



TODAY'S MESSAGE:

Expectations vs. Reality

Logan Holloman | NextGen Pastor | December 18, 2022

*"In those days a decree went out from Emperor Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." **Luke 2:1-7 (NRSV)***

How's your Christmas shaping up?

Expectations vs Reality

"There can be a tendency, when things do not come together smoothly, to wonder what has gone wrong with our prayers or our relationship with God. This is why the true story of Christ's birth is far more helpful to us than the parody we immerse ourselves in every Dec 25th. This account in Luke is indeed the birth of God's Son, a birth anticipated for thousands of years, a birth announced by angels in a blaze of light, a birth unquestionably superintended by God himself. And what do we find? A child born out of wedlock. A rough journey. No room to breathe. Noise. Confusion. The pain of childbirth unalleviated, but for Joseph, by familiar faces. Strangers breaking in out of the night. Yet God's will is done. If God brings about his Son's birth in such a dark and convoluted fashion—or so it appears to our eyes—may we not expect his will to be worked out in our lives, from time to time if not frequently, in a similar fashion? **Andrew Murray Pura**



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*"And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, 'Look! God's dwelling-place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.' He who was seated on the throne said, 'I am making everything new!' Then he said, 'Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.'" **Revelation 21:3-5a (NIV)***

Making room...

- **Rest assured that He is with us**
- **Reject the facade of a "perfect" Christmas**
- **Rejoice knowing his will is being done**

Reflection Questions:

- 1)** How has the reality that God took on human flesh and lived among us changed your life?
- 2)** How are your relationships in this season? Are your expectations meeting reality?
- 3)** Where can you "rest, reject, and rejoice" this week leading up to Christmas?