

## SIMPLY CHRISTMAS

Adapted from Dr. Willard Metzger "Benefits of Simplicity" *World Vision World Watch*.

**Text:** Luke 2.1 - 7 (in pew Bible p. 1014 / in large print Bible p. 1577)

### **Intro:**

- magic of the simple Christmas story is brought to life *when we hear it read by a child.*  
innocent voice transports us to Christmas events *of long ago.*

-Jesus' birth took place *in a simple environment.*

animals provided warmth.

strips of cloth became a baby's blanket.

animal's stirring served as a soothing lullaby.

-why then, do we struggle to keep our celebration of Christmas simple?

- busy rush and stressful expectations.
- financial burden and strain on budget.

-the Christmas story is a profound theological mystery.

- but this wonderful event also shows us the benefits *of a more simple approach to living.*

### **Take Home Point:**

-simplicity is not only a necessary hardship during tough times *it is God's gift for rich living.*

- here are three magnificent benefits *of simplicity.*

## **COMMUNICATES AVAILABILITY**

-the story of Jesus' birth announces to everyone *that the Good News is for them.*  
angels announcement to shepherds who were found in routine of life *shows that the commonplace is a special place for the Good News.*

like choosing the local coffee shop or the local bar *for a divine visitation.*

-this is the benefit of simplicity:

it is an invitation designed for anyone – *Good News is for everyone.*

no one is excluded – simplicity communicates availability.

## PROVIDES A CLEARER FOCUS

-the simpler things are, the clearer the focus.

**illust.** focus on dog with prime lens.

-events of the Christmas story brought everything into a tack sharp focus.  
angels pointed to the stable in Bethlehem.

star shone over the place where Jesus lay.

major focus of the message was plain and simple: “A savior is born. He is Christ the Lord.”

nothing is too confusing about that.

-the choir of angelic voices crowding the skies was elaborate and the truths of the virgin birth and Christ’s incarnation are deep but the message itself is clear.

a child has been born brought eternal life into sharp focus.

-simplicity keeps the focus clear.

avoids the potential clutter of the elaborate, the expensive, and the stressful.

truly we can have Peace On Earth!

## ENABLES EMPOWERMENT

-the Christmas story shows us how ordinary people were empowered.

- poor shepherds became special instruments of God.
  - carried the wonderful message of hope.
  - their positions and influence were not at risk.
  - enthusiasm was genuine and compelling.
- Mary and Joseph were ordinary people too.
  - their scandalous relationship freed them to be the platform of God’s revelation of Salvation for the world.
  - they show us that God’s presence can always be with us in any circumstance of life.

## Conclusion:

-simplicity is not only a necessary hardship during tough times it is God’s gift for rich living.

- **illust.** Sailing The Dream
- benefits of simplicity are that it communicates availability, brings things into a sharper focus, and empowers people.

-it was no accident that God chose:  
the simple way to bring such profound truth.  
the ordinary to be the context for the beginning of salvation.  
pain and suffering had become ordinary, so the offer of healing and forgiveness must also be found in the ordinary.

-simplicity does not produce a second rate Christmas:

- simplicity is Christmas at its best.
- simplicity preserves the true meaning and beauty of Christmas.

-herein lies the fullness of God's invitation of love.

- a Saviour has been born to us – he is Christ the Lord.

**-Closing Hymn: #213 Because He Lives (all verses).**

## Sailing The Dream

In 2006 Nancy and Stephen Lefneski sold their home, quit their jobs and sailed the world in their 39-foot sailboat *Toboggan*.

They both had good careers and were making good money, but were spending it on stuff like furniture, and thinking, "this is not fulfilling." Nevertheless, "... it's what you do and your experiences that make life interesting, says Stephen. "I was working 10 to 12 hours a day and while it was fun, I was only doing one thing with my life," So they decided to sail their dream, says Nancy.

In 2004 they started saving their money for four years at sea. "If it didn't go on the boat, we didn't buy it," says Nancy. "It's amazing the money you can save when you're basically buy only food."

Nancy and Stephen returned home in March 2010. Today, Nancy and Stephen sit in their new home, sparsely furnished with the bare necessities, and reflect on how their journey changed them. Living on the boat forced them to be "pseudo environmentalists," preserving energy and food and minimizing water and waste. They continue to live with that philosophy in mind.

Nancy and Stephen regret that "before we left on our voyage, and sadly now that we're back, we leave early for work, come home late and barely talk to our neighbours. We're all too busy. At sea, you talk to people, whether it's a local person or another sailor. You help each other. You entertain each other. That was something we really liked" (Mallory O'Brien "Sailing The Dream" in *Laurier Campus* Fall 2010, p.p. 22 – 27).