

December 16, 2018

TODAY: Morning Worship - 10:15 a.m.
Evening Worship - 6:30 p.m.
Messages by PASTOR JIM BYRD
INTERNET: SermonAudio.com
Visit our website at: www.13thstbaptist.org
(webcasting live during listed service times)
WEDNESDAY: Mid-week Service—7:00 p.m.
Message by PASTOR JIM BYRD

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O PRAISE EMMANUEL

Tune: "It Came Upon a Midnight Clear," (CM/Double)

Words by Pastor Jim Byrd

*O hear the tidings of great joy,
Of Jesus Christ the King;
Exalt His name above all names,
And to Him praises sing.
The prophets set Him forth of old,
This Savior promised long;
Come sing the glories of the Lord,
With all the blood-bought throng.
A Child was born, a Son was giv'n,
The Lamb of God was He;
Christ came glad tidings to proclaim,
And set the captives free.
Ascribe unto Him majesty,
Jesus who came to save;
He died to put away our sin,
And rose up from the grave.
With Him the Father is well pleased,
Christ is our worthiness;
In Jesus sinners are received,
He is our Righteousness.
Rejoice, give thanks and sing His praise,
Let ransomed sinners tell;
That God in human flesh has come,
O praise Emmanuel!*

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BIRTHDAYS THIS WEEK

Dec. 20 Andy Thomas

Dec. 22 Lisa Kuehne

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The last Sunday of this month we will partake of the Lord's Supper at the close of the morning message and then have lunch together; there will be no evening service that night, December 30th. Food sign-up sheets are on the front table.

Congratulations to Kelsey West-Keller who received her Masters degree from the University of Kentucky.

A new Bible or a good book would make an excellent present for the holidays. Please visit the church office for your Christmas gifts.

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"And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God" (Luke 1:35).

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"Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us" (Matthew 1:23). His birth and work of redemption fulfilled prophecy, caused the angels to praise God, the devils to tremble, His enemies to despise Him, humble sinners to rejoice, and the Father to exalt Him. O blessed Savior: "God with us."

—Pastor Jim Byrd

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THE PRODIGAL – Luke 15:11-32

The prodigal son acted as a fool and revealed he was an ungrateful wretch. He demanded to receive his inheritance early so his father granted the request, dividing the heritage between his two sons (v. 12). It didn't take long for the unwise young man to waste all his money on life's fleshly pleasures which, though they gave temporary happiness, rendered no lasting joy to his heart (v. 13). Having spent all, he now found himself in the midst of a famine, starving for food (v. 14). God has His ways of drying up every avenue of dependence. In desperation, the prodigal went to work feeding pigs, even desiring to eat with them (vv. 15-16). In his time of despair and at the end of his rope, he began to think about his father's servants who fared much better than he did (v. 17). They were fed, he was hungry; they were happy, he was miserable; they had a warm bed to sleep in, he slept with the pigs!

It was then that he purposed to go home; he even prepared a heart-felt speech of repentance (v. 18). He would plead with his father to receive him back, not as a son, but as a hired servant.

I wonder how the young man felt as he got closer to the house and saw his father running to meet him. Surely his heart was riddled with guilt and regret; ashamed and embarrassed over his foolish actions, he knew his own sinfulness distanced him from the father making him unworthy to even be called a son. I suspect he assumed he faced a severe reprimand and punishment or maybe even total rejection. He knew that whatever he got by way of retribution, he certainly deserved it, but he would go as a MERCY-BEGGAR.

To his utter amazement, the Father embraced him in love (v. 20). And before he could finish reciting his speech of repentance, the Father commanded THE BEST ROBE to be given the young man, the righteousness of Christ. The Father called for the RING of Sonship for his hand, indicating love without beginning or end. The Father also demanded SHOES for his feet for he will stand steadfast and immovable in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 22). And the fatted calf was killed and eaten; Christ has died, the Just for the unjust to bring us to God. This young man will feed with all the children of God on the blessed Savior, receiving Him by faith as our all in all (v. 23). And what a time of joy and celebration followed! *"For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry"* (v. 24).

Is there a prodigal reading these words? God has made you aware of your spiritual foolishness and ill-treatment of the Lord? You've been unthankful and wasted your life on carnal pleasures which you have found can bring your soul no lasting joy. You've ignored the glories of Christ and the necessity of worshiping Him. May the Lord enable you to do as this young man did. *"I will arise and go to my Father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son: make me as one of the hired servants"* (v. 18). When the Holy Spirit draws you home, you will find a gracious God that has ordained your salvation and has even used your own foolishness to bring you to the end of yourself. My friend, if God were not more willing to show mercy than any of us are ready to receive it, none would be saved. Come home to God. The way to the Father is very clearly set forth. Christ said, *"I AM THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE; NO MAN COMETH TO THE FATHER, BUT BY ME"* (John 14:6).

—Pastor Jim Byrd