

New Year's 2025 | Noah Agnew

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Date: 27 December 2024

Preacher: Noah Agnew

[0 : 00] All right, well, good evening. I was not expecting this and see, like they didn't even adjust the podium for me and everything like that.

! Usually, it's a lot shorter. Thank you. All right. Well, just for those of you who don't know me or don't remember me, maybe, my name's Noah. My wife, Lacey, is back there with our daughter, Selah, next to my mom there.

We work at a camp called Turkey Hill Ranch Bible Camp. And basically, it's a camp that serves kids from ages 8. Well, we have a day camp that goes even younger.

But 8 to 13 is our junior camp, and then 13 to 17 is our teen camps. And we have various activities that we do and various things that go on throughout the camp.

So my personal job, my main thing that I do is actually work with the horse program that we have.

We have about 50 head of horses right now, 52 head of horses.

[1 : 01] So I work with braking, training, maintaining, all of that kind of stuff, along with my co-worker, Jimmy Allen, who kind of started the horse program. Well, tonight, I just kind of want to talk about what I talked about a couple weeks ago. So if you were at Jefferson City Bible Chapel a couple weeks ago, it's going to be kind of similar to that.

Actually, before I get started, this is a really couple of wild stories. And some of you may know these people, and some of you may not. But, so I own a leather crafting business. So I make just little gifts and trinkets, bags. I also recover Bibles, restore Bibles for people.

And I go out and I do craft fairs. And the name of my business is 839 Leather Craft. And the reason why it's named 839 Leather Craft is because it's based off of my favorite set of verses, Romans 8, 35 through 39.

And basically, it says, we cannot be separated from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. When I first started the business, the idea was to not hinder the gospel going forth.

So it felt appropriate to name it something that would remind me that I'm not supposed to hinder the gospel with this business. And so that's why it's named that. So, going out to craft fairs, it's a really good way to witness to the community or wherever you're at.

[2 : 24] People always ask about the numbers or how I got started and all of that other stuff. So I was at a craft fair in Vienna, which is our local town. Turkey Hill is actually in Vienna, Missouri.

So it's this little craft fair. And the reason why I go to this one is because I'm out in the community. I get to put faces to names of people that we talk about, we hear about. And people can see me too. Oh, you work at Turkey Hill. I know where that is. I know what you guys do.

So that's why I go to this craft fair. So anyway, I'm going about it. I'm actually there by myself. Lacey had something to do with Selah that day. So I was there by myself just talking with people and selling the items and stuff.

And this older gentleman comes up to me and he says, Oh, I heard you are associated with camp and all that other stuff. And I was like, yeah. And he's like, have you ever done any other missionary work or stuff?

And I was like, well, when I was younger, I went on a mission trip to the Philippines. He's like, oh, that's really cool. My son-in-law also has gone to the Philippines. I was like, oh, that's really cool. Where did he go?

[3 : 28] And he's like, here, I'll let you, I'll let him tell you. He was there. So I meet this individual and I did not catch his name because we were just talking back and forth and all this other stuff. And I was like, yeah, I went to Davao City and did a couple of VBSs there and all this other stuff.

And he's like, that's really cool. I went to, I live in Davao. Like I'm over here on sabbatical right now. I live in Davao. Who are you associated with? And I was like, well, we went over there with Stephen

Dottie St. Clair.

And he's like, I worked with Stephen Dottie St. Clair. So I'm in this podunk little town in the middle of nowhere. And I meet this guy who knows the same exact people miles and miles across the ocean. And they worked with the same exact people that I did years and years ago because of Bethel Community Church right here. Allowed us in a youth group to go over to the Philippines to serve there.

And my mind was blown. And that's probably why I didn't ask his name because I was just like, do you know this person? Do you know this person? And they're like, yeah, I know this. We know Victory Academy. All this other stuff. So it was just a crazy wild story. The other story that I have is actually about you guys and your generosity and your loving kindness.

[4 : 41] So Lacey, if you don't know, is actually getting her master's in divinity. So she's going to school and basically just to get knowledge. It's not something that we're planning to make money off of or anything like that.

But a tool to use to allow our staff to have more knowledge as well. To have books. To have that access to it. To have a person to go to to ask questions about.

Hard questions. Anyway, this year she finished off her semester. And we really didn't have the funds to have her continue on the next semester. And so we were really praying about it.

And I'll share with numbers with you. But the tuition, I think tuition itself was about \$4,000. And then books and some other stuff was, I can't remember exactly how much.

But \$4,000 is what we needed. And we were praying about it. And the time is coming up for her to sign up for the next semester. And lo and behold, your guys' check comes in the mail.

[5 : 37] For \$4,000. And we were like, okay, I guess this is the answer of the Lord. So I just want to personally thank you for that. It was definitely an answer to prayer.

We didn't tell any of you guys that we needed that money or anything like that. It was totally of the Lord. And we are just so thankful for that. So that's a little bit about me. And I'm going to try to segue into my message.

Now, this time of year, we often look at baby Jesus. We look at the beginning of his life. Hardly ever do we actually look at the end of his life here during this time of year.

But as we look towards the new year and new beginnings, we also know that there's another part of the Lord Jesus Christ story, which is the resurrection, which is a new life, a new thing.

A couple weeks ago, I spoke about knowing Jesus. And I tried to go through his entire life in a short little period of time. And so that's what I kind of want to do today.

[6 : 37] I know that the more you know Jesus, the more you know him, the better off it is. I know the more on I go about my life, the more you know about me. The more I go on about the Lord Jesus Christ, the more you're going to know about him and the better your life is going to be.

I know if I read from this scripture, even though I had only five minutes to prepare, that it is profitable for teaching and encouraging. So what I want to do is, the idea is that I would love for you to know Christ more.

And what better way to start knowing somebody is from the very beginning. So when I was back in Jeff City, I actually played Two Truths and a Lie with the people of Jeff City. And if you don't know what that game is, the premise is you tell three things.

Two of them are true about yourself, and one of them is a lie. And so I asked Zeke Allen a couple of them that he would probably know, because he hasn't known me for very long. And my mom was actually there.

And so I asked some stuff about when I was a baby. And she knew them. And the idea is that the longer you know somebody, probably the better off you're going to know about them. You know about their life and all of that stuff.

[7 : 44] So that's why I think it's very important to start at the very beginning of Jesus' life. So if you want to turn to Luke chapter 2, we'll read the Christmas story. We'll read about Jesus' birth.

In Luke chapter 2, starting in verse 1, it says, In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

This was the first census that took place while Cornelius was governor of Syria. And everyone went into his own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth to Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house in the line of David.

He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him, and expecting a child while they were there, the time came the baby to be born. And she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in swaddling cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room in the inn. And there were shepherds living in the field nearby, keeping watch over the flocks at night. [8 : 58] And the angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. And they were terrified. But the angel of the Lord said to them, Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy.

I bring you good news of great joy, and that will be for all people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you. You will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger. Suddenly a great company of heavenly hosts appeared with the angels, praising God, saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.

When the angels had left them and they had gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let's go to Bethlehem. See this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about. So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby who was lying in the manger.

When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told to them about this child. And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

[10 : 04] And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising for all the things that heard and seen which they had just been told. So that's one part of the Christmas story.

I'll go ahead and go to Matthew chapter 2. This is kind of the second part of the Christmas story a lot of times you hear. So you've got the shepherds and then you've got the magi is the next part. So Matthew chapter 2, starting in verse 1. It says, After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, Where is one who has been born king of the Jews?

We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him. When King Herod heard this, he was troubled and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people, people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Christ was to be born.

In Bethlehem in Judea, they replied, For this was the prophet has written, But you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among rulers of Judah.

[11 : 11] For out of you will come a ruler, who will be the shepherd of my people Israel. Then Herod called the magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared.

He sent them to Bethlehem and said, Go, make a careful search of the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I may too go and worship him. After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen in the east went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was.

When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. When they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, of incense, and of myrrh, and having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they turned to their country by another route.

And then verse 13, it says, When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. Get up, he said. Take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.

So there's a lot going on in the very first part of Jesus' life. This is a very common story that we hear this time of year. It's a very common theme across many Christmas songs, many Christmas paraphernalia, all of this stuff.

[12 : 35] The wise men coming, presenting their three gifts, the shepherds out in the field being visited by angels. And all of these characters wanted to go and know Jesus more.

As soon as they were told about this baby that was born, they dropped what they were doing and went and searched for this child. Now, back in those days, obviously the shepherds, they were out in the field tending the sheep, watching them.

I don't exactly know how far out of town they were, but they had to go back into town. Now, they didn't know, I'm assuming they didn't know Mary or Joseph. They didn't know their family.

So how do you think they found out where the baby was? They had to probably go around and ask people, like, where's this baby that was born in a manger? And a lot of people were probably like,

what are you talking about? So they had to go and ask.

They wanted to find out. They had a zeal in their heart after being told by the angels that the Savior of the world is being born. There's a few things that happen in this story that are kind of weird.

[13:38] The baby, one, being placed in a manger, kind of an odd place to have a baby. We had our baby in a hospital. I'm very glad for that. I didn't have to lay him in a feed trough or have to lay Selah in a feed trough. I had this big, huge contraption with a bunch of lights and stuff and it was called a big panda machine or whatever.

But Mary just had a manger to lay her baby in. What's really interesting is that these shepherds, not the priests or anything like these, the shepherds are visited by the angels.

These wise men who have no idea who this baby is, just that he is the Savior and they've read about him. These Magi travel about two years is what most scholars will say to come and visit this child to know him more.

A king, a very wealthy, a very powerful king wants this innocent child killed. It's a very interesting thing to happen.

But I think the most interesting thing to me is that the Magi and the shepherds, Magi refer to him as a king and savior and the shepherds are told that a savior is born to him.

[14:45] That's already a lot that I would want to know about this baby. Why is he called a king right away, not a prince first? Why is he called the savior? We read in context that a lot of these people probably knew the scriptures, knew the stories and stuff.

We had that King Herod called the priests and the priests knew exactly what was going on, but they didn't necessarily want to know Christ the king. We read in Matthew that it says that Herod was troubled with all Jerusalem with him.

I think that really shows the heart of Jerusalem at this point. They're not really wanting a savior, which is crazy to think about. But despite that, these people that got to know the Lord Jesus Christ as a baby had great joy with it.

We see obviously that the shepherds went and shouted out. They went and told everybody about this baby. They had great joy with it. And everybody else had joy that was with them hearing that. And the Magi brought gifts. I don't necessarily want to bring a gift to somebody that I'm not joyous to see or joyous to learn about or whatever. So these Magi took joy in knowing the Christ more.

[16:02] The good thing about this story is that it doesn't just end as a baby there. It gets better for us, especially. Jesus grows up, lives a perfect life.

He grows up, same things that you and I have probably had to go through, puberty, all of that other stuff, getting told by his mom not to do that, not to do this, go clean your room, all of that stuff.

This little baby grew up a normal life so that he could one day be sacrificed and die on the cross for our sins. And you'll have to forgive me as I didn't bring my Bible with me, but I'll have to look up.

But if you turn to Luke 23, verse 44 through 49, now this is the end of Jesus' life here. Life here on earth, I should specify.

So if we look at Luke 23, 44 through 39, we see that this is where Christ is crucified for you and for me. So, and starting in verse 44, it says, it was now about the sixth hour and darkness came over the whole land until the ninth hour for the sun stopped shining and the curtain of the temple was torn in two.

[17:21] Jesus called out with a loud voice, Father, into my hands I commit my spirit. And when he had said this, he breathed his last. The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, surely this was a righteous man.

When all the people who gathered to witness this sight saw what took place, they beat their breasts and went away. But all those who knew him, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at the distance watching these things.

So we just read this crazy story about a baby being born in kind of an interesting place for one, interesting circumstances of having to flee for the first part of his life because a king wanted him killed.

Super knowledgeable, wealthy scholars coming and visiting him and giving him gifts, random shepherds coming and taking so much joy in seeing him. And then he grows up in his childhood. We don't know too terribly much about his childhood, but he starts his ministry about 30 years old and does many great things, does many miracles, says many profound things, many true profound things.

[18 : 30] Basically, he's flipping the culture almost upside down on its head. And this is the last part of his life. He's dying on the cross. Why does he need to die on the cross?

Well, that goes back even further in the book of the Bible. That goes back to the very beginning. In Genesis 3, we read that there was this thing called sin that came into the world.

Sin is just disobedience against what God has, his mark of perfection. So anything that goes against the mark of perfection, which is God, we have sin.

Or that is called sin. And each one of us has sin in our lives, and what that sin does is it separates us from the Lord Jesus Christ. It separates us from God. We can no longer have a close, personal relationship with him.

I know that I would be devastated if there was something that happened between me and Salo right now where I could no longer have a relationship with her at all from day one.

[19 : 30] I know that God himself was grieved when he could no longer have an intimate relationship with us. So, God made sacrifices.

Blood had to be shed to atone for sin. To atone for it. The thing is, is that no amount of animal blood shed would actually take away our sins.

It would only cover it. And so, there was thousands, hundreds of thousands, millions of animals killed to help cover people's sin. But there was nothing that could take it away.

That problem was still there. The only thing that could take away a person's sin, could get rid of it completely, would be that of a perfect human being who would sacrifice himself.

But it couldn't just be any man. It would have to be God's own son, Jesus. And that's what we look at here, is that Jesus Christ, born as a baby, an innocent baby, growing up, dying on the cross, shedding his blood, so that we could have remission of sins.

[20 : 34] You may ask, like, well, he died, that's it. All those other animals died, nothing else special happened. The key part of where Jesus Christ can take away all of our sins, my sins, your sins, everybody in the world's sin, is that after he died, three days later, he rose again.

And so, if you look at Luke 24, verses 5 through 6, and this is just an amazing crescendo to the redemption plan of the Lord Jesus Christ. So, Luke 24, verses 5 through 7, it says, in their fright, the women bowed down on their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, why do you look for the living among the dead?

He is not here, he is risen. Remember how he told you while he was still with you in Galilee? The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and on the third day rise again.

And then they remembered these words. So, that's the amazing part of this whole story is not only was Jesus born as a human, lived as a human, a perfect life, so he's meeting the criteria to be able to take away our sins.

He died, shed his blood, blood was shed for our sins, but not only that, he was able to rise again the third day, conquering sin and death, allowing him to take away everyone's sin, not just one person's sin, not just one sin, not just one act of a sin, but everybody's sin.

[22 : 03] All of the criteria was met for the relationship to be able to be restored with God. All we have to do to receive this wonderful gift is believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, believing, trusting in him, just like you guys are trusting in your chairs to hold you up.

And that's a beautiful story to know, but there is so much more about Christ to know. I know in my life there have been many a times, many struggles, many of joys, that if I didn't know the Lord Jesus Christ, or I didn't know his people that he had been filling with knowledge and fellowship and all of that, I would not be the man I am today.

I don't think I'd be able to come up with a message in six minutes. I wouldn't be, I would be messed up. I know that for a fact. Many of you know my life story, and so you know that.

Many of you know just our recent stories that have caused me to question my faith in some aspects, but I know that the Lord God is good no matter what circumstance.

I know he was good when he was born a baby, when he grew up as a child, when he died on the cross, and when he rose again on the third day. I know all of those things he was good. I also know that even before he was born as a baby, he was good.

[23 : 22] And I know after he is also good. There's going to be a time where he comes back and takes us all home, those who are believers. And I can't wait to look for, I can't wait for that moment to where we can know him even more.

See, on this earth, we can know him through the scriptures. We can know him through the fellowship of believers with one another. We can know him through praise. We can know him through his creation. But there's going to be something else when we get to see him face to face that we're going to be able to know him even more.

And what's exciting to me is that we will always be able to know him more. There will never be a moment where I can say that I know everything about my Lord and Savior, which is awesome. So if we read in Philippians 3, 8 through 10, it says, What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus, my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things.

I consider them garbage that I may gain Christ and be found in him, not having the righteousness of my own that comes from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness that comes from God on the basis of faith.

[24 : 34] I want to know Christ, yes, to know the power of his resurrection and participation in his suffering, becoming like him in his death. I can, with unwavering certainty, tell you that the Lord Jesus Christ is good.

I can tell you with unwavering certainty, the more you know him, the better your life will be. I'm not saying that your life will be easier. My life has been one struggle after another as I know many of you has been too.

But with that, we can find joy in knowing the Lord Jesus Christ. And what better time to start than a time of the year where we, like a majority of people, are focused on the Lord Jesus Christ and his birth, you know, starting from the beginning.

I know that one of my goals every year is to know the Lord more than I did last year, to love him more than I did last year. And I hope that is for you too. I hope I've given you a good message in the six minutes that I had to prepare.

So I'll go ahead and just close in prayer real quick. Heavenly Father, we just thank you for this day that you've given us. Lord, we're so glad that we have the scriptures with us, that we can know you more and more every day.

[25 : 43] Lord, I'm so thankful that there is more and more to know about you, that we will never completely understand. Yet, Lord, we can still experience that joy of knowing you and getting to know you more.

So, Father, as we look forward to this new year, Father, may we just fall more in love with you. May we just know more about you. And we just thank you for all these things in your son's name. Amen.