

ALL SAINTS' CATHEDRAL, KAMPALA

Sermon notes

Luke 2:1-15

Theme: It is too crowded

Prayer

Welcome and appreciation:

- All of us and thank God who has made it possible for us to meet again in this candle light service of 2016
- We should not take an opportunity like this for granted.
- There are some who were with us on 24/12/2015 who are not with us anymore, who went to be with the lord.

Introduction

- Christmas poses a challenge to many of us who have heard the story since we were children.
- After you have attended 20, 30 or 40 Christmas services, and you have listened to many Christmas sermons, and heard or (sung) every Christmas carols a few hundred times; what more is left to be said that has not been said before?
- If you know about Christmas at all, you know about:
 - o Mary and the angel Gabriel
 - o About Caesar's decree
 - o About Herod's insane jealousy
 - o About the inn with no room
 - o Sing about the angels and the shepherds.
 - o About the mysterious wise men from the east.
 - o And the last-second flight to Egypt.
- a) All these stories are so well known that when we hear them again, we don't really hear them at all because we've heard them all before. We hear but the truth is we don't hear.
- b) This is indeed a problem (challenge)
Familiarity can breed, if not contempt, at least a kind of casual disinterest.
- And this is very sad, because the story of Christmas is full of surprises.
- There are unexpected miracles on every hand
- And it tells the most amazing story: That God invaded human history in the form of a tiny helpless baby.

A. Theme: it is too crowded.

This is another challenge with Christmas time: "it is too crowded"

- If you are not careful, you can easily miss out on Christmas surprises and miracles because of the crowd.
- The crowd in Christmas time has been increasing for the last 2000 years plus.
- For those who attended this service last year 2015, we talked about the inn that had no room for the birth of the king of kings.
- This is because Bethlehem was crowded.
- It is amazing that this crowd continued up to this day.
- If you are not careful you can easily miss the message of Christmas.

B. CROWDS ARE SYNONYMOUS WITH CHRISTMAS

- It is a very busy time for this year. Many of us feel rushed, broke, out of time, stressed, hurried, crowded, over extended.
- Traffic is heavy on the street. On Monday it took us 1 ½ hours with Rev. Jaffu to drive from here to Namirembe.
- Supermarkets are full of people looking and buying things for the day.
- Even churches have a few more people than normal.
- Our homes are teeming with additional decorations, parties and activities.
- Buying and giving of gifts and families getting together.
- Many a times on Christmas we get so caught up in the festivities of the events that we lose sight of the real meaning of what Christmas is all about.
- If Christmas is about anything, I believe it is about getting rid of the crowd.
- The problem with crowds at Christmas is that they tend to trample Jesus in us.
- We get so involved in the shopping that we miss the savior. A lady who refused to prepare food for the family on Christmas because the husband did not buy her a new gomesi.
- We are so busy with travel that Jesus is left at home alone.
- We slide into a seat at church that is not our usual place because someone else is sitting in our place and we don't focus on Jesus because we are angry with that unfamiliar pew occupant.
- We are in such a hurry at Christmas that we are not living well; our souls are in need of a break if not intensive care.
- One writer by the name of Richard Foster wrote in his book "Celebration of Discipline" in contemporary society our adversary majors on three things: Noise, Hurry, and crowds. If he can keep us engaged in Muchness and Manyness he will rest satisfied.
- There is at no time of year when this observation is a great reality that at Christmas.

STORY

- A story of a lady who had a 2 year old baby.
- She organized a birthday party for the baby and invited her friends.

- She organized the birthday party in a hotel down town.
- She decided to leave the little baby with her old mother in order for her to have a good time with her friends.
- When it was time to cut the cake all of them were requested to surround the cake.
- One of them asked. "Where is the birthday baby?"
- Imagine a birthday party without a birthday baby?
- Christmas activities, crowds, parties, shopping have a tendency to overshadow Jesus. He is more often forgotten neglected and if we are not careful destroyed.
- Birthday parties are put in place but the birthday baby "Jesus" is not invited.
- That is when people will drink themselves silly.
- I pray that none of you will be caught up among the sill drinkers.

C. I WOULD GUESS THAT MANY OF US CAN IDENTIFY WITH THIS STATEMENT – IT IS TOO CROWDED because we feel the same way at this time of year.

- There are several things that begin to happen when we get to this point of being too crowded.

When our lives become too crowded, we can:

- i. Lose our time alone with God
 - Making time for Him is the last thing we have on our mind.
 - We always have no reason for that.
 - Our minds are crowded and we have no room for Jesus.
- ii. When our lives are crowded with other things and if Christ is not the first thing in our lives, He will usually be the last.
 - He does not come in 2nd.
 - He does not want to be 2nd by the way.
 - He wants to be first.
 - But because of our scheduled and all of our endless activities He ends up in the last place.
 - He takes last place in our giving, and in our commitments.
- iii. When our lives become too crowded, we lose our time with God.
 - We can also lose our relationship with God.
 - It is a fact of life that we make time for things that matter.
 - We make time for the things and the people we love.

From the time of His life, Jesus has been told by too many of us that there is no room for Him right now.

- The inn keeper told many and Joseph point blank (Straight away / flat out) that there is no room for you in the inn.
- When Jesus told that rich young ruler that he needed to sell he had and give it to the poor, the young man walked away very sad and gave nothing. He basically said, Jesus I don't have time for this kind of thing.

- When Peter denied Jesus: “I don’t know the man” he was saying I don’t have time for you right now.
- When Judas sold Jesus to the highest bidder for 30 pieces of silver, he was saying: Jesus you don’t matter to me. Money is more important.
- What is more important to you in your life more than Jesus?
- When they nailed Him to the cross the soldiers were saying we have no time for you. We don’t need you here.
- And the truth is we do the same of you are thinking “But I never denied Jesus”
 - I never sold him to the highest bidder.
 - I never crucified Him.
 - That was the Jews, the soldiers.
 - That was Herod. Whoever we choose to blame it on.

TRUTHS WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND

1. All have sinned and all of us have fallen short of God’s standard for our lives.
 - a. God does not put us into categories according to our sin.
2. All of us have inherited a sinful nature.
 - a. From generation to generation, sin nature was passed down to all of us.
 - b. “Sin entered through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned” (Romans 5:12)
 - c. Further, Paul reminds us that the wages of this sin is death.
 - d. Wages are payment.
 - e. Because of our sin, we must die.
 - f. There is only one person in the history of the world that did not - Christ.
 - g. His virgin birth allowed Him to miss the curse of Adam.
 - h. He was not only born without this nature but He also continued to live without ever committing a sin.
 - i. Paul said He was the only one who had no sin.
3. There is no way out except through Jesus
 - a. It is our sinful nature that has put us in this predicament and it is our SINLESS SAVIOUR who must get us out.
 - b. It is as though we have fallen into a pit.
 - c. We try and try to get out.
 - d. We go this way, we go that way.
 - e. We try every way possible except the one God has offered to us through His son.
 - f. We think you know I figured out how to get myself into this mess, I can figure a way to get out. I.e. you lie and you apply a lie to take away a lie.
 - g. But we cannot.
 - h. No matter how hard we try

- i. No matter how much we work at it.
 - j. There is only one way - Jesus.
- 4. It is only through Jesus Christ that we can be born again

“That which is born of the flesh is flesh and that which is born of the spirit is spirit” John 3:6

When we are born of Adam, we inherit his sin nature; but when we are born again in Christ, we inherit a new nature. That is the good news.

- 5. When we receive Christ, we inherit a new nature but we also keep our old nature.
 - a. It is the very thing that caused Paul to say: “Why do I do the things I don’t want to do and the things I want to do... I can’t do?”
 - b. Many of us are like Paul.
 - c. As believers we now have two natures living inside of us and we must decide daily which one we are going to allow controlling our lives.
- 6. Daily we must give control to Jesus.
 - a. We must allow Him to gain more control over our lives.
 - b. You see, when I receive Christ, I don’t get more of Jesus that you do. And when you receive Christ, you don’t get more of Jesus that I do.
 - c. It is not how much of Him you get, the question is how much of you do He get?
 - d. Let us get rid of the crowd in our lives and create room for Jesus to be born in our hearts, lives
 - e. Allow Him to control your life.