

## MORE THAN A FEELING

*And Mary said:*

*"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is his name.*

Luke 1:46-49

"It doesn't feel like Christmas," someone said to me recently. What is Christmas supposed to feel like? That is a loaded question because our expectations for the holiday season come from many and varied sources. Businesses (like department stores) want consumers to have experiences that lead us to spend money and buy their goods. Movies and news stories focus on "good" feelings that we are told should be our constant companions throughout the season. Others will tell us that we will find the "spirit" when we give to charities. False expectations and unfulfilled dreams abound during the season of Christmas. Here is the crux of the problem: When we focus on these lesser things we will ***ALWAYS*** feel that we have fallen short (because we have!). What should Christmas feel like? When the truth of who God is, of what God has done for us through the sending of His Son, of how He has come to us and to whom He has come (why me, Lord?), there are a variety of emotions we will feel, most of them are not the ones that are popular and most trumpeted by our society. Feelings of humility (that God would look upon us with favor the way that He has), gratitude (for His saving work through His Son), a deepened awareness of the spiritual need within our world, a greater desire to find rest and peace even as the world is telling us not to rest but to rush about from parties to stores to seasonal events to social gatherings (and on and on and on it goes).

So, if you are thinking, "It doesn't feel much like Christmas," here's my suggestion: Instead of wishing for some "Christmas feeling" to come over you this season, here is a novel thought - try asking the Lord what ***He would desire from you*** during this holy celebration.

(Pretend your Julie Andrews while singing this tune)

*Worship, devotion, to Christ our salvation;  
Praying and singing and calling the nations  
To come to Jesus, alone to Him cling,  
These are a few of God's favorite things!*

A most blessed Christmas to all!

*Pastor Kevin*

Last year, in my December article, I made a suggestion for your Christmas list – a copy of "The Story" from Zondervan Publishing. It is a thirty-one chapter book that takes you through a majority of the Bible in chronological order. The great thing about reading the Bible in this way is that you really get an understanding for the flow of the Bible and a bird's eye view of God's redemptive history that runs through the Scriptures.

That was last year. This year, I am suggesting that you if you did not get a copy last year that you do it in the next few weeks. The creators of "The Story" have now developed a series that will take us through the readings in thirty-one weeks, accompanied by a preaching series. There will also be an opportunity for small groups to study the Bible passages during their weekly gatherings.

This is how one pastor describes the series: ***What I tell questioners is that The Story is a condensed chronological account of the Bible telling the story of creation, what went wrong, and how all will be made right again - who God is, who we are, and the meaning and purpose of life.***

We will begin this series in February (after I am done with my third residency for my Doctor of Ministry program). We will spend a significant part of the year walking through the story of the Gospel as found throughout the Bible.

I love the thought of traveling through the Scriptures together as a church family. I know God will bless our time and will open our eyes to new and wonderful truths ("*Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.*" Psalm 119:18)



**WISHING ALL OF YOU  
A BLESSED  
CHRISTMAS!**



**G**LORY TO GOD  
IN THE HIGHEST,  
AND ON EARTH PEACE  
TO MEN ON WHOM  
HIS FAVOR RESTS. LUKE 2:14

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**CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES:**



**Family Service:  
4:30 PM**

**Candlelight Service:  
6:00 PM**

***CHRISTMAS DAY  
SERVICE:  
9:30AM  
"PAJAMA SERVICE"***

