

“Is Jesus Your Counsellor?”
By Brother Andy Giebler
Sunday, December 24th, 2017

Remain standing for just one more second. Let's bow our heads. God almighty, we come to You, thank You just to worship, that we can worship You. That the veil of partition was rent, that we have an avenue to You, that we have the ability to come to You. We thank You. God, I ask that You would bless this morning. Bless the message, bless every word that is spoken; God, bless the hearts that receive it, in Jesus name, amen.

Luke 2:1-19 *And, it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.(And, this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.)And, all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And, Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:)to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. And, so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. And, she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. And, there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And, the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And, this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 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, good will toward men. And, it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. And, they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger. And, when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child. And, all they that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart.*

Thank you, Ed. I enjoy this time of the year for several reasons, and there are some things I don't like about this time of year. One is because the Christmas story that the world tells, takes away from this story. I enjoy the traditions, though. I enjoy family getting together. I enjoy—it's one thing just to give presents, but it's another thing when someone gets something for you, not necessarily something that cost a lot of money—not going out to find the biggest price tag—but, someone actually, thoughtfully, gave you something. Thoughtfully went out and made something, thoughtfully wrote a card, a letter. I know that some people would just enjoy getting cards, but they enjoy getting something written in it, personally, as well. And, those are the things that I do enjoy about this season. But, I tell you, the story that was just told, story that was just read—stop and put aside the noise, put aside this hustle and the bustle of the preparing food, and cookies, and getting the ham in the oven—yeah, that's what I had to do this morning, figure all that out.

But, put all that aside, and just think of the story that was told: this child that was born. Angels came to personally announce His birth. I mean, it was great to have y'all sing Happy Birthday to me, last week, but, to have your birth announced by Angels in the Heavens, I mean, come on, that's pretty special. And, it says that Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. But, when we stop

and think about that, there was prophecy foretold of Jesus. So, what she pondered in her heart was based on the prophecy she already knew. There was prophecy already told of what this Christ child was going to be. And, it was one thing to have angels singing, and have the shepherds show up, and have Kings show up, and bring presents, but, she'd already seen an angel herself. An angel came and said, "Here's what's going to happen to you. You're going to have a child, it's not going to be from another man." And, Joseph, in a dream, saw an angel, who told him what was going to happen. Put that in perspective on what she was pondering. Put it in perspective, as Jesus grew, and she brought Jesus to the Temple, and it was prophesied over Him what He should do, that He would die. There's a song, "Mary Did You Know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters, walk on water, heal the blind," and I'm sure she had a lot of thoughts in her mind on what was going to happen with this thing that she had in her arms. But, I think that going forward from that, what was foretold, and people didn't see out right until it happened, was Jesus was more than just that, He was, He was something for me. We have a lineage now, because He did what He did, because He fulfilled that prophecy, we have the power, we have the power to become Sons and Daughters of God, we have an heir to that throne. We have an inheritance. And, that's what this Christ child was about. And, there's a question today, who is Jesus to me? So, as Mary pondered this child, who was this child to her? What did she see, what would she ponder? As we have our gift of Salvation, what is that gift to me today? What do I see in that gift? Do I see the power in that gift? Do I see salvation in that gift? Do I see what God has for me in that gift? Do I see, not just my life, but do I see an avenue to the Father? It was quite a significance last week, Kirk talked about superheroes, and movies, and powers, and people; and it's kind of funny, you look at those things, and any movie you see, whether it's a superhero, or someone that was put in a position, none of them live, they all die at one point. They all died in, maybe, a martyrdom, or in a blaze of glory to help someone else, or to do good for someone else. And, that's what the world wants, to do good. I think they were afraid to have an immortal superhero that's going to live forever. Yeah, they've got some that are gods that live forever, but, the majority of them, those powers, they still die. And, there's something that's supposed to happen at the end of their life, that they're death meant something. But, Jesus said, "I lay it down, and I take it up again." That's something that no man has ever done. No one that has ever been claimed as a god, as a religion, only Jesus lay down His life and took it up again. Only He rose from the dead. And, that's in John, ten, seventeen:

John 10:17 *Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again.*

So, is this just a story, or is it the beginning of a story? This beginning of—and we do a New Year's celebration where we talk about resolutions, and doing things better, and eating better, and reading my Bible, and praying more, but this Christmas Story should be the start of that. The start of looking back. This is the story at the beginning of my life, because this is the story of—and we all found Christ in a different time in our lives. But that was the beginning. Without this Christ-child being born in that manner, and living perfectly, that day when I was in high school, when I looked and said, "God, there's got to be more to this." And, then went out with my friends, and did everything that seemed fun to do, things that we talked about, and shared about, and, when we talked about it, it was so much fun, but when we went out and did it, I came back, and there was no fulfillment. And, that day that God spoke to me and pointed me in a different direction, because there was something more to this life, that's where this story begins.

Isaiah 9:6-7 *For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne*

of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even for ever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.

He's wonderful, He's a counselor. Wonderful, something outside of the natural, something bigger than anything of life. He's our counselor. How many of us have had a counselor of some sort during our life? Our parents, guidance counselors in schools, legal counsel, marriage counseling, college counseling, and they're all people that we go to for counsel on things because they have a knowledge, they have an understanding, they have a direction for us.

So, the title of this section is, "Is Jesus Your Counselor?"

When do we seek Him? David said, "I will bless the Lord at all times," in Psalms 16:7, "Who have given me counsel: my reins also instruct me in the night seasons."

And, in Psalms, one nineteen, ten:

Psalms 119:10-11 *With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments. Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

So, what is this Word he's talking about? Hid in my heart. They didn't have words of Jesus, Jesus hadn't been born yet. They had some books that we would call the Old Testament, now. But those words, it was more than words, it was Spirit, it was seeking as Jesus our Savior, as God our counselor. Is He our counselor when He wakes us up in the middle of the night? When we pull out our wallet to spend money on something? Is He our counselor when we watch a movie? When we have conversations with our friends? When we speak to family members, and we speak to friends? Is He our counselor?

John 1:1 *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

So what's this Word we talk about? You know, this is important (holding up a Bible), and I would never take away from it, but without Spirit it's just words on a paper. We can follow the commandments, but if we're just following this, then we're no different than those that are trying to maintain the law. I like the Scripture that talks about, we being Gentiles, do by the nature the things contained in the law through the Spirit (Romans 2:14), because if we're spiritual, then we're doing these things. If we're spiritual, if we're seeking God, if we're seeking the Word that was made flesh, that was the spirit that came in the form of flesh, that was the Word, the manifestation, this is also a manifestation. But, that Word made flesh, that same Spirit can dwell in us. Jesus continually referred to the Father, gave glory to the Father, said, "My Father works, and I work, I do nothing but of My Father." (John 5:17, 36) And, that same Father is our Father today. that's the story that started with a birth of a Child; that same story ends with the death of a Savior, so I can have that avenue. Our Counselor.

1 Corinthians 10:13 *There hath no temptation taken you but such as is common to man: [I'm going to get a little personal, here] but God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able; but will with the temptation also make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.*

So, when is God my counselor? Is God my counselor when I'm standing at the doorstep of sin, when I've got to make a decision? When I'm right there in it? Or was God my counselor, you know, about a mile back, whenever God was saying, "Hey, don't even go there?" And, we go down the highway, highway signs are there, and I think we've all missed an exit somewhere along the line, why? Because we weren't watching. And, we always want to blame—"Aw, that road sign was bad," or, "It just wasn't there." But reality, generally, is I just wasn't paying attention. I wasn't familiar with that road. Once again, how do I get familiar with the roads? Right here (holding up his Bible) I can get familiar with

those roads. If I haven't studied that Word, I'm not familiar with it. We all want to rely on our GPS's, put the little phone up on our dashboard, put the GPS on the dashboard. Sometimes those things work great. Sometimes they're not straightforward. But, if you sit down with a map before you get on the road, and, you say, okay, this turn, this turn, this turn, now you know what's coming before it gets there. Once again, study the map ; you know what's coming before it gets there.

Luke 8:13 *They on the rock are they, which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, [This is from the parable of the sower.] which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away.*

So, the seed was sown on a hard ground, it was on a rock. You put something—maybe a rock's get a little bit of soil on top of it, you put a seed on it, it starts to grab in and grow, and sprouts up, but, it's got nowhere to go. That seed has nowhere to go. So, what's my heart like today? What's your heart like today? Is the Word, You know, we read it, and study it, you know, am I allowing my heart to be soft enough to receive it? Am I allowing it to sink in? Because, that's where the key is, the root, having a depth, having a depth in God. And, I know this time of year is one where there's a lot of temptations that we, you know, we're with a lot of different people we wouldn't normally be with. A lot of us in the Navy had to deal with the Christmas parties on the ships. Workplaces have different Christmas parties. They all want us to do different things. They all want us to be like them, they want us to be good. Just like the superheroes, they want us to be good. They're that good, this isn't good enough, "Oh, it's okay; come out with us, come out and party, just let yourself—take a couple of sips, and kind of let yourself kind of fade away, you know, and loosen up a little bit. But, the question is, and I always had to look back at it, because I'm not going to stand here and say that putting one drop of alcohol in your body is a sin that's going to put you in Hell. But, why would I put something in my body that I know is going to dull my senses? Why am I going to put something in my body—and I look at that on prescription drugs, sometimes I've got to take a prescription drug that some of the side effects are not that great. But, if I keep taking that, when I know that that puts my mind in a state that's not good, or if I take a drink of the alcohol, It's going somewhere where I have put alcohol in control of my body. I have said, God I want control, and I'm going to numb myself with this—and you could call it spirits, and it's not a wonder that they call alcohol 'spirits'—but being in control, and being ready when temptations come, knowing the road map.

I'm going to move on to the next section, but I just want to reiterate, you know, remember Jesse talked about the peace of God last Sunday? Do we have the peace of God in our life or willful sin? I can't have peace in my life if I'm not following the Commandments. I can't have peace if I'm committing willful sin. I heard someone say that, when you go to make a decision, sometimes, we have to make decisions that no one is laid the groundwork for. That a person hasn't told us how to make it. And, that's if you have the peace of God in your heart when you make it the decision, that's something that's good. When you go to make a decision, when you go to do something, and you seek God, and you don't have His peace, it's time to turn the other way. Because God can show us things through His Spirit that we can't see in the flesh. I mean, God has shown me things, to go talk to a person, and I did not want to go talk to that person, but as soon as I opened my mouth—actually before I did. I walked towards that person, and that person came to me, and God made it crystal clear exactly where that conversation was going to go. And, it didn't go anyway that I had presumed it would go. And, that was when the peace of God was there. The peace of God will be there when you go, whether it's to go pay your bills, whether it's to—what to do as far as buying a new car, a house, all the decisions of life, things that are just of the flesh. Those are still things that, "Does the peace of God come to me when I go to do this?" I really appreciate what Pastor Paine had said, you know, last year, about this time: "We have everything we need in Ministry." We keep looking around sometimes and say, we need this, "We need this," and I'll sit

down at my computer on Amazon to go buy a couple of things, maybe we could use this and that, and no, hold off, and God even showed me that we don't need that stuff. We may need it somewhere down the road. But God wants to use what we have here right now.

Now it's the holiday season. At Christmas, we give gifts. I have a question: what do I have to give? I've got money, I've got things at my house I can give, I've got food, I've got my time, what do I have to give?

Acts, chapter three, verses one through seven:

Acts 3:1-7 *Now Peter and John went up together into the temple at the hour of prayer, being the ninth hour. And, a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms of them that entered into the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple asked an alms. [So, here, he's asking for something. And, this goes back to the peace of God, and things that, sometimes, we have to do. Sometimes people are going to ask us for things, they don't even know what they need. Sometimes God will show us, this is what they need, instead. You look how many times Jesus, someone would ask Him a question and He answered them according to their heart, not according to what they were asking.] And, Peter, fastening his eyes upon him with John, said, Look on us. And, he gave heed unto them, expecting to receive something of them. [So, he's expecting something, and people will expect things of us.] Then Peter said, Silver and gold have I none; but such as I have give I thee: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth rise up and walk. And, he took him by the right hand, and lifted him up: and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.*

Peter didn't have with the man was asking for. He was asking for money, and it's a good thing Peter was out of quarters that day. But, Peter had something worth giving. Peter had something worth more than any silver or gold. But, the man who was lame didn't know what Peter had. He looked at them, he knew they had something. I'm sure that he knew who Peter was. He knew he had something to give. And, if you're in the peace of God, and, if you've got God Spirit, people are going to look at you. People are going to know that you've got something. They may not know what you have to give. They may not know what to ask from you. But, when God puts people in your path, you have something to give. Sometimes, it might be something monetarily, sometimes, it's spiritual, sometimes, it's a kind word, and a kind action, sometimes, it's saying, "You need to get right," because God will put words, if you're faithful, God will put those words in your mouth, too. That could be a gift that God uses. And, it's not pleasant sometimes, but sometimes, God will say, "Speak these words to this person." And, I know, when people talk this way, people say, "Oh, you're crazy. God talks to you?" Yeah, and he talks to you too. Just, sometimes, we're not listening. Sometimes, we're going down the road of life blind, and not reading the roadmap, and we're not studying, we're not listening, and we don't hear that voice. But, God wants to use us.

And, Peter didn't have the gift to raise him up of his own self. He wouldn't have it unless he was being spiritual, he wouldn't have it unless he was seeking his Father. If he wasn't seeking the God of his life, he wouldn't have had that gift. Just like, if I didn't go to work—we brought Christmas presents for our daughter, and our son-in-law, and our grandkids; if I didn't go to work, I wouldn't have the money to pay for those things. We wouldn't have bought those. And, if I don't study, if I don't learn, if I don't seek God, I don't have those gifts to give to people.

All the superheroes have a plot, all these movies, you know, there's an end. Well, this has an end, too. The trials and tribulations of this life are nothing to compare with glory. You know, we read this in Luke, where Ed read, we know the end of the story. We know where it goes. And, sometimes, through our life, we kind of put the map aside, and forget where we're going, and lose sight of what our end goal is. I figure, I look at when I turned forty-seven this year—a couple of years ago, I started to

think, “Wow, I could be halfway through my life right now. What have I done with my life, and what am I going to do with the next forty-seven years?” You know, life is short. You know, I know some of y’all, when you were younger, you were still in school, or you were not in school yet, and you’re thinking, “It’s an eternity until I graduate high school. It’s an eternity until I get to drive a car. It’s an eternity until I have my own place.” Then, all of a sudden we’re there, with that stuff, and it’s like, Wow, where did the time go?” What do I have to give?

One more Scripture I want to read. Galatians five, eighteen through twenty-five. Who’s got a Bible and can stand up and read that? Chris. Galatians five, eighteen through twenty-five, yeah, just stand up there and read it. That’s fine.

Galatians 5:18-25 *But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law. And, they that are Christ’s have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.*

Amen. Read the list of the fruits of the Spirit, one more time.

Chris: Love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.

And, those are some things—notice it says fruit. How do I know if I’m living right? Do I have those things in my life? Love, joy, peace. Sometimes, sometimes I think I’ve got to work on my love, I’ve got to work on my joy and my peace. Long-suffering, I’ve got—that’s a big one. I’ve got a house full of young kids, yeah, I’ve got to work on my long-suffering. But, long-suffering goes beyond their families. Long-suffering goes beyond our children. It goes to people around us. If I find myself needing long-suffering, love, joy, peace, what do I do to get those things? Walk in the Spirit. Because, you don’t plant an apple tree and expect to get a peach tree. You don’t put forth one action expect to get something else. I heard a story of a farmer who planted a certain crop, then asked God to raise up something else other than what he put in the ground. It doesn’t work that way. We go through life talking about peace, and joy, and love, but that’s—we look at that from a fleshly side of things, and we try to look at how we get those things. And, sometimes, we find ourselves in the midst of failure, sometimes we find ourselves in trials, we find ourselves in places we shouldn’t be, and we say, “God bless this.” Now, the Scripture does say that all things work for good for those that love the Lord (Romans 8:28). God is going to work things out. That doesn’t mean that if I plant wheat that I’m going to get corn. Sometimes, I’m going to have to reap that wheat.

And, if I’m farming, and there certain times of year that you plant certain things, and if I put wheat in the ground, and say, “Oops, that’s the wrong time of the year for that. That’s not going to grow.” I’m going to reap what I sow. Now, if I get back on track, and I get where God wants me to be, sure, God can bless it. But, I’m not expecting a bumper crop of wheat. I’m not expecting corn to come up instead. I’m not expecting to get something different than what I sowed. God can still bless, but sometimes we have to reap the rewards of the things that we do. I look at King David, King David put himself in a bad situation. King David, I think most of us are familiar with it, found himself looking over at a woman, bathing. Found himself sending for her. Found himself sleeping with her. Found himself in a whole predicament, and told lie after lie to get out of it. But, I’m going to tell the story, and then I’m going to wrap it up. King David knew his castle. He knew the stairs that went to the roof. He knew where

the women took their baths. He knew, if he went and took a look, what he would see. It wasn't that he—I don't believe he wound up there on accident. He made choices. And, when the servants even questioned him, “Hey, isn't that somebody else's wife?” He sent for her anyway. It's all about decisions. There is no temptation taken you (1 Corinthians 10:13), the temptation was before he started to walk up those stairs. “Ooh, I'm going to go take a look.” No. His deliverance was there at the bottom of those stairs. But, if I take the time, and most of us, hopefully, got some time off, take some time to just be on your face, seeking God. Say, “God, what do You have for me, this New Year? What do You have for me, and even before we come together?”

We're going to have a New Year's Eve celebration, next Sunday, right here. It's going to be a New Year's celebration, it's going to be at our normal service time. So, that way, no one has to drag kids home late. We're just going to have it at ten o'clock in the morning. But, even before we go to that service, take some time this week, read that Christmas story again. Seek God, say, “God what do You have for me this year?” Because, don't wait until next Sunday to say, “God, what do You want me to do?” No, let's pray about it this week. And, bring those things before God, and have a time of prayer, here. Come together. Because, there's one thing about being in prayer on our own, there's something else about being in prayer collectively, God hearing us, having God's spirit here. So, this week, take that time. Take the time to say, “God what would You have me to seek?” And, we're going to come next Sunday and seek Him. I tell you, I miss Parrish this week, he'll be back next Sunday; he'll be bringing the message. But, I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to a New Year, and I know a lot of us, some people talk about traditions, “Oh, those are just traditions.” Okay, sometimes traditions are good. The children of Israel had traditions. God told them, “Set up a memorial, have a feast for times of the year.” And, there's times in our seasons when we do things in the flesh just for that reason. So, as we celebrate Christmas and New Year's, yeah, there's some traditions that we do the flesh, start some traditions that draws closer to God. Start some traditions that—of reading a certain part of scripture every year, traditions that remind us of who we are, remind us of where we're going. Amen.