



BIBLE BAPTIST CHURCH OF ERIE SERMON OUTLINE

By James M. Duncan, Pastor

DECEMBER 2, 2018

SURVIVING THE CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

Matthew 1:18-25

As you can tell by the stores, TV ads and outside lights, it's starting to look a lot like Christmas and as the Andy Williams song says, *"It's the most wonderful time of the year."* that song says: - and in many ways, it should be the most wonderful time of the year, but without doubt it is also the most **stressful time** of the year and oftentimes the most **depressing time** of the year and without question one of the **loneliest times** of the year for many people.

Among the movie classics of Christmas such as, *"It's A Wonderful Life"* with *Jimmy Stewart*, there is a rather dumb movie that I enjoy called *"National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation"* with the Griswold family. Maybe the stress of Christmas is caused by too many expectations, too much pressure to be at this place or that place, too much worry over whether you are buying that perfect gift, or for a few, too much sadness and painful memories.

Well, that very first Christmas was not without its own share of stress. And what I would like for us to do is to look at the stress surrounding that very first Christmas and learn the lessons so that we can survive our stressful times this Christmas.

I. I CAN SURVIVE CHRISTMAS IF I CAN LEARN TO:

ACCEPT THAT THINGS DON'T ALWAYS GO AS I HAVE PLANNED V-18

Hebrew marriages had two stages.

- (1) **The Pledge** or as we would call it the **Engagement** - called the **etrothal** in V-18
- (2) **The Marriage ceremony** itself as Joseph was planning on marrying his sweetheart.

Can you imagine a 15 year old Mary going to her 20 something fiancée and Joseph starts talking about floor plans and wall color...Mary says, **"Joe, honey, we need to talk...I'm pregnant."**

Our plans may not be what God has planned for us. **Remember what it says in James 4:13-15.**

II. I CAN SURVIVE CHRISTMAS IF I CAN LEARN: THAT MY WAY IS NOT THE ONLY WAY TO LOOK AT A SITUATION Vs. 19-20

In vs. 19 we see that Joseph has made up his mind what he is going to do about Mary being pregnant and the child not being his. Many of us are like this - my mind is made up, don't confuse me with the facts.

III. I CAN SURVIVE CHRISTMAS IF I CAN REMEMBER: WHO IS IN CHARGE VS.-22-23

In V. 22 God gently reminds us that He is in charge. It is God that spoke to the prophets. It was God that was going to bring forth a Savior.

IV. I CAN SURVIVE CHRISTMAS IF I REMEMBER: THAT CHRISTMAS IS ABOUT **GOD WITH US** Vs. 22-23

Maybe some of the stress of Christmas is that we forgot what Christmas is all about. It is about **IMMANUEL** which is "God with us." (Isa, 7:14) And Matthew, in his gospel narrative of the birth of Christ, picked up what Isaiah had prophesied in V-23.

Lastly we learn that . . .

V. I CAN SURVIVE CHRISTMAS BY: BEING OBEDIENT TO THE LORD Vs. 24-25

Here are 3 words to help you gain perspective when your plans are interrupted.

◆ **PRAY** - I Thess. 5:17, James 5:13a

◆ **PERSPECTIVE** - Luke 12:22,25; Matt. 6:34

◆ **PROVIDENCE** - Duet. 32:4, Is. 55:8,9, Ps. 145:17

My surviving Christmas all depends upon what I do with Jesus this year. May this be for each of us – the most wonderful time of the year – because of how precious and wondrous the Lord Jesus Christ is to us as **IMMANUEL** which is **"GOD WITH US."**

