



## Giving Thanks for HIS INDESCRIBABLE GIFT

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All material in this study is from  
the works of Pastors Frank and Parris Bailey,  
unless noted otherwise.

# Week One

## HEARTS FILLED WITH THANKSGIVING

***Psalm 95:1-2 "O come, let us sing unto the LORD: let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms."***

There is no holiday quite like Thanksgiving. So far, it has been impossible for the world to steal it. Easter has the Easter bunny, Christmas has its Santa, but Thanksgiving? At the end of the day the thing left unsaid is crying for our attention. There has to be someone to be thankful to. To those of us who have been born again have come to understand that it is the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who is to be the recipient of our thanks and our praise. Thanksgiving is a truly American holiday. It has been part of the conscience of America from our country's inception.

### **1. WHO ARE WE TO BE THANKFUL TO?**

***Psalm 107:1-2 "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy."***

We are thankful to \_\_\_\_\_, who has redeemed us from the hand of the enemy and has caused our hearts to be reconciled back to Him. He opens our ears to hear His sweet voice singing over us and opens our minds to understand His words and opens our eyes to see in a whole new light. He then opens our mouths and fills it with His new song and a continual attitude of gratefulness begins to gush forth.

### **2. WHERE DOES THIS NEW SONG OF PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING COME FROM AND HOW DO WE LEARN IT?**

In 1740 Jonathan Edwards wrote, "In order to learn the new song, you must hear the melody of the voice of Christ in the gospel. You have heard that the glorious \_\_\_\_\_ is that out of which this song is to be learned, and that 'tis Christ that must teach it. And this is the way that he teaches it: by causing the soul to hear the melody of his own voice in the gospel. 'Tis Christ that speaks to us in the gospel. Many hear his words, but they perceive no sweetness in them. They perceive no pleasantness in his voice, in the doctrines and invitations and promises of the gospel. 'Tis all an insipid thing and dead letter to them. But to the godly, Christ's mouth is found to be most sweet. You must perceive the sweetness of the voice. You must see the glory of those doctrines, and the sweetness of those invitations, and the exceeding preciousness of those promises."

### 3. WHAT WAS THE CONDITION OF OUR HEART BEFORE WE CAME TO CHRIST?

Before we came to Christ our hearts were \_\_\_\_\_. It seems that most of our time was spent wondering (or complaining) about why we didn't have certain things that we wanted. Our hearts were not filled with thanksgiving and praise, they were obviously filled with something else. How can you worship God when your heart is polluted? How can you be thankful when we are poisoned with ungratefulness? How can we sing a new song when we are consumed with the song of this world?

### 4. HAVE YOU EVER ALLOWED THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF YOUR LIFE AFFECT YOUR ATTITUDE? IF SO, WHAT IS THE REMEDY?

***1 Thessalonians 5:18, "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."***

A few years ago the Lord began to deal with me about being thankful. He was convicting me about being ungrateful. He wanted me to be grateful, even though there were some situations in my life that were not ideal, not pleasant, and most of the time quite annoying realities. I was allowing the circumstances of my life to affect my attitude. I found myself murmuring and complaining to myself and my wife regarding my situation. After the Lord began to deal with me, I told my wife and my kids that we were going to be a grateful family. I asked them to correct me when I was being ungrateful. Our new family saying became "Thank you Jesus". It might sound ridiculous, like a cliché or even possibly insincere but it's our heart's cry. When I find myself complaining or dare I say whining, I utter my new mantra, "Thank you Jesus". **The Lord wants our life to be seasoned with thanksgiving.**

### 5. IN WHAT WAYS CAN WE EXPRESS OUR GRATITUDE TO THE LORD?

A. IN \_\_\_\_\_ OR \_\_\_\_\_

*Colossians 3:17, "And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him."*

B. IN OUR \_\_\_\_\_

*Psalm 69:30, "I will praise the name of God with a song, and will magnify Him with thanksgiving."*

*Psalm 95:2a says, "Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving."*

Psalm 100:4 says, "Enter into His gates with thanksgiving, and into His courts with praise. Be thankful to Him, and bless His name."

### C. IN OUR \_\_\_\_\_

Philippians 4:6-7 says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus."

Colossians 4:2 says, "Continue earnestly in prayer, being vigilant in it with thanksgiving."

1 Thessalonians 1:2 says, "We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers."

### D. IN OUR \_\_\_\_\_

Psalm 116:13-19 "What shall I render to the Lord For all His benefits toward me? I will take up the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people. Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints. O Lord, truly I am Your servant; I am Your servant, the son of Your maidservant; You have loosed my bonds. I will offer to You the sacrifice of thanksgiving, and will call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows to the Lord now in the presence of all His people, in the courts of the Lord's house, in the midst of you, O Jerusalem. "

## 6. HOW DO WE ENTER INTO THANKSGIVING WHEN THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF LIFE ARE UNPLEASANT?

**Hebrews 13:15 "Therefore by Him let us continually offer the sacrifice of praise to God, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to His name."**

He wants us to be thankful to Him for others. Yes, even those that persecute you. You might be thinking, "How is it possible to be a giver of thanks when the circumstances of your life are unpleasant?" Psalm 97:12 says, "Rejoice in the LORD, you righteous, and give thanks at the remembrance of His holy name." Psalm 107:8 says, "Oh, that men would give thanks to the LORD for His goodness."

**We can enter into thanksgiving by remembering Him, by considering Jesus, by meditating on Him and His marvelous works and confessing His Goodness with your own lips.** Give thanks today to the Lord for His Goodness, for His Mercy that endures forever, for His excellent greatness, for His mighty acts of deliverance, and for His saving grace in your life. Let Him season you with a little Thanksgiving Seasoning as you say "Thank you Jesus."

“Yep, Thanksgiving is not only an American holiday, it is a Christian holiday. Since The Lord has washed us from our sins, filled us with His love, and baptized us in His Spirit; what else can we do? Our hearts are filled with thanksgiving. He has blessed us. Not only with the blessings in this world, He has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the love of His Son.” Pastor Frank Bailey  
Have a Happy Thanksgiving!!!

**ANSWERS:**

1. God Himself
2. Gospel
3. Not Thankful
4. In our Word or Deed, Praise, Prayers, Giving

**TAKAWAY:**

1. We thank God Himself for reconciling our hearts back to Him.
2. He sings over us a new song. We learn this song through the Gospel the Word of God.
3. Before Christ our hearts were not thankful.
4. In order to be thankful, our hearts must be cleansed.
5. We express our gratitude to the Lord through our Praise and through our Prayers.
6. We enter into thanksgiving by remembering what He has done for us and recounting His goodness.



## Cloyed with Light

The world was cloaked in darkness  
The kind that clouds your mind  
The hopes and dreams from days gone by  
We knew we'd never find

But the promise still reminded  
Of God's eternal plan  
That in the midst of darkness  
His light would shine again

It started in a meadow  
Bleating sheep sounds filled the night  
The dark was filled with Glory  
Then singing cloyed with Light

We had never heard such singing  
The joy was beyond compare  
The darkness had been conquered  
His love was in the air

The Light brought us to a manger  
To a stable and an Inn  
In Bethlehem we found the Savior  
That's where life began

Pastor Frank Bailey

# Week Two

## CHRISTMAS LIGHT

***Isaiah 9:2" The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, upon them a light has shined."***

### 1. WHERE ARE LIGHT AND LIFE FOUND?

***John 1:4-5 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.***

At the time of Jesus birth, the land of Israel was experiencing a time of unprecedented darkness. It seemed as if the promises of the prophets, by now hundreds of years old, were just the words of dreamers without the slightest chance of ever coming true. It was in that time of chances that were slim and none, that the Light began to shine.

The world we live in is shrouded in darkness. It seems as if the world is permeated with a godlessness, an apathy about the spiritual realities that surround us. This spiritual darkness enslaves every person that comes into this world. It effects our perception of everything. At times, it may seem as if the story of the birth of Christ is irrelevant, only a story from long ago. But in it we learn of others, in spite of the darkness they lived in, saw a great light and their eyes were opened. Without the light that shines from the face of Jesus shining in our hearts today, it is impossible for us to see. Light and Life are found only in **CHRIST**.

### 2. DESPITE THE DARKNESS, WHO WERE WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH?

***Luke 1:5-6 There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea, a certain priest named Zachariah, of the division of Abijah. His wife was of the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. And they were both righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless...***

Despite the darkness there were a **REMNANT** of people who were righteous before God, walking in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless. Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah were two of those people. Day in and day out they silently served their God and believed in the promises of old. The fullness of time was upon them, but little did they know that the Dayspring was about to arise with Healing in His wings. And yet like all of us, they thought themselves to be prepared, they were taken by surprise.

### 3. IT HAD BEEN 400 YEARS OF DARKNESS. WHAT BEGAN TO CHANGE?

Pastor Parris Bailey writes, "The Old Testament in the book of Malachi ends with an historic prophecy about the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers. It is hard to believe 400 years pass between the Old Testament and the New. A lot can happen in 400 years! But time is so amazing that when it does happen, when God steps into our world, it always seem as if it always was. I pray if your world has grown silent, a 'fullness of time' would come to you."

When you start to read the gospel of Luke you can tell the \_\_\_\_\_ had begun to move again. "The fullness of time was not yet come. The time was maturing, but was not yet ripe. Heaven was long ago prepared for an Incarnation. There must be a leading up to God's gift, or His blessings cease to be blessings. ***The world must be prepared for the Christ***, or virtually He is no Christ, no Savior to them. The Christ must come into the world's mind as a familiar thought. He must come into the world's heart as a deep-felt need, before He can come as the Word Incarnate." (Quotes from Expositor)

### 4. HOW DOES GOD SHOW UP IN OUR DAILY LIVES?

Luke, right off in Chapter One begins to tell of that prophetic hour, "In the days of Herod, King of Judea". Such is the phrase that now strikes the Divine hour, and leads in the dawn of a new era, the time when the Dayspring on High will arise with healing in His wings. My, how a moment can change a world! All I know is that God, the angel Gabriel, Son of God and or the Holy Spirit show up everyday in our lives with \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Everyone in this Luke story was taken by surprise. The unexpected came. We can let 400 years pass us by or we can be like Simeon who "read from the stars of promise" and "filled his heart with music of fond hope" he kept awake till the dawn of morn. (Quotes from Expositor)

"Do you know that you always live in the divine hour?  
The fullness of time has come for you!  
Put yourself in the place of expectancy  
and cast your vision!  
He is always moving in the ordinary!"  
Pastor Parris Bailey



## **5. MARY WAS ANOTHER WHO WAS TAKEN BY SURPRISE, HOW DID SHE RESPOND TO THE ANGELIC MESSAGE? (READ LUKE 2:26-38)**

Mary was caught by surprise when an angel appeared to her and told her that she would carry the Christ Child. *She put herself in the place of expectancy by accepting what was told to her. She said, "Let it be to me according to your word."* The vision was cast before her and she would not look back. The vision wasn't just a global vision for Mary it became personal. As a result she began to sing a new song.

## **6. HOW DID MARY MAKE ROOM FOR THE DIVINE PURPOSE TO BE FULFILLED IN HER LIFE?**

***Luke 1:46-47 "My soul doth magnify The Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Savior"***

Mary made room for the divine purpose to be fulfilled in her life. She did so by putting herself in the place of \_\_\_\_\_, by simply surrendering to the Lord's song being sung through her life.

When Mary visited Elizabeth it wasn't long before their faith and joy combined into torrents of joy and the supernatural. One minute they were just two ordinary country girls that changed suddenly into a prophetess and poetess. Everyday we should look for God to show up in our ordinary, transforming it into something spectacular.

When Mary encountered the visit from the angel Gabriel she made it personal. She decided to magnify the Lord or make room for Him in her life. In fact it as if she said, "my spirit shall dance like David before the ark, I shall leap, spring, bound and rejoice in God my Savior. She was answering back that "the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head."

Will you embrace the divine purpose? Human will meets with the divine will and something supernatural always happens. The question is "will we surrender to the song God wants to sing over us?" I am sure Elizabeth had "all kind of plans for her "little Johnny"- maybe he would be the best disc thrower or become a priest like his father. Instead he ate locusts and honey and grew dreads! When God comes near, our whole perspective can change. Mary faced a choice that day to either embrace what lay before her or run and deny the chance for God to overshadow her. All of us are faced with these same choices.

## 7. WHAT TWO MEN HAD A HARD TIME EMBRACING AND SEEING INTO THE FUTURE?

### A. ZECHARIAH- (See Luke 1:18,64)

Gabriel also made an unexpected visit to the priest Zachariah and he was struck dumb because he didn't embrace the future that his wife would conceive and bare John the Baptist. Many of us find it hard to embrace or even believe that God has a remarkable plan for us. We have spent most of our lives shutting down so we perpetually continue on the same path. We too can be like Zachariah getting another chance to believe and when his son is born, his mouth speaks nothing but praise!

### B. JOSEPH- (See Matthew 1:18-25)

Joseph was a *just man*, therefore he was not willing to expose her.... He was *minded to put her away privately*. Note, the necessary censures of those who have offended ought to be managed without noise. *The words of the wise are heard in quiet*. Christ himself *shall not strive nor cry*. Christian love and Christian prudence will *hide a multitude of sins*, and great ones, as far as may be done without having fellowship with them..... (But after having a dream, in which he was visited by an angel), *he did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him*, though it was contrary to his former sentiments and intentions; *he took unto him his wife*; he did it speedily, without delay, and cheerfully, without dispute; **he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision.**

## 8. WHAT DID THE ANGEL TELL JOSEPH IN HIS DREAM, THAT JESUS WOULD DO FOR HIS PEOPLE?

***Matt. 1:21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.***

The angel was telling Joseph that it was okay for him to go ahead with the wedding plans, it was God's plan for Joseph to take Mary as his wife. Joseph had some huge things to think about. First, he was trying to wrap his head around a virgin birth. Secondly, he was trying to sort out what saving His people from their sins meant. You see, Christ came because of our sins. **He came to die to forgive us for our sins but His work only began there. It was saving us from the power of sin that really was the point of the coming of Christ.** All of us were born in a state of slavery to sin. The power of the gospel not only forgives but liberates us from the clutches of sin that held us in bondage.

## **9. ELIZABETH, ZACHARIAH, MARY AND JOSEPH ALL HAD A SUPERNATURAL ENCOUNTER WITH GOD AND THEY SAW A GREAT LIGHT. WHAT IS THE MISSING LINK IN OUR LIVES FOR OUR EYES TO BE OPENED TO SEE GOD EVERYDAY?**

The missing link in most of our lives is just that we never have had a \_\_\_\_\_ with God so we live from day to day in disappointment, heartache, and hopelessness. As in Mary, he always wants to stomp on the serpent's head in our lives. There is nothing like forgiveness, love and joy in the Holy Spirit. Like Mary, we simply cannot contain the gratitude we feel when God shows up in our storm. Are you willing to open wide and "let the King of Glory" come in?

Elizabeth, Zachariah, Mary and Joseph, all had an encounter with the living God. There was darkness all around, but the Light of Lights broke through and shone on their lives. They all put themselves in a place of expectancy. The vision that was placed before them was set and they never looked back. For them, the vision wasn't just for a nation, they made it personal. Without the light that shines from the face of Jesus shining in our hearts today, it is impossible for us to see. Oh to see into the unseen. To see the face of God and live, truly live....Their eyes were opened and now they believed..."with God nothing was impossible." "Let it be to me (also) according to your word."

### **ANSWERS:**

1. Christ
3. Great Clock of Heaven
4. Hope, Healing, New Beginnings
6. Expectancy
9. Supernatural Encounter

### **TAKEAWAY:**

1. We don't have to live in the dark.
2. Jesus is the Light of the World.
3. We must make room for God.
4. We must put ourselves in the place of expectancy and cast our vision.
5. Jesus came to save His people from their sins.
6. A supernatural encounter with God opens our eyes to see that nothing is impossible with God.



## O STAR!

O BEAUTIFUL STAR  
HOW BRILLIANT YOU ARE  
THE PLACE I SEE YOU SEEMS SO FAR  
WILL YOU HEAR MY CALL?

O STAR, STAR DIVINE  
HOW DO YOU MAKE YOUR FACE TO SHINE?  
IF WE FOLLOW THE STAR WHAT WILL IT SAY?  
“GO TO THE MANGER”  
WHERE CHRIST THE BABE LAY

FAR AWAY FROM PRESENT DANGER  
STAR OF AMAZING SHINE  
FULL OF HOLY LOVE DIVINE  
SHEPHERDS AWOKE IN THE NIGHT  
THERE WAS A GREAT LIGHT

THEY HEARD THE ANGELS SING  
GLORY TO GOD, PEACE TO ALL  
FIELDS AND VALLEYS DO RING  
THE NEWS OF THE NEW BORN KING  
O STAR, SHINE ON ME!

SHOW ME THIS WONDERFUL MYSTERY  
IN YOU, HIS FACE I WILL SEE  
FROM NOW TO ETERNITY  
YOUR SHINE BRINGS CLARITY

BRIGHT AND MORNING STAR  
FAIREST OF TEN THOUSANDS  
GUIDE TO ME TO THE DISTANT SHORE  
WHERE I WILL BE WITH HIM FOREVERMORE  
UNTIL THE DAYSTAR COMES WITH HEALING IN HIS WINGS.

Pastor Parris Bailey



## Let's Go to Bethlehem

Let's Go to Bethlehem  
I heard a shepherd say  
He was rambling about some angels  
He supposed he saw that day

Something about the throne of David  
His words were strange to me  
A virgin and a baby boy  
A song about God's mystery

God's Glory shone from heaven  
I heard him clearly say  
A King born in a manger  
God's love came near today

I turned and followed closely  
My heart thumped in reply  
Could this be why I'm living  
A King just born to die

Then something burned inside me  
This glory  
From on high  
God's mystery from heaven  
The King who was born to die

I've never seen such kindness  
Such power and such grace  
This King revealed from glory  
He died to take my place

Pastor Frank Bailey

# Week Three

## LET'S GO TO BETHLEHEM

**Luke 2:1,4** *In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.... And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,*

### 1. JOSEPH, MARY AND OTHERS WOULD FIND THEMSELVES ON AN UNEXPECTED TRIP TO BETHLEHEM. WAS THIS JUST A COINCIDENCE?

**Proverbs 16:9** *"The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps."*

I don't think Joseph was filled with joy when he was summoned to the home of his heritage to pay his taxes. It was a most inconvenient time for this unusual family. Joseph's wife was carrying a baby in her womb that didn't come from Joseph. The whispering of rumors in Nazareth were bad enough, taking a trip to Bethlehem on a donkey with a pregnant wife to pay taxes he couldn't afford to intruders he didn't like was a little too much. **All of these supposed inconveniences and coincidences were actually the working of the hand of the unseen God.** As the old saying goes, the Lord often works in mysterious ways.

"Thus we see that the holy servants of God, even though they wander from their design, unconscious where they are going, still keep the right path, because God directs their steps. Nor is the Providence of God less wonderful in employing the mandate of a tyrant to draw Mary from home, that the prophecy may be fulfilled. God had marked out by his prophet—as we shall afterwards see—the place where he determined that his Son should be born. If Mary had not been constrained to do otherwise, she would have chosen to bring forth her child at home. Augustus orders a registration to take place in Judea, and each person to give his name, that they may afterwards pay an annual tax, which they were formerly accustomed to pay to God. Thus an ungodly man takes forcible possession of that which God was accustomed to demand from his people. It was, in effect, reducing the Jews to entire subjection, and forbidding them to be thenceforth reckoned as the people of God."

John Calvin

From time to time the Lord will lift the veil in our lives and allow us to see a glimpse of the beauty of Providence. His plans are definite, precise, and indefinable, I can rest in His plans and promises. Does that mean I do nothing? Ask Joseph. He still had plenty to do, he was just covered by the providential plans of God.

**2. IN BETHLEHEM THERE WERE THOSE WHO WERE DRAWN TO THE SMALL TOWN, WHO'S EYES WERE OPENED TO SEE WHAT LAY BEFORE THEM. THEY WERE ALSO OTHERS WHO WERE UNAWARE. IS IT POSSIBLE, THAT WE TOO, WHEN CHRIST SHOWS UP THAT WE ARE UNAWARE?**

***Luke 2:7 "And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn."***

This is one of the striking elements of Luke's account of the birth of Christ, there was no room in the inn. This instantly paints a picture in our minds of an insensitive, greedy business man who is just trying to make a buck on other people's misery. No time for a pregnant teenager, there is more important matters at hand. We tend to see ourselves differently, surely I would have made room for Mary, Joseph, and their son. But if the truth were known, would I? Every time I think of this story I am reminded of my reluctance to embrace the outpouring of 1994. God was moving and I was clueless. That's how it was for the innkeeper. Christ was visiting his very home and he was unaware. **How about you? Maybe The Lord is visiting us again, are we aware of His nearness?**

Martin Luther writes, "All of us should use the gospel to evaluate ourselves. How near or far are we from Christ? How are we doing in faith and love? Many become inflamed with dreamy devotion when they hear about how impoverished Christ was when he was born. They grow furious at the people of Bethlehem and criticize their blindness and ingratitude. They think that if they had been there, they would have served the Lord and his mother. They wouldn't have allowed them to be so miserable. But these people don't even notice their own neighbors who are nearby and need their help. They ignore them and leave them as they are. Who on earth doesn't have miserable, sick, blundering, or sinful people around them? Why don't they show their love to these people? Why don't they do for their neighbors what Christ did for them?"

### **3. WHY DOES THE LORD STRATEGICALLY PLACES US IN OUR POSITIONS IN OUR WORLD?**

Maybe the Lord has shown up again, this time in the homeless man who visits your church, or the pregnant teenager next door. Or maybe He is the coworker struggling in his marriage or the neighbor overwhelmed with troubled children. Each one of us are strategically placed in our world to serve as \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Often, our own problems or even our own important work tends to blind us to the truly important. As we take a break from our normal routines during our Christmas celebration maybe we can reflect on our current spiritual condition. Maybe we, like the innkeeper in Bethlehem, have been blinded by our own busyness. Maybe God has come near and we are unaware. Maybe He has come near, moved into our own world. If we ask, He always answers. Go ahead, ask Him how He intends to reveal Himself and use you for His glory in the coming year. Maybe we can shut down our busyness and join the shepherds, wise men, and other creatures worshipping at the manger.

### **4. STILL THERE WERE OTHERS WHO WOULD TRAVEL THAT ROAD TO BETHLEHEM. WHO WERE THEY? AND WHAT DID THEY SEE AND HEAR?**

***Luke 2:13,14 "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, goodwill toward men!'"***

This was the strangest day ever for these shepherds. They were just simple men; after all, they were only shepherds. They were just ordinary Jewish men, just taking care of their flocks, trying to survive and support their family. But this was not an ordinary night—this was the night that would define their lives. They had never seen an angel, they had never met or even heard of anyone who ever had, but that was about to change.

Suddenly a light like they had never seen filled the meadow where they were resting, and they were suddenly all wide awake. Then they heard it; it was a sound like they had never heard before, it was music, but much more than music. This music was like a living being, and it seemed to be full of life itself. It was all around them; it was inside of them, but seemed to be coming from these strange, holy creatures that were lighting up the sky with the glory reflecting off of them.

They were singing about a Savior, born of a virgin in a manger in nearby Bethlehem. As unbelievable as it sounded, after what they had just witnessed they knew it was true. Suddenly they were on the run and they couldn't stop until they found this child wrapped in swaddling clothes in the stable at the inn in Bethlehem.



## 5. CAN WE STILL HEAR THE ANGELS SINGING?

These angels are still singing after 2000 years, and they are not about to stop. How could they stop? Living in the presence of such greatness, they have to sing! Those that have \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ can still hear their singing today. Charles Wesley heard the angels singing in the 1700's and wrote his famous song "Hark the Herald Angels Sing". Listen to one of the verses of his song— you never know, maybe you will hear the voice of the angels in his song.

"Adam's likeness, Lord, efface, Stamp Thine image in its place: Second Adam from above, Reinstate us in Thy love. Let us Thee, though lost, regain, Thee, the Life, the inner man: O, to all Thyself impart, Formed in each believing heart. Hark the herald angels sing Glory to the newborn King"

"Adam's likeness, Lord, efface". All of us carry the "likeness" of the fallen man, Adam. Christ came to stamp His image in its place. As we draw near to the Lord, the hope of Christmas is being formed in each of us—the image of Christ Himself.

(1-5 From Pastor Frank Bailey's Book- "Great is the Mystery of Godliness")

## 6. HOW DO WE JOIN IN ON THE HEAVENLY SONG?

Let those who have been made partakers of this free and glorious grace of God, \_\_\_\_\_ their \_\_\_\_\_ much in praises and hallelujahs to God, for the wonders of His mercy in their redemption.

When you praise Him in prayer, let it not be with coldness and indifference; when you praise him in your closet your whole soul be active therein; when you praise Him in singing, don't barely make a noise, without any stirring of affection in the heart, without any internal melody. Surely, you have reason to shout, cry "Grace, grace be the top-stone of the temple!"...

Surely, if the angels are so astonished at God's mercy to you, and do even shout with joy and admiration at the sight of God's grace to you, you yourself, on whom this grace is bestowed, have much more reason to shout."

It is so easy for the indifference and apathy of the world and worldly people (not to mention apathetic Christians) to effect us. People express their emotions for touchdowns and bonus checks, how about some passion for the mercy and grace of God. Christmas is the celebration of God's love displayed to fallen man by the birth of His Son. If that is the case, we need to join with the angels. Just as the shepherds were shocked into reality by the shouting angels, maybe someone you know will be awakened this Christmas by your singing and shouting for joy.

So it was, when the angels 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.

Luke 2:15-16

**ANSWERS:**

2. Salt and Light
5. Ears to Hear
6. Spend their Lives

**TAKEAWAY:**

1. When you are a follower of Christ, His unseen hand will guide your steps and get you to the place of divine appointment
2. Sometimes we are unaware when Jesus shows up at our door.
3. He wants us to see and hear things in the unseen world.
4. He wants us to join in on the heavenly song being sung by the angels and the redeemed.

# Shepherd's Song of the Night



The darkness had fallen  
Like a dark dismal hole  
So dark you could feel it  
In the depths of your soul  
We huddled together  
Our fears were unseen  
Our thoughts turned to daylight  
And what it might bring  
Then suddenly we heard it  
The sound from above  
The song  
Like no other  
It tasted of love  
This music in darkness  
This contrast of light  
This sound pierced the darkness  
This love filled the night  
Some said it was angels  
Others wouldn't say  
This song touched each one  
Like the brightest of days  
This song of the night  
It's God's mystery  
It comes at the darkest  
To set all men free  
This song of the angels  
This deep mystery  
It pierces the darkness  
Its love pierces me  
In the darkest of nights  
When all Hope is gone  
Your long lonely night  
Will be pierced by the song  
This song is it's brightest  
When your hopes are all done  
This song of the angels  
How God sent His Son

Pastor Frank Bailey



## The Christmas Dance

Before there was history  
There lived a great mystery  
A story of joy and romance

The Lord and His Son  
They've always been One  
Embrace in the great Spirit dance

An unspeakable delight  
It burst through the night  
A joy that's stronger than wine

The Father and Son embracing as One  
In the dance that's long before time  
This singing and dancing  
This holy romancing

This joy to the world Angels say  
It came to the earth  
At our dear Saviour's birth  
This joy it begins Christmas Day!

Pastor Frank Bailey

# Week Four

## THE WORD BECAME FLESH

**Luke 2:15-16** "So it was, when the angels 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."

### 1. WHO WAS THIS BABY LYING IN A MANGER?

**John 1:1-5** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it."

**John 1:14** "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

\_\_\_\_\_, the Word of God, the creator of this entire universe was the babe lying in a manger. He is the One who scooped out the ocean with His hands. Our entire universe came into being through the Father's idea of Himself. The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. This incredible person, a God who's bigger than our ability to understand, took upon Himself human flesh. You see Jesus wasn't actually born in Bethlehem. He took on flesh in Bethlehem, but actually He has lived from the beginning of time. He was with the Father way before creation. He's been rejoicing with Him from the days of eternity.

Micah prophesied, "But thou, Bethlehem Ephrathah though thou be little among the lands of Judah, one is coming forth out of you who will be ruler of Judah; His days are from long ago, from the days of eternity." Eternal God, the Word, became flesh and dwelt among us. Great is the mystery of godliness. Who can understand it with the natural mind? God was manifested in the flesh. Awesome God!

### 2. WHY DID JESUS STEP OUT OF ETERNITY?

Jesus humbled Himself and stepped out of eternity, out of the realm of time and space, and took upon Himself human flesh, **so that He could declare this almighty God. So that He could explain and reveal this almighty God. So that He could be the representation, the outshining, of the glory of God. So that we could look and see this awesome God and get a glimpse of what He's like.** What was God after? God was giving us the opportunity to step into a life beyond life. He was given us an opportunity, and invitation; and that is what Christmas is all about.

### 3. WHAT IS THE GOOD NEWS OF CHRISTMAS?

***Good news, good news! Rejoice today in Jerusalem, for in Bethlehem a child has been born who is Christ the Lord. Good news for all people.***

Jesus wants us to hear the good news: "There is an opportunity for mankind to step into an intimacy, a fellowship that I've shared with My Father from the beginning of time." **He is calling us to \_\_\_\_\_.**

We have the opportunity to enjoy Christmas like no one else. The Message Translation of John 1, it says, "The Word was first, the Word present to God, and God present to the Word. The Word was God and ready for God from day one. Everything was created through Him, and not one thing came into being without Him. What came into existence was Life and the Life was Light to live by. The Light blazed out the darkness; the darkness could not put it out." The Message translation of verse 14 tells us, "The Word became flesh and blood, and moved into the neighborhood." Jesus came and moved into your neighborhood. He walked into your neighborhood of humankind coming to walk among us and live among us, coming to reveal His glory.

### 4. WHEN WE THINK ABOUT CHRISTMAS, WHAT DOES IT REMIND US OF?

***And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him. John 1:16-18***

***Christmas reminds us that Christ is the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, generous inside and out, true from start to finish. The Message version of John 1:16 tells us, "we all live off His generous bounty, gift after gift after gift." Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift! When we come into the presence of God- whether it be in worship or in prayer time- we come into His presence with empty hands to receive. We don't come with anything to give. We come to receive. We receive the breath of life. We receive supernatural love, insight a word, something to satisfy the hunger in our souls.***

We leave His presence with something tangible. When we walk through the doors of the church and we go into the physical world, we don't leave His presence but we leave those special times of precious overwhelming intimacy with God. We go out into the world and that's when we have something to give, something to minister. We have nothing to give to God, be we have everything to receive from God.

This grace that we receive everyday comes from Jesus. I come to the manger and bow down. I come to the throne and bow down. I come into His presence and bow down and worship Him.

I am shocked again by His generosity constantly pouring into me. He lavishes upon me His presence, His joy, His peace, His Word. It comes and sustains me and fills me up, and then I have plenty inside to go about my journey and give away these gifts. "Giving away this life," John says, "This is what I was born for – this incredible, receiving and giving life."

## 5. WHAT IS THE GREATEST CHRISTMAS GIFT OF ALL?

We too like the others that made their way to Bethlehem (the house of bread) will discover in that manger the greatest gift of all: \_\_\_\_\_. Jesus wants us to hear Him as He says, "I've got a gift for you this Christmas. The gift is ME... I'm your Gift! I am going to give you Myself for Christmas! Come and feast on me. Come and taste! Come and drink! Come and eat! Come to the Father's table. Come and dine at this supernatural table. Come to Bethlehem and feast on the love of God.

Merry Christmas from God! What a Christmas gift! Have yourself a merry, merry little Christmas, enjoying the greatest joy of all; the joy of God Himself. Joy to the world! The Lord is Come! Let earth receive Her King!

(This lesson was taken from Pastor Frank Bailey's mini book- *The Word Became Flesh.*)

### ANSWERS:

1. Jesus
3. Himself
4. Giver of Gifts
5. God Himself

### TAKEAWAY:

1. Jesus, the Creator of the Universe, step out of time and came to earth, to be the outshining of God's glory.
2. He wants to draw us to Himself.
3. He is the giver of gifts.
4. The greatest gift is God Himself.

"For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given;  
And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be  
called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."  
Isaiah 9:6



## Hungry Heart

Restless heart you struggle so  
    Searching for repose  
Looking for that place of rest  
    That rest man seldom knows  
Lonely heart-Your grieving so  
    When will the sadness end  
You get back up- to face the world  
    To just fall back again  
Anxious Heart-You worry so  
    Your trust seems far away  
Who can you trust when things go wrong  
    Who will you trust today  
Ambitious heart – it never ends  
    Will there ever be a time  
When you can stop this torrid rush  
    And place your hand in mine  
Hungry heart has found its food  
    To still this longing soul  
    To satisfy the heart of man  
    To make the sinner whole  
In Bethlehem the house of bread  
    Not far from Calvary  
I gave my life for you my son  
    That you could feast on me

Pastor Frank Bailey





## The New Old Song

Have you seen it  
Can you hear it  
All creation sings as one

Have you heard  
That New Old Song  
God has loved us with His Son

A love so strong  
A song so pure  
A taste of Heaven in every breath

Can you hear that New Old story  
This song of joy  
Revealed by death

A song of life  
A kiss of death  
This song unveils

The hidden worth  
Out thoughts revealed in  
The song of Heaven

This love concealed in our  
Saviour's Birth  
This New Old Story  
This New Old Song

This Song from Heaven up above  
I can hear it  
I can feel it  
God has kissed me with His love

Pastor Frank Bailey

# Week Five

## A MOMENT IN TIME

**Luke 2:25-35** *"And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God..."*

### 1. WHY DID JOSEPH AND MARY TAKE THE BABY TO THE TEMPLE EIGHT DAYS AFTER HIS BIRTH?

They took Him to Jerusalem to dedicate the baby to the God. In doing so they fulfilled the law.

### 2. WHO WAS SIMEON?

He was a well known individual in Israel. His father was Hillel, who was one of the leaders of the Sanhedrin, the supreme council of the Jewish people, and Simeon at one time held the office of president of the Sanhedrin. Simeon's son was Gamaliel. He is the teacher who disciplined Paul the apostle before he was saved. But Simeon lost his position because of his beliefs that the Messiah was not coming as a conquering king. He believed He would be a suffering servant (Luke 2:24-25). The Jewish religious and political establishment couldn't handle this view.

### 3. WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT SIMEON?

**Luke 2:25-26** *"And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon, and this man was just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ."*

In Luke 2:25 it says that the \_\_\_\_\_ was upon him. Just like Elizabeth and Mary and Zecharias being told that his son would be filled with the Holy Ghost from birth. To be full of the Holy Ghost means to be filled with God Himself. That means he was different from most everyone else. He was hated for what he believed, probably hated by his peers, yet he bore the reproach of his fellow Jews because of his expectations about the Messiah. In verse 26 it says that he had a revelation of Jesus. It said that he would not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ; Simeon was a believer. He saw something, something that the other members of the Sanhedrin couldn't see.

#### 4. HOW COULD SIMEON SEE WHAT THE OTHERS COULDN'T?

**Because he had a relationship with the Holy Ghost.** The Holy Spirit of God was upon him. Simeon wasn't depending upon men. He wasn't relying upon popular opinion or what anyone else thought or what was commonly believed in his day. He didn't get revelation from man, but from God. The Holy Ghost was upon him.... He lived in the presence of God. The Holy Ghost was upon him and he went to the house of God. Everywhere he went the Holy Ghost was upon him.

#### 5. WHAT WERE THE CHANCES OF HIM BEEN IN THE RIGHT PLACE AT THE RIGHT TIME?

Jerusalem was a big city, and that temple was a big place. **What do you think were the chances that at the very moment of all moments- when Joseph and Mary came to dedicate their baby Jesus to the Lord- that Simeon would come walking in? Not in a million years.** But that's exactly what happened. Simeon was right where he was supposed to be, right when he was supposed to be, because Simeon was full of the Holy Ghost.

When you honor the Holy Ghost- when you fellowship with Him, embrace Him and drink His glory- you'll be in the right place at the right time. You'll have Someone taking care of you, Someone watching out for you. You'll have Someone who's your rear guard, Someone who goes before you and prepares the way.

#### 6. WHAT WAS SIMEON'S GREATEST CREDIT?

Simeon was \_\_\_\_\_. The others missed it, but he was there. Jesus came to the temple and they missed it. What a tragedy that would be... for God to be doing something, (for God to show up), and for you to be so caught up with your own plans and ambitions that you missed what He was doing. ...That's exactly what happened to thousands of people in Simeon's day.... Only those who were spiritually hungry could see what He was doing. The people who saw what was important recognized the visitation of God because they hungered for something better than anything this present world had to offer. Simeon and Zacharias and Elizabeth and Mary and Joseph and (the shepherds and the magi and Anna...) they all hungered for something greater than prestige and wealth, reputation or titles. And they all saw Jesus.

## 7. WHAT WAS SIMEON'S GREATEST MOMENT?

**Luke 2:27-33** *"So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said: "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel." And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him."*

Luke 2:27-28- "This was Simeon's greatest moment. He had waited his whole life for this. His greatest moment wasn't when he was announced president of the Sanhedrin, or dedicated the building, or his audience with Herod. **Simeon's greatest moment was the day he took the Christ child into his arms.** "This is what I've been waiting for," he must have said. As he held Jesus next to his heart, feeling the heartbeat of God next to his, Simeon looked into the eyes of this baby who was his Creator.... He began to prophecy."

## 8. WHAT WAS HIS PROPHECY ABOUT?

**Luke 2:24-25** *Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed."*

His prophecy was an unpopular one. **He said that Jesus was going to tear this community in two, the fathers against the mothers and the brothers against the sisters.** He is going to bring discord and division, unity and healing. Sometimes we think that when Jesus comes that everyone will be friends. But when He comes, He'll bring the greatest division you can ever imagine.... But at that moment, to Simeon nothing else quite mattered.... In that moment in time he touched God and God touched him. His glory became real to Simeon that day At that moment when Simeon touched Jesus, everything was suddenly okay. He could die in peace because his eyes beheld His glory and salvation.....Let this moment be your moment in time!!!!

## 9. WHAT DID THE INN KEEPER, THE SHEPHERD'S, THE MAGI, SIMEON AND ANNA HAVE IN COMMON?

In Luke chapter 2, we have Joseph and Mary going to Bethlehem to participate in the census. While there Mary had baby Jesus, wrapped Him in swaddling clothes and put Him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn. That day was that inn keeper's moment in time. Jesus came to his door but the inn

keeper knew it not. It was the same for the other shepherd's who were living out in the field. One group of shepherd's would see the star and follow it to their King. Other shepherds would probably see the same star and only wonder about it's mystery. The shepherd's would seize there moment in time when Jesus came. Not just wondering without cause ...They took their opportunity to draw near.

It was the same with the magi who came from the east seeking the King. First going to the one's that should have known Him, the priests, and teachers of the law in king Herod's court (Matt. 2), they acted interested, but none would take the time to follow the star. The magi would bring Him their finest gifts. The priests and the teachers would keep their gifts to themselves, for their benefit only. Simeon and Anna's moment would come. When He would fulfill His promises to those who had faithfully waited, even though they were written off as almost dead. To these five and countless others \_\_\_\_\_ and would come. He comes daily to us. Our prayer must be that we and the one's we love don't miss our moment to see the King.

#### **10. THE WISE MEN WOULD NOT ONLY COME TO SEE THE BABY KING, BUT WOULD HONOR HIM WITH TREASURES. WHAT WAS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THESE GIFTS THEY BROUGHT?**

***Matthew 2:11 And when they had come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His mother, and fell down and worshiped Him. And when they had opened their treasures, they presented gifts to Him: gold, frankincense, and myrrh.***

These men had come prepared to worship, and they had brought gifts worthy of a king. But these gifts, these prophetic gifts, spoke about the days to come in this special infant king's life.

The first gift was **GOLD**, the royal gift that spoke of the \_\_\_\_\_ of this unusual king. "Are you a king?" The words were strangely familiar...the words of Pilate 33 years later. Yes, He was a king but His kingdom was not of this world. Kings are not born in manglers. They are born in palaces, unless their kingdom is not of this world. This special gift spoke of the coming eternal kingdom of this infant king. He has made us kings and priests, but our kingdom, like His, is not of this world.

The second gift was opened—**FRANKINCENSE**. This was another gift of prophecy speaking about the heavenly ministry of this precious Savior. Incense speaks of the work of priests—it speaks of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_. Of course, this is the heavenly priesthood of Jesus. Today Jesus is our heavenly priest and He represents the human race before the Father in His priestly ministry of intercession.

Finally, the last gift was opened. Joseph looked at Mary as she hugged her child closer to her breast...in her heart she knew the secret meaning of this gift of **MYRRH**. This was a gift of spices to anoint this child for His \_\_\_\_\_. From the day He was born, He was not far from the cross. As the wise men slipped away to head for home, mixed feelings filled their hearts. They returned home another way to avoid Herod, but everyone there that day knew what the future held. The Word had been given, the prophets had spoken. "God so loved the world that He sent His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish, but shall have eternal life."

"Today, these gifts from the wise men are still speaking to us. Have you received Jesus and His heavenly kingdom or are you still stuck in the kingdom of this world? Have you tasted the fellowship that comes to you from the Father as you enjoy the intimacy this heavenly priest has made available to all of us? Finally, have you stood with these wise men, gazing at the child in Mary's arms knowing He came to die—He came to die for you? Embrace His love today...after all, He has loved you from eternity!"

Pastor Frank Bailey

(Week Six Lesson has been taken from Pastor Frank's book Simeon's Moment, unless noted otherwise).

**ANSWERS:**

3. Holy Spirit
6. There
9. He Came
10. Kingdom, Prayer and Worship, Burial

**TAKEAWAY:**

1. Simeon was a devout man full of the Holy Spirit.
2. Simeon waited in the temple anticipating the arrival of the Messiah.
3. Simeon's greatest moment was when he embraced the Christ child- Jesus.
4. Others missed their moment.

# Week Six

## REDEEMING THE TIME

***Ephesians 5:15,16 "See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."***

### 1. HOW CAN WE BUY BACK THE TIME?

We are rapidly heading into a new year, 2016 is over and 2017 is about to begin. At the end of each year it is good for us to reflect on our past year and begin to think of the new opportunities just ahead of us. In today's scripture Paul talks about redeeming the time. What is he saying, how can I buy back lost time? Obviously we can't buy back time that is past, but Paul is describing a supernatural lifestyle that can begin to make the very best use of our time and in some ways begin to buy back lost time. Paul talked about the way to make the best use of our time in the next few verses, he said we could do this by ***staying filled with the Spirit.***

*"And do not be drunk with wine, in which is dissipation; but be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord, giving thanks always for all things to God the Father in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ." Eph.5:18-20*

The word Paul uses, dissipation, literally means to waste your time. He is saying we can buy time back by staying full of God.

*"YOU have now heard of the preciousness of time; and you are the persons concerned, to whom God hath committed that precious talent. You have an eternity before you. When God created you, and gave you reasonable souls, he made you for an endless duration. He gave you time here in order to a preparation for eternity, and your future eternity depends on the improvement of time.— Consider, therefore, what you have done with your past time. You are not now beginning your time, but a great deal is past and gone; and all the wit, and power, and treasure of the universe, cannot recover it. Many of you may well conclude, that more than half of your time is gone; though you should live to the ordinary age of man, your glass is more than half run; and it may be there are but few sands remaining. Your sun is past the meridian, and perhaps just setting, or going into an everlasting eclipse. Consider, therefore, what account you can give of your improvement of past time. How have you let the precious golden sands of your glass run?"*

*Jonathan Edwards*

## **2. WHAT COMFORT DO WE HAVE CONCERNING THE PRESENT TIME?**

***Psalm 31:14,15 But as for me, I trust in You, O Lord; I say, "You are my God." My times are in Your hand; Deliver me from the hand of my enemies,***

This passage of scripture brings a sense of security and peace, resting in the Father's plan. No matter how many enemies we have stacked against us, no matter how strong they may be, our life is held safely in the \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_. Exactly what does the Lord have in His hand? He has my family, my ministry, the day of my birth, the day of my death, He has everything orchestrated perfectly for my life. Who can separate me from the love of God? Shall life or death or sickness or poverty? If God be for me, who can be against me? Shall life or death or angels or any created being be able to hinder the plan of God in my life?

## **3. WHAT COMFORT DO WE HAVE CONCERNING OUR TIMES IN THE FUTURE?**

Albert Barnes wrote about the times of God. "My times are in thy hand – That is, I said this in my trouble; when my friends forsook me, and when my enemies came around me and threatened my life. The meaning is, that all that pertained to him was under the control and at the disposal of God. He would "live" as long as God should please. It was His to give life; His to preserve it; His to take it away. All in relation to life – its origin – its continuance – its changes – its seasons – childhood, youth, middle age, old age – \_\_\_\_\_ was in the hand of God. No one, therefore, could take his life before the time that had been appointed by God, and he might calmly commit the whole to him. This we may feel in all seasons of life and in all times of danger; of sickness; of feebleness. We shall live as long as God has appointed; we shall pass through such changes as he directs; we shall die when and where and how he chooses. In the faithful discharge of our duty, therefore, we may commit all these things to him, and leave all at his disposal."

Thinking about the day of your death may be "different" for you, but knowing that everything, even that day, is all orchestrated brings an incredible sense of peace into our lives. Our times are in His hand and we can rest in that.

2017 is just ahead of us, even though nothing has happened, each of those days in this next year are in the hand of God. We can rest in His plans and confidently go forward knowing that the Lord has us in His hand and nothing will be able to stop His amazing plan from being fulfilled in us.



**ANSWERS:**

2. Father's Hand
3. ALL

**TAKEAWAY:**

1. We redeem the time by staying filled with the Holy Spirit.
2. Our lives are held safely in the Father's Hands.

# Week Seven

## ALL THINGS NEW

**Rev. 21:5,6 "And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." Also he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true." And he said to me, "It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. To the thirsty I will give from the spring of the water of life without payment."**

This passage of scripture always reminds me of the movie "The Passion of the Christ". During the scene in the movie where Christ is carrying His cross through the streets of Jerusalem the movie depicts Christ falling and coming briefly face to face with his mother. As their eyes met He said, "Mother, I am making all things new". What a powerful thought, all things new.

### 1. HOW DOES HE MAKE ALL THINGS NEW IN MY LIFE?

This passage of scripture seems to say that this renewal is actually internal and is connected to drinking from the spring of "Living Water". He says, "to the thirsty I will give from the spring of water of life without payment". He actually makes all things new in our lives through this \_\_\_\_\_. For many, spiritual things are not relevant to their daily activities, but to those who know Him, drinking this water of life is the very source of our life.

### 2. WHAT DOES HE MAKE NEW IN OUR LIVES?

Our love for Him becomes new, our passion and understanding of His Word becomes new, our love for the lost is made new, our love for the house of God becomes new. He literally renews \_\_\_\_\_ of our lives. As we begin a brand new year we can actually start with a clean slate, He washes our past clean and makes our heart clean and new.

### 3. HOW DOES THIS RENEWAL HAPPEN AND WHAT IS MY ROLE IN THIS PROCESS?

Remember what Jesus said in John 7, "everyone who is thirsty, come and drink", He repeated almost the same words in this passage, "To the thirsty" He addresses His invitation. Come and drink from the water of life. **Drink in as you worship, drink in as you soak in His word, drink in as you go to the house of God.** As you do, His words begin to take effect inside of you. He begins to make all things new, the best news is that that this miracle is starting inside of you today. 2017 can be the best of all years, come and drink, He is making all things new.

#### **4. SINCE HE HAS GIVEN US THIS MIRACLE OF A FRESH START, WHAT SHOULD WE ASK THE LORD TO DO ABOUT OUR DAYS IN THE FUTURE?**

***Psalm 90:12 "Teach us to number our days aright, that we may gain a heart of wisdom."***

Have you thought about just how short our lives really are. It's as if they are like a mist that is gone before you even know it. We are to \_\_\_\_\_ our days because none of us know how many we have left. Each day is a gift from the Lord, precious and more valuable than we know.

Kathryn Kuhlman also had a sense of eternity in her preaching. She often spoke of the day in our lives that has no tomorrows. I wonder if that day will be in 2017. Only the Holy Spirit can sensitize us to the hour that we live in. Could this be the year of Christ's return. If so, I need to number my days.

#### **5. FOR THE RIGHTEOUS WHAT CAN WE BE ASSURED ABOUT THE DAYS AHEAD?**

***Psalm. 31:19 "Oh, how abundant is your goodness, which you have stored up for those who fear you and worked for those who take refuge in you, in the sight of the children of mankind!"***

Over the years I have observed that there are distinct seasons of harvest for God's sons and daughters. David said that God's \_\_\_\_\_ is stored up for us. Recently, The Lord opened this scripture up to me and as He did I became excited about 2017. Before you say "Here we go again", let me reassure you, I cannot stand religious hype, you know, promising untold breakthrough blessings each year, telling people just what they want to hear. Those unfounded promises have always left me with a bad taste in my mouth, but seriously, I have a great expectancy for 2017. Many times, I receive personal blessing in my life as a sign to me of things to come in the church. I am in one of those seasons right now.

William Gurnall also spoke about this verse, here are some of his thoughts:  
"Mark the phrase "Laid up for them; "his mercy and goodness it is intended for them, as a father that lays by such a sum of money, and writes on the bag, "This is a portion for such a child." But how comes the Christian to have this right to God, and all that vast and untold treasure of happiness which is in him? This indeed is greatly to be heeded; it is faith that gives him a good title to all this. That which makes him a child, makes him an heir. Now, faith makes him a child of God. John 1:12, "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believed on his name." As therefore if you would not call your birthright into question, and bring your interest in Christ and those glorious privileges that come along with him, under a sad dispute in your soul, look to your faith."

I love that thought, "that which makes him a child, makes him an heir." Just as we were saved by faith we receive our inheritance by faith. Get ready, there are an abundance of stored up blessing coming your way in 2017!

**ANSWERS:**

1. Spiritual Drinking
2. Every Part
4. Number
5. Abundant Goodness

**TAKEAWAY:**

1. He renews us daily by learning to drink spiritually.
2. He wants to renew every part of our lives.
3. We are encouraged to number our days, because each day is precious and is a gift.
4. Abundant Goodness is stored up for the righteous.