

Morning Star Church
Small Group Study Guide
C2 Christmas, Nov 28-29, 2009

Message Synopsis: We began our new Advent series this past weekend call *Countercultural Christmas*. If you have already endured the “Black Friday crowd” this past weekend, you can appreciate the challenge Pastor Keith gave us, to pay attention to the *real* meaning of Christmas, the counter-cultural message. We learned that Christ said, “*you have heard it said...but I tell you*”. Just going along with tide of traditions will not teach us anything new this Christmas. When we view Christmas through *His Eyes*, it changes everything.

You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, - If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that?

Matthew 5: 21-22, 27-28, 43-44, 46-47, NIV

Additional passages: Matthew 1:17-25; Luke 1:5-56; Luke 2:1-20.

Questions for your small group to consider:

1. During the first Christmas, Bethlehem was in frenzy much like our *holiday celebrations*, except their busyness was imposed by the Romans for census. Results were still the same, crowds, chaos, no vacancy, noise everywhere. The most significant event in all human history happened in a busy world too pre-occupied to notice. Share with your group your thoughts about how easy it is for us to be so engrossed with holidays.
2. Pastor Keith’s suggestions to make Christmas countercultural were to slow down, spend less, serve others and support a cause. Which of these would you want to embrace this year for deeper understanding of Christmas?
3. If you could change *one thing* about your holidays that causes you the most stress, what would it be and why? How would you change it?
4. Read Philippians 4:13 in your group. If this verse is true (as we know that it is), then God is ready to bring *His strength* into your Christmas to help you turn it into a most meaningful experience, share with your group how would you desire His strength to help you accomplish this holiday.

Prayer Requests:

**Morning Star Church
C2 Christmas
Sermon Notes - Nov 28-29, 2009**

"Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD rises upon you. See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your dawn.

(Isaiah 60:1-3)

**The Culture's
Christmas**

1. **MARTHA STEWART**
sets the standard for decorations
2. Lots of **GIFTS** = Good **PARENTING**
3. Light **DISPLAYS** = **SOCIAL** Status
4. **BUY** Now /Pay **LATER**

**Jesus'
Christ(mas)**

- SLOW** Down
- SPEND** Less
- SERVE** Others
- SUPPORT** a Cause

The Counter-Culture Christ:

"You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. You have heard that it was said, 'Love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I tell you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, - If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your brothers, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? **(Matthew 5: 21-22, 27-28, 43-44, 46-47)**

**(For further study: 11/30 Matthew 1:17-25;
12/1 Luke 1:5-25; 12/2 Luke 1:26-38; 12/3 Luke 1:39-56;
12/4 Luke 2:1-8; 12/5 Luke 2:8-20 12/6 Matthew 2:1-12)**