

Dec 31st – Sermon notes

Text verse:

1 John 5:20 We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.

Main Idea: His true nature revealed and His faithfulness in the year gone by, fills us with great expectancy of the same and much more in the year ahead! The Best is yet to come.

As we are on the brink of beginning a new year, a time of reflection can be very beneficial, especially for those of us who have placed our faith in Jesus The Christ; the true one, the light of all people. Jesus the Messiah, Jesus the Anointed One. We are coming out of the season of celebrating the miraculous conception and then the physical entry of the Savior into the world. The amazing splendor of it all is still fresh in our minds. “One scholar, J. Barton Payne, has found as many as 574 verses in the Old Testament that somehow point to or describe or reference the coming Messiah. Alfred Edersheim found 456 Old Testament verses referring to the Messiah or His times. Conservatively, Jesus fulfilled at least 300 prophecies in His earthly ministry.” <https://www.gotquestions.org/prophecies-of-Jesus.html>

Therefore, if all of that was true, then all of the rest is true!

If we can see His faithfulness in the year gone by, we can surely expect more of the same in the year ahead!

As we go into a new year, we may find ourselves filled with angst about the uncertainty of it all. We can align ourselves with Oswald Chambers, an early-twentieth-century Scottish Baptist evangelist who wrote. “We are uncertain of the next step, but we are certain of God!” Oswald called it Gracious Uncertainty. Certainty, he says is the mark of the commonsense life. Gracious uncertainty is the mark of the spiritual life; and as soon as we abandon ourselves to God and the task he has placed before us, He begins to fill our lives with surprises!

Let us also align ourselves with the scriptures that remind us that the one who began this work in us, will never leave us, (Hebrews 13: 5), He is for us (Romans 8:31), He loves us with everlasting love (Jeremiah 31:3) & 1 John 4 16; He is in us and is greater than the one that is in the world (1 John 4:5). Yes, there is more... but you get the picture.

To guide our reflection- This Sunday we will look at Mary, the Mother of Jesus

Read John 2: 1-11

On the third day, a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. 3 When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

4 "Dear Woman,[a] why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My hour has not yet come."

5 His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

6 Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.[b]

7 Jesus said to the servants, "Fill the jars with water"; so they filled them to the brim.

8 Then he told them, "Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."

They did so, 9 and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside 10 and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

11 What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Jesus, at Mary's request, transformed approximately 120 – 180 gallons of water into wine

A. How did Mary know that she could tell Jesus about this problem at the wedding?

Her expectancy was fueled by her knowledge of who Jesus was promised to be.

- Up to this point, Jesus had only asked a few men to join Him. From the looks of the people, he had following him around, well... let's just say- they didn't look like the cream of the crop.
- So, what they were out of wine. What was the big deal? One scholar notes that in those days, wine was needed to bless the union of the couple. Dr Oliver Tearle (Loughborough University)
- Jesus's response to his mother, reveals that he did not plan to reveal his divinity at this time, (Tearle).
- But Mary, knew what was spoken to her about Jesus! When she was only a 13-year-old Jewish girl, engaged to be married, the angel Gabriel came to her and told her a few things. She knew how He was conceived in her, she knew that a choir of angels serenaded his birth- well if that was true then all of the rest is true. Nothing is impossible with- God!
- Mary was told that she would conceive a child of the Holy Spirit (John 1: 35) and the holy one she carried would be called the son of God! So since that was true, then all of the rest is true. Since He is the son of God- this wine issue should be right down His lane.

She wrote this song: Luke 1: 46-55

And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord

47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

48 for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.

50 His mercy extends to those who fear him,

from generation to generation.

51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;

he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones

but has lifted up the humble.

53 He has filled the hungry with good things

but has sent the rich away empty.

54 He has helped his servant Israel,

remembering to be merciful

55 to Abraham and his descendants forever,

just as he promised our ancestors.”

- Her song indicates that she knew a thing or 2 about God. The majority of the wedding guests (even the host) did not know about the miracle of the wine. Only the servants knew. Think about, Jesus’s first miracle revealed first to those who were servants. Most important of all, Mary knew. I surmise that Jesus did it for Mary.
- Did Mary have uncertainty? Yes- there is one instance when Mary and Jesus’s siblings came to Jesus. Mark 3: 31-33. The passage does not say that Jesus went out to meet them. Instead, He asked, “Who are my mother and my brothers?” Whoever does the will of my Father.
- Do you think this left Mary with some uncertainty- Like Mary, we may be uncertain of the next step, uncertain about what God is up to, but our history with our Lord who we know loves us tells us that we can be certain of Him!
- Our uncertainty does not indicate a lack of faith. It is a consequence of living in these human bodies, with human eyes, that have a limited view.

So I ask- what do we now know about the Lord that fills us with great expectancy for 2024

In reflection of 2023- there are things He has done that only you and I know about. His Holy Spirit uniquely reveals it to us. 1 Cor. 2:9-10 However, as it is written: “What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived the things God has prepared for those who love him—10these are the things God has revealed to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God”.

- There are things that have ministered to us and taken us to a new level of faith in Christ.

I just want to mention a few of those things the Lord served up for us, right here in this room:

- George told us that Jesus was our hiding place, protected from the storm that rages.
- LaVern told us that she simply could not remember a time when Jesus was not in her life.

That statement just causes me to smile as I remember His promise to make all things new!

- Akasha reminded us that our help comes from the Lord. She then included us in her private conversation with the Lord as she told him thank you for “always walking with her, sharing all her moments, and that they had done so much together”. They even blew bubbles together!
- Major reminded us that every praise is to our God, every word of worship in one accord, every praise is to our God. He sang with exuberance, God my savior, God my healer, God my deliverer, Yes He is ! Yes, we are to sing hallelujah to our God, Glory Hallelujah is due our God, every praise, every praise is to our God.
- Deacon Gary told us that God was crafting us according to his unique design, according to His “specs” for us.
- Elder Don reminded us that the truest blessing the Lord has given us is Himself.
- In our Bible study of Mephibosheth, Kevin reminded us that adoption means full inclusion and Marty told us that our disabilities do not disqualify us from receiving all that God has for us.
- Corrine told us that when the oceans rise and thunders roar, Christ would soar with us above the storm; that He is king over the flood, we can be still and know that He is God.
- Avonn- reminded us that God is in control and that Christ’s followers are everywhere. And that could God reveal himself to a 7-year-old while hiding in a trashcan. Now a man of 54 could stand before us and proclaim that Jesus won his heart.
- The Burly men told us that when the spirit of the Lord comes upon their hearts, they would dance as David danced. Then they showed us.
- Pastor- Reminded us time and again that getting to know Jesus is the greatest prize. [Read Wait if there is time.]

As I go into 2024- I know a few things:

1. Jesus can get me through any sticky wicket.
2. I don't have to see a way for there to be a way.
3. There is a difference between waiting on Jesus and resting in Jesus.
4. My life is in good hands.
5. Jesus can make use of anything. With Him, the size of the offering does not matter.
6. Belief in Christ is not a means to a comfortable, easy life. Belief in Christ is not a means to social justice, social equality, or even the absence of war. In him is life and His life is the light of men.
7. There is certainty in my uncertainty.

Not knowing what the future holds really does leave us with breathless expectations. We know of His faithfulness in the past and look forward to his faithfulness in the future.

Benediction: Ephesians 3:16-21

16 I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, 17.. that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, 18 may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, 19 and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.