

Christ Community Covenant Church
A 'Down to Earth' Lifestyle!
Pastor Dave Scherrer - December 11, 2016

Down to Earth - our theme for Advent 2016

There is a double message to our Advent theme **Down to Earth**

1. Of course the obvious meaning of God coming down to earth to show himself to us and to restore us into a justified relationship with Him - to pay the price of sin so that we could be forgiven and
2. That this Christmas season might have a more **down to earth** feeling or attitude to it.

When I think of things that are "down to earth" -

"He is a real down to earth kind of guy" what does that mean to you?

I think Jesus was a down to earth kind of guy and I am going to suggest in our time this morning we can celebrate Christmas in a down to earth manner as well. Our Christian lifestyle reflected in our Christmas traditions and practices reveals a lot about not only us but also the God we worship. You see I think how we behave is a direct reflection on what we believe about God. I think this is especially true right now at Christmas time where our Kingdom values of how we treat money and time and even gift giving are so revealing about our faith. If your Christmas, in time and money, is more about the trappings of the season rather than the hilarious truth that God has come down to earth to save us and restore our relationship with the Father, then your theology is suspect as well.

Last week we had a **down to earth** conversation about obedience. Jesus' obedience to the Father in leaving His throne on high and obeying His Father even to death on the cross. The existence of the baby Jesus at all is a testimony to the love of the Trinity and their obedient submission one to another. Now that is a Christmas story that should be told more often!

Now this morning we are going to have a **down to earth** conversation about the advent **Lifestyle**. By taking a look at the holy family I think we are going to see several things we can apply to our own lives...

The Simple Lifestyle of the Holy Family
The Passionate Lifestyle of the Holy Family
The Disciplined Lifestyle of the Holy Family
The Legacy of the Holy Family

Let's talk about that first one – the simple lifestyle of the holy family

The Simple Lifestyle of the Holy Family

It was a simple time anyway in Israel in the first century of course. There was no leisure time like you and I know it. Mostly just survival. Then add to that the fact that they were simply poor, simply hardworking and primarily family all about family.

We know they were poor based on the fact that when they went to the temple to offer the required purification sacrifice for their first born son, they offered the sacrifice that poor offer as described in Leviticus.

We know they were hard-working because Joseph was known as a **tekton** in the Greek. Some have translated that carpenter and there is some church tradition regarding Joseph as a wood worker. But there are virtually no trees in that part of Galilee but there was a huge rock quarry there at the time of Jesus. The word **tekton** can be translated as any kind of craftsman and in those days people used rocks to make houses and temples. When Jesus was around 12, Joseph would have started teaching his first son a trade so Jesus might have learned the hard work of stone cutter and brick mason, perhaps helping

to construct the house and offices of Herod Antipas who constructed his capital at Zepphoris just four miles from Nazareth. Perhaps Jesus spoke out of experience when he spoke of cornerstones and living stones. We could expect that Jesus worked in his craft for 18 years from age 12 to 30 when he started his ministry. No matter what, to live – he worked hard.

We know they were family centered because archeologists tells us that the little village where the holy family lived only had maybe 15 to 20 families, most likely all related. They lived together, worked together, lived and died together.

So what do we take from this simple lifestyled family and Savior? What if we tried to make our lives simpler? What if at Christmas time especially we focus on the important stuff and work hard to simplify our running around. What if we tried to make gift giving simpler?

**Something they want, something they need,
Something to wear, something to read.**

Then there is the idea of the passionate lifestyle

The Passionate Lifestyle of the Holy Family (Kingdom passion)

Luke 2:41-52

Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom. ⁴³ And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, ⁴⁴ but supposing him to be in the group they went a day's journey, but then they began to search for him among their relatives and acquaintances, ⁴⁵ and when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem, searching for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ And when his parents saw him, they were astonished.

And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Behold, your father and I have been searching for you in great distress." ⁴⁹ And he said to them, "Why were you looking for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ And they did not understand the saying that he spoke to them. ⁵¹ And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was submissive to them. And his mother treasured up all these things in her heart.

⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

I heard someone say recently that he hated Christmas. He hated traffic and he hated shopping (I asked him about that and he said he actually doesn't do any shopping, his wife does it all). He didn't like being compelled to give gifts to people he didn't like. OK I guess I get all that but honestly, that bah humbug attitude was bleaching all the joy – the Christian Joy out of one of the most mysterious and beautiful ideas that has ever come into the mind and heart of humankind. The incarnation is as transcendent and captivating as any event ever throughout the creation of the universe. Bigger than football. Just saying. It's time to put the passion back into our Christmas's. Focus on what you love about Christmas and you will find yourself passionate once again and that is a very attractive character trait.

Joseph's passion for his God and his desire to obey His God perhaps made him the scorned one of his family. We will never know what cost the holy family paid so that they could live a passionate life as parents for the Son of God himself.

The last line in this passage leads me to believe that the Holy Family was a disciplined family.

⁵² And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man.

No one increases in wisdom and stature and social favor and spiritual depth without working hard at it and being disciplined of mind and will. That takes us to our last down to earth lifestyle that we can think about for this Christmas.

The Disciplined Lifestyle of the Holy Family

Do you remember the account where Joseph learns that his wife to be is with child? How measured and thoughtful and deliberate Joseph was. And spiritually disciplined to obey. That does not come easy at any time in any culture. Let's look at the passage together.

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel" (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

None of us can know the full measure of the cost that Joseph carried emotionally, socially, perhaps financially because the girl he was engaged to was having a child that did not belong to Joseph. Did he and his family become social outcasts? Did his brothers and sisters blame Jesus for their circumstances? Was Mary made fun of, the object of gossip and scorn?

What incredible discipline and commitment they must have shown each other. God chose the foster parents of His Son very well.

What does a disciplined Christmas look like? I'm not sure what it looks like to you, but I think for me it means making sure I keep my attitude right, Keep my eyes disciplined on the Christ child and make sure the important stuff gets done. And almost all the important stuff has to do with the people I love. How is it that at the most loving season in the year, we become the most unloving to the people who are most important to us. Not only sad but dangerously consequential.

We have been talking about what theologians and pastors call an incarnational life. As Christ becomes alive in me it changes the way I think and act and love. God coming down into me is another incarnation, my very own personal incarnation. Jesus living in me and His presence makes me make different choices that if Christ had not come down to earth to meet me and live in me. I want to wrap up this kingdom conversation we have been having this morning by inviting Richard and Debbi to come up here so you can meet them.

Speck interview

"We talked earlier this week about this lifestyle idea that we are talking about it this morning. There are a couple of stories you shared with me that though they aren't Christmas stories per se, they kind of demonstrate a *down to earth kingdom attitude* that we are talking about this morning."

"One thing I know about you guys is that for many years you have opened your home to people who were in need. Tell us a little bit about that . . ."

"You also shared with me that many years later that gift of hospitality was still remembered . . . tell us about that"

“Now more recently Debbi you invited your brother to come and live with you . . . what was that story . . .”
“And then Rich, you have shared with me before that your Dad has been slow to warm up to Christ but your Dad called Debbi to speak to her about this gift of love and life that you offered to Debbi’s brother. What was that call all about?”

I didn’t have the Speck’s share this morning because I wanted you to be like them. Who we want to be like is our Savior and His Holy Family. There is a legacy of the Holy Family.

The Legacy of the Holy Family

A legacy of simply, costly faith. What if our Christmas’ look more like their Christmas? What if that becomes our Christmas legacy too?

Let’s pray