



## *It's About Time*

Luke 2:1-7

Welcome. Out of towners. Those who deferred to family. Not sure you believe this stuff. Sweet story...but not true, is it? God didn't really come to earth, did he? Well...come to a place where we actually believe it IS true. That God-baby changed the world. Changed our lives. Who knows...he could change your life, too. Let's see what happens.

There are a lot words in Luke's Christmas story that might be very easy to skip over, they are so simple and straightforward. Like the ones in Luke 2:6: **"While they were there, the time came...."** What does Luke mean when he says, "...the time came?" Of course! It was baby time!

Kids...any of your mommies have babies inside of them? Moms...any Christmas Eve surprises for your husbands?

Most memorable Xmas Eve for Toones... Christmas Eve 1995. Cyndi was **very** pregnant with Cooper. **"The time"** had not quite come, but was coming soon! In fact, with my cell phone on pulpit.... **"...the time had come."**

**"While they were [in Bethlehem] the time came..."** Kids...help me. Bibles in pews. Where in this book is the beginning of Christmas story? Matthew, maybe. Parents help. Angel...Virgin Mary... nine months pass, and out comes Jesus. **"The time came."** Simple as that, right???

Well, not really! God's didn't decide to send his son to earth here. (Matthew) Way back here! Genesis. Then... the rest of the Bible repeats God's promise again and again. Jesus is coming. Jesus is coming. Hundreds of years!!!! Thousands of years.

Kids, what if mom and dad made a promise to get you a puppy! One week. One month. One year passes. No puppy. What would you think? They forgot. Changed their minds! Or maybe you'd think they were mad at you. That's what Bible people thought. God said he was going to send his Son to earth... but hundreds of years? Nothing! Forgot! Changed His mind. Maybe mad?

No.... **The time just wasn't right.** God's time hadn't come. **Xmas presents.** Will you open them tonight? Tomorrow? For us...I had to stay in bed until my folks got up. It was so hard! I wanted to see what Santa had brought so bad... but had

to stay in bed until parents got up. I listened for their door! And **finally**, when I heard my parents get up and walk down the hall, I would say, "It's about time."

That's what people in the world were saying about God. "**It's about time you kept your promise, God! It's about time you came and saved us. Helped us. Made us free.**" But God didn't come yet. He wasn't ready. He had to get everything ready first. **He waited until** a guy named Alexander the Great conquered whole world and taught everyone how to speak the same language. But God still wasn't ready. **Then he waited until** some guys called the Romans built huge roads all over the world and they made them safe. Only then, when God's messengers (like the Apostle Paul) could walk all over the world and be safe and could tell the story of Jesus in a language that everyone would understand... only then did God know that the time was right.

And the people were so ready! They were ready to meet the real God because the world was filled with crazy religions! They took rocks and made statues and then they called them gods and prayed to them! How crazy is that? Idols. Hundreds of them. People wanted a real God to pray to. A real God to come and help them and love them and save them. People were crying out, "**It's about time God came to help us.**" And finally...after hundreds and thousands of years...when God had everything ready...God said, "OK...here I come!" **The time came...**

Back to 1995. Guess what day my son Cooper was born? Christmas Day. ANYONE HERE born on Xmas Day? Or today? It took 7 hours for Cooper to come out. His mommy was so tired. When he FINALLY arrived...guess what his mommy and I were both thinking? "**It's about time!**"

How about Mary? Romans said she and Joseph had to go to...what town? **Bethlehem**. They lived in Nazareth. Do you know how far that was from Bethlehem? 90 miles. Twice as far as Seattle. Did they ride in a car? No, they walked. Or rode a donkey maybe. How would like to walk to Seattle and back again! Mary was ready to pop, she was so big and so tired. They got to Bethlehem and **the time came** for her to have her baby. Did she go to a hospital? Hotel? Disneyland? No... She had her baby in a barn with animals and animal poop and hay. Was that clean? No, it was really dirty. But at least it was warm. It was a hard way to have a baby. What do you think Mary wanted to say when Jesus was finally born? **It's about time!**

Any of you parents saying those words tonight? **It's about time!** Is it a hard Christmas for you? **It's about time** I got a job! **It's about time** my marriage improved. **It's about time** I got along with my kids better. **It's about time** my health improved! **It's about time** my life had some purpose. Any of you show up here tonight saying, "**It's about time!?**"

Last Monday I asked my daughter, Rachel, if she wanted to join me for a last minute shopping trip to the Kitsap Mall. I've only been there once but it seemed like a good idea. **It was a horrible idea.** The freeway was busy; the side streets

were packed; we were waiting for the light to change 4 times to make it through an intersection. So, by the time we **got** to the mall, I was already frazzled.

We parked, we walked in, did our shopping and came out with two hours to spare before our party. We started walking to the car. Guess what? **No car.** Okay...no problem...just retrace our steps and look a little more carefully. We were probably distracted. So we retraced our steps more carefully, and guess what...**no car.** Hmmmm... So we started walking up and down the aisles of the parking lot from one end of the section to the other. **No car.** I started pressing on my alarm button. No alarm. No car. **Rachel and I split up.** She started at one end of the parking lot, I at the other, walking back and forth like we were mowing the lawn; we would meet in the middle. We met in the middle. **No car.**

How do you think I was feeling about now? Wet. Frustrated. **Humiliated.** I've heard about the guy who loses his car in the parking lot. My gracious, Christian response has always been the same: **what an idiot!** Now **I** was the idiot. **I thought, "It's begun! I'm going senile."** My only consolation was that my very bright college daughter couldn't find the car, either. Then I thought, "Well, maybe someone stole it." I could call the police. Problem is, the state just made me change my license plates. I don't remember my license number. "I've got a gold 2003 Subaru." Hmmmm, that narrows it down. I didn't think the police would find that very helpful.

All the while this stuff was going through my head, I was walking up and down the **same** aisles in the **same** parking lot pressing the **same** alarm button, getting wetter. And madder! By now, we had been looking for 15 minutes. That may not sound like very long but, I guarantee you...**it was a lifetime.**

**Finally, Rachel says, "Daddy, I don't think we went into the mall through those doors. I think we are in a different parking lot."** Of course, I **knew** I we were in the right parking lot but, just to humor my daughter...and to give me more time to figure out how I was going to explain to my wife that she needed to drive to Silverdale and pick us up...I said, "OK, let's walk over to the **next** parking lot. Same drill. You start at one end; I'll start at the other."

Guess what? Three minutes later, a phone call: "I found the car-har, I found the car-har." **We were looking in the wrong parking lot the whole time!** And all I could think when I tumbled into that car... wet, frustrated, humiliated, late...all I could think was... **"It's about time!"**

If you showed up here this Christmas Eve and the truth is, you feel lost... feel like you can't find your way... you feel like your life is so confused, so messed up... maybe **it's about time** you started looking **somewhere else** for your answers! You've tried all the things you are supposed to try...good education, good job, right clubs, right marriage, right schools and activities for your kids, nice house, nice things... **but you still find yourself walking up and down the aisle of your life, pressing the alarm button in frustration.** Or **maybe** everything you've

worked so hard for...marriage, kids, house, job... is slipping through your fingers. You know you need help but you are too embarrassed to ask.

**Isn't it about time you looked somewhere else for the answers? Isn't it about time you tried something different?** Maybe it's about time you swallowed your pride, **called a marriage counselor** to get some help. Maybe it's about time you **learned how to talk to your husband in a different way** that doesn't make him feel put down every time you open your mouth. Maybe it's time you **stopped living with your boyfriend** and started building a relationship on a foundation that will last. Maybe it's time you **cut up your credit cards** and started actually paying for the things you buy.

Maybe it's time you **tossed out half of your kids' sports activities** so that your family can actually BE together once in a while. Or maybe it's time you decided that you **want your children to grow up loving God** and the best way to do that is to go to God's house with God's people. Yes, on Christmas Eve and Easter... but on some of the Sundays in between, too!

Kids...maybe it's time you treated your little sister or brother nicer. Or made your bed every day. Or did what your mom said without being told three times. Maybe it's time to be nice to that weird kid at school that everyone picks on.

**Maybe it's time for your family to admit that you are looking for life in all the wrong places;** to started searching for the God who came searching for you 2000 years ago.

Well, if you are feeling any of those things... **you** parked in the **right** parking lot tonight. The story of Christmas is the story of a God who painstakingly prepared...who patiently put everything into place so that, when the time was right...the world would be ready to receive her king. That baby...God in human form... changed everything...and he can change your life, too.

Maybe everything you are going through...all of the dead ends and u-turns... are God's way of preparing you for this moment...this moment when God says, "Isn't it about time you let me love you?" And the answer is ...Yes. It's about time!