

ON THE EIGHTH DAY OF CHRISTMAS

Luke 2:21-32, 39-40

NOW WHAT?

The presents are opened; the day has come and gone. Now what?
Everything points to one moment in time: the unwrapping of the gifts.
But this is where we can make a fatal mistake.
You get the diploma.
You land the job.
You begin the relationship.
The baby is born.

UNWRAPPING AND UNFOLDING

The real power in life doesn't come with the unwrapping but with unfolding.
We all know that life is a journey – not a destination.
Can you think of a present that has been unwrapped in your life for some time?
What would happen if you could recapture the joy you once had?

RAINBOW DAYS

“This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you ...I have set my rainbow in the clouds ...” (Genesis 9:12-13)
Exceeding expectations.
Have you ever looked forward to something and when it happened, it was so much more than you expected?
It happened to Mary and Joseph and Simeon.
Rainbow days are gifts and should never be taken for granted. Treasure them!
Don't begin to believe that you deserve them or somehow have earned them.

FALLING INTO A MAINTENANCE MODE

The baby is born. The shepherds and wise men all go home.
Life becomes ordinary. There is no major crisis, no huge problems, but no great gains either.
“In those days, the word of the Lord was rare” (I Samuel 3:1)
Spiritual habitation.

EMBRACE THE ORDINARY

Try spending a day with Jesus.
Drive with Jesus.
Read a newspaper with Jesus.
Watch television with Jesus.
“We were not meant to embrace moments, but to embrace God ... Moments are simply the place where we meet him. Every moment. Starting now.”
(John Ortberg)

Prayer Concerns: *Burney Biesel, Brian Haslop, Mac Kerr, Emma Ruth O'Malley, Vicki Page, Mildred Sentell, Doris Swafford, Carol Webb, Lucille Alwerdt, Kenneth Amick, Ray Billings, Dorothy Burns, Gene Burns, Patti Chou, Betty Crenshaw, Charles Hamilton, Jean Hansford, Barbara Heck, Kristi Jackson, Winnie Johnson, Joyce Kuhl, Judy Malaquias, Macy Morgan, Taylor Murray, Moody Palmer, Betty Scott, Robert Thole ...*

PASTORAL PRAYER

O Loving God, we praise your name as we cross one dividing line of life and enter another. Father, none of your gifts remind us more of our need for you than the gift of time, for as it passes so quickly from one year to another, we recognize how fragile life is and how quickly things change, and we turn to you for meaning.

Thank you for new beginnings, times when we can start over again. Thank you for the high gift of freedom to act and choose, as we will. Be in our choices of words to speak and deeds to do. Be in our moods and our motives. Give us integrity. But give us forgiveness, too, for we are sure of nothing more than our own mistakes in this new year you are placing before us. Because we know we will fall, be ready to lift us up and start us again.

Hear our prayers now for those who in special ways need your presence: those who mourn, the lonely, those facing painful decisions, those who are confused and anxious, those who are sick. Give us all the gentle touch of your presence, for this is our prayer in the name of the one who brought new beginnings for all of us, Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us to pray ...

THE LORD'S PRAYER: Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors; and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

LUKE 2:21-32, 39-40

And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb.

And when the time came for their purification according to the law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord.") and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons." Now 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. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And inspired by the Spirit he came into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the law, he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said,

"Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace,
according to thy word;
for mine eyes have seen thy salvation
which thou has prepared in the presence of all peoples,
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and for glory to thy people Israel."

And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city, Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom; and the favor of God was upon him.

SERMON SCHEDULE

In the Sanctuary:

January 8	<i>The Greatest Moment of Your Life</i>	Exodus 8:1-15
January 15	<i>The Gift of Complaining</i>	Job 10:1-3, 18-22
January 22	<i>A Brand New Life</i>	Mark 1:14-20
January 29	<i>Powerful Preaching</i>	Mark 1:21-28

On the Radio (1450 AM):

January 8	<i>Come Before Winter</i>	2 Timothy 4:6-9
January 15	<i>The Secret of Success</i>	Philippians 4:4-13
January 22	<i>Peace of Mind</i>	John 14:25-27
January 29	<i>Martha Moments</i>	Luke 10:38-42