

Christmas is God's comfort

Review: hope **elpizo, elpis** – confident expectation; faith in Christ = confident expectation that the promised blessings in Christ are ours now and will be ours when we die

- Confidence that His death on the cross has given us victory over eternal condemnation
- Confidence that His resurrection has given us victory over death – a door to being face/face with God

His birth was the beginning of His victory over sin/death He shares with us – confidence in our victory
Christmas story – confident that we already have victory and will be face/face with God when we die.
Our confidence in His victory and so our victory over sin/death is the reason we can be comforted

(Luke 2:25) And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him.

- Consolation: **paraklesis** comfort, encouragement; **Title:** Jesus, the Comforter of Israel

From the fall of Adam until now, mankind has lived with the sorrow of being condemned sinners in the devil's world. AOS caused us to be born with a sin nature from which we have constructed a self-centered belief system that corrupts our relational strategies and all of our relationships. Nothing sorrows the soul more than being at odds with those we love with whom we are intended to find human fulfillment. AOS guarantees broken relationships, barren, unfulfilled lives, blindness and baggage in our souls and sets us up for failure in the battle of the Angelic Conflict. Isa 53:3 Jesus was a man of sorrows and so are we. His birth was the start of our chance to be comforted from the sorrows of this life.

1. The birth of Christ is the beginning of comfort for broken relationships – grieving hearts.

God: Gen 3 – Man's relationship with God is broken – eternal condemnation and temporal curses
3:15 – comfort – the seed of the woman will bring reconciliation – eternal relationship

Man - Betrayal – an intimate companion betrayed Jesus – He knows the sorrow of betrayal

- Betrayal by someone we trust and depend upon is one of the most hurtful experiences of life
 - Parent/child – abandonment, abuse; Peers – friends turn on you; Mates – affairs, withdrawal, anger
 - Betrayal of trust – disillusioned, NAP's, inability to be intimate,
 - Broken hearted - loss of love & loved ones breaks our hearts; foolish child; personal life failures
 - Psalm 69:20 Scorn has broken my heart and has left me helpless; I looked for sympathy, but there was none, for comforters, but I found none.
 - Psm 34:18 the Lord is near the broken hearted; Psm 147:3 He heals the broken hearted
- a. Born sp. Dead, separated from God, with a sin nature in the devil's world is a sure formula for sorrow.
 - b. These factors guarantee our inability to relate successfully, starting with parents, peers, mates, and children.
 - c. Inability to relate successfully guarantees that our relationships will be dysfunctional and even broken.
 - d. Broken relationships - live with broken trust, relationships that never reach the potential of their original design, relate behind defensive walls, with fear of being betrayed, withdrawn – unable to love freely & fully.
 - e. The birth of Christ began God's demonstration of totally unconditional love – Rom 5:8
 - f. Jesus paid for and potentially resolved everything that causes us to be dysfunctional in our relationships.
 - g. Jesus exemplifies and reveals true and healthy love lived through His New Man belief system.
 - h. He makes His beliefs and relational strategies available to us – take off the OM – put on the NM.
 - i. Life in Christ comforts us in our broken relationships and enables us to heal these relationships in time.

2. The birth of Jesus was the start of comfort from barren & unfulfilled lives

- a. Born w/out God – God created us with needs that only He can fulfill & so we live our life w/out the only person who can meet these needs – we can correct this situation through salvation & spiritual growth to maturity.
- b. Life w/out God is empty & meaningless – chasing the wind – life w/out meaning/purpose is sorrowful
- c. We build our original beliefs & relating styles thinking we can find fulfillment through people w/out God.
- d. We confuse the needs only God can meet & the ones only people can meet – chase the wind with people
- e. This confusion causes us to seeking ultimate fulfillment from temporal life – only yields sorrow
- f. The birth of Jesus was the start of His ministry that resolved life w/out God – death, burial, resurrection
- g. His completed work opened the door to I/HS, F/HS, spiritual growth and meaningful life in Christ.
- h. In Christ God can love us as He designed us to need love and we can put ultimate and temporal fulfillment into their proper places and context – Inner fulfillment & overcome the sorrow of being disappointed

3. The birth of Jesus was the beginning of freedom from spiritual blindness and personal baggage.

- a. Our separation from God caused us to be unable to understand spiritual ideas - 1 Cor 2:14 But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him, and he is unable to understand them, because they are spiritually evaluated.
- b. Our OSN caused us to emphasize self so all of our OM ideas work to meet our needs as our first priority.
- c. Sp incapacity, OSN, self-emphasizing beliefs causes our relationships to be corrupted and even broken.
- d. Our sp. blindness & baggage makes us selfish, easily hurt, defensive and fills our souls with pain and grief
- e. The birth of Jesus is the beginning of His work that offers us freedom from blindness and baggage.
- f. Your salvation, spiritual growth, application giving freedom and reconciled relationships offer comfort.
- g. This year at Christmas, consider the temporal blessings Jesus secured for us and be comforted.

4. The birth of Jesus offers us comfort during the difficult battles in the Angelic Conflict.

Ephesians 2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins, 2 in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience. 3 Among them we too all formerly lived in the lusts of our flesh, indulging the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature children of wrath, even as the rest.

- According to – kata – down, norms/standards, domination – under the control & domination
- Course of this world – **aion kosmos** – common view of the day dominating the world
- Prince of the power of the air – the devil – spirit working in the sons of disobedience
- Lusts of the flesh – desires of the flesh and mind – by nature children of wrath – OSN à desire system

- a. We begin life vulnerable to the influence of the world, the devil and our desires connected to the OSN.
- b. We develop our ideas under the influence of the world, the devil and our desires connected to OSN.
- c. Before salvation we are part of the devil's kingdom, part of his work force and under his complete control
- d. After salvation we share the ultimate victory of Christ and are transferred into the Kingdom of the beloved son.
- e. Through spiritual growth we are able to develop spiritual strength & wisdom to win our own battles for Christ.
- f. We have the comfort of knowing that we can use the word to win every battle God allows in our life.
- g. If we are struggling with defeat, we can change our minds any time and win over that area of life.