

“GOOD NEWS FOR BAD TIMES”

(CHRISTMAS SEASON - 2008)

The wisest king of all time wrote, *“When times are good, be happy; but when times are bad, consider: God has made the one as well as the other”* (Ecclesiastes 7:14). After we consider this truth, we might be compelled to ask, “If this is so, is there any good news to be found for the bad times”? I propose that the answer is yes, and such good can be found in the birth of Jesus.

The season of Christmas comes every year and with it comes the greatest treasure of “Good News” for all times, whether good or bad. The prophets spoke centuries before, of the coming Messiah, who would bring, as the angels announced, *“good news of great joy that will be for all the people”* (Luke 2:10). This year, we will take time to reflect on the prophecies of old, that foretold of God breaking into history to bring “good news”.

Your struggles during these troubling days of job losses, financial setbacks and unending questions about the future are many. You may be tempted to simply skip Christmas this year and hope for a better one next year. On the other hand, you may look for Christmas happiness to ease your pain for a small moment in the bigger season of hardship.

May I suggest that God is never late or lax in His care for you, as we read *“when the time had fully come, God sent his Son”* (Galatians 4:4). Rather than wait for better times, or hide in the tinsel and wrappings of the season, let’s look into the manger of the prophesied Messiah Jesus and come face to face with *“the God of all comfort”* (2 Corinthians 1:3)

In our series of Bible messages for the Christmas season of 2008 we will look at a Savior who is **“Forever Yours”** as the **“One and Only”** answer for all your needs. We will find that He is **“Without Limits”** and will always be the **“Sonshine of your Life”**, if you will trust Him to be your Savior, Sufficiency, Security and Satisfaction.

Remember, although life may be very hard, God is very good and He sincerely cares for you with an everlasting love. *“This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us”* (1 John 3:16). He sent his one and only Son, born in a manger, yet in the shadow of the cross. Jesus came to the end of his earthly journey, spread out his arms at Calvary to say “I love you ... this much”. There can be no greater “Good News” for bad times.

While our underlying message is focused on the good news of Jesus, this can only be good news to those who come to Him with humble hearts and receive Him as their personal Savior. Just as every Christmas gift must be received, so the greatest of all gifts must be received. *“Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God”* (John 1:12). I trust that the Christmas season of 2008 will bring “Good News” to you, for both good times and bad.

A truly God blessed Christmas to you and yours,

Pastor Jimmie Van Sant

Pastor Jimmie Van Sant
First Baptist Church
Bloomfield, NJ