prayer!

Mt 25:37-40 Naked, Cold, Hungry, Thirsty *"Done it to the least you done it to me!"*

3. Unexpected Resources: He Provided Resources From A Totally Unexpected Place To Meet Unexpected Need!

- Herod wanted to kill the newborn child
- Joseph needed to leave: Imagine the cost of that...Escape...and Living in a different country
- Where would he ever get the funds to do something like that!
- And totally unexpected...The Wisemen show up...bringing GOLD!
- Cool Part: They Left: Weeks or Months in advance! God timed it perfectly to have them arrive when needed!

Applic: Free Christmas Tree: Three Bags of Food: Budget

Philippian 4:19 *"And my God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus."*

4. Unexpected Hope: God Provided Hope When They Didn't Know What Was Going To Come Next!

- Unexpected, totally unheard of pregnancy: How can this even be?
- Relationship on rocky ground
- Long distance journey
- Family no where to be found
- Strange people constantly showing up: Angels; Shepherds; Wisemen
- Running for their lives

And in the middle of it all...God is at work in totally unexpected way to provide, to protect, to comfort, to encourage.
Biggest thing He gave them...was HOPE!

~Hope that there was purpose to their pain

~Hope that they could endure and get through to the other side

~Hope that God had NOT abandoned them, regardless of how it must have felt.

Applic: He still gives hope!

Rom 5:5 *And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit*

Is 49:23 *"those who hope in me will not be disappointed."*

5. Unexpected Direction: God Provided Direction When People Didn't Know What To Do or Where To Go!

He did this for a LOT of people in the story: Mary and Joseph, Shepherds, Elizabeth and Zechariah

Most clear and compelling example...the one that illustrates our point the best: WISEMEN

3 Step Process

- Circumstances: *Star: Helpful, but easily misunderstood and misinterpreted*
- Counsel: *Religious Leaders: As Good as the people you are asking (These good, others bad)*
- The Word of God: *Always 100% Reliable!*

Applic: God will give us the direction we need as well

Jas 1:5 *If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given him.*

Prov 15:22 *"Without counsel purposes are disappointed; but in the multitude of counsellors they are established."*

Ps 119:105 *"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path."*

6. Unexpected Forgiveness God Provided Us All With What We Need Most: Forgiveness

- Everyone in the story needed it
- Everyone since then has needed it
- You and I need forgiveness today!

Applic: Mt 1:21 Speaking to Joseph: *"He will save His people from their sins!"*

CONCL: What Do You Need Today That You Are Unsure You Will Get?

God is STILL in the business of meeting our needs.

Just as He did that first Christmas, God can move in unexpected ways to provide what YOU need

You may be convinced that there is NO WAY OUT OF YOUR MESS!

Everything around you is telling you...It's going to be a Christ-mess Yet God can still move!

- Come and ASK for what you need: Peace? Direction? Hope?
- Forgiveness? Come and ask God to give you the forgiveness that ONLY He can provide!
- Share Gospel