

## Christmas Window

by Pastor Kurt Schroder

From the kitchen table in our house, where I am presently writing this article, we have a view through our sliding glass door that can be spectacular. The sunset is often incredible over the valley below. Today, I can see yellow leaves on a couple of maple trees. Birds of vast variety settle on our feeder. And sadly, I get a glimpse of projects I need to finish on the exterior of the house. None of these things would be readily revealed without the clear glass of windows.

Christmas is nearly upon us. In its own way, Christmas is like a window. Let me explain.

First, Christmas is a window that reveals what is inside. We have all probably gone window shopping. You would walk past a store and see their display window. The display window let you see what valuable things are inside.

Christmas reveals what is inside. If we are all about Santa, gifts, getting, even family and gathering, Christmas will reveal what really motivates us. There is no easier time to see what our hearts really cherish than at Christmas. Christmas is a window to the heart to see what we truly treasure. Does stuff and the celebration rule our hearts or is our greatest treasure of the Christmas season the Savior who would come into the world to ransom us from ourselves and our sin?

Christmas is also like a window in that it lets light in to dispel darkness. Of course we live in a world that is dark with sin. Luke 1:79 tells us that we all sit in darkness and the shadow of death. Sin entered the world through Adam's

disobedience and because of that rebellion, darkness and death became prevalent. All men are under sin's penalty, death. Into that darkness through the window of Christmas, a great light has shown. The Dayspring from on high has visited us (Luke 1:78). God, in His mercy, sent His Son into the world to save His people from their sin. Are you thankful for the window of Christmas, where light has shown into your darkness?

Finally, Christmas is a window of opportunity. As we have opportunity let us do good to all (Galatians 6:10). The word opportunity is not a fixed moment of service but rather a season of life, a window of time. At Christmas time we have a greater window to share the gospel with others. The message is all around us. Stores play carols with words like "Hark the herald angels sing, glory to the newborn King. Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinners reconciled." People show some kindness to each other, giving is, for a time, more important than receiving. People are more open to coming to church, or a children's program, or a Christmas Eve Service. The season offers us a window of opportunity to speak of the Savior and point others to the gift of eternal life He offers.

As you look through the glass of Christmas, rejoice in the light of Christ that flooded your soul, resolve to make the Lord Jesus your dearest treasure, and use the season to point others to the Savior of the World!

## Have Patience!

by Dan Waters

There's an old prayer that is supposed to be funny: "Lord! Give me patience! And give it to me now!" Unfortunately, there's enough reality reflected in that prayer to make it more of a cringe than a laugh. Perhaps it is more convicting than anything else for many?

I found that there are at least nine articles in answer to questions at [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org) (a recommended website!) about "patience." I didn't read them. But you might want to read through some of the articles (How about "What does the Bible say about patience?" or "What are some Bible verses about patience?" or "The Fruit of the Holy Spirit – What is Patience?"). I'm not interested in regurgitating someone else's work. You can read it for yourself. Obviously, this is a topic of great interest! I was somewhat amused seeing a book with some information about patience in it entitled, "One-Minute Prayers for Dads." Let me guess that those who only have time to pray for one minute struggle with patience!

It may come as a surprise that even some souls in heaven exhibit a little impatience with God! Revelation 6:9-11 reveals some of these chiding God: "How long ..." until You take revenge on our enemies who killed us? The souls are told to "rest a little longer." Note: this is God's first answer to the need for "patience" that I call you attention to.

The 12 Disciples were obviously impatient. They asked Jesus, "When will these things be?" (Implication, "we want to know now!" Matthew 24:3). In Acts 1:6 they asked Jesus if He was going to set up His kingdom *now*. The next verse has Jesus telling them it is not for them to know. (Note, this is God's second answer about having patience that I will mention). I'm sure they wouldn't have been satisfied if He had told them, "It's going to be over 2,000 years!" That would have been an accurate answer, but not very satisfying for them. Perhaps we too should be satisfied with Jesus' answer, "It's not for you to know." If I really need to know the timing of some event, God will tell me. Questions like, "How long will it be until Jesus returns?" or "How long do I have to live?" are certainly questions of interest to us all. But we don't need to know, otherwise God would tell us.

A third answer to questions about patience

from God is that "patience" is the fourth fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22 – translated as "longsuffering" by NKJV, but "patience" by several others). Patience comes from the Holy Spirit. Don't quench the Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19 – don't throw cold water on what the Spirit wants you to do! Obey! Otherwise, you might kill the fruit.). Don't grieve the Spirit (Eph 4:30 – by doing something sinful or that you know you shouldn't do, you grieve the Spirit. Otherwise, you might kill the fruit.). The Holy Spirit will produce this fruit of "patience" if we trust Him rather than provoking Him. Daniel had to wait 70 years in Babylon. Abraham had to wait 25 years. Job had to wait ... Moses had to wait ... David had to wait ... God will come through for you also. Wait ... Trust Him! Don't set a time limit on God.

Note how God works with people (– with us!). He didn't tell them how long their trials would last. But He put them all in situations which required them to be unfulfilled for a long period of time. Again, do we trust God or not? It's not pretty when we try to short-circuit God's timing! The Spirit was grieved when Sarai came up with the idea that her husband should sleep with her handmaid. Moses grieved the Spirit by killing the Egyptian. Job grieved the Spirit when he cursed the day he was born. Contrast these with Daniel, who allowed the Holy Spirit to have His way. He trusted God when he was put into a lions' den. His friends trusted God when they were put into a fiery furnace. God delivered Joseph from prison, after he suffered for a while. What a deliverance Joseph had!!! He waited! He had patience! He trusted God!

When the Son of God was on earth with His self-imposed limitations, He had perfect trust in the Father. The angels have that same perfect trust. That's why, when they didn't know something that the Father did not reveal to them, they just trusted Him without being anxious to know more. They were content with what had been revealed to them. Jesus taught us exactly what to do with our own lack of knowledge: "Take heed, watch and pray; for you do not know when the time is" (Mark 13:33). We are told what to do: "watch and pray." And we are told explicitly, "you

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## Services & Bible Studies (Times and Places)

Every Sunday:

Sunday School	9:45 am
AM Service	11:00 am
PM Service	6:00 pm

Every Wednesday at 6:00 pm:

Adult Bible Study & Prayer
Middle & High School Youth Group

Men's Bible Study:

Men's breakfast is once a month.  
Usually the 2nd Saturday at 8 am.

Women's Bible Study:

The ladies' Bible study will meet every other week. Monday morning at 9 am at the church and Monday evening at 6 pm at Sharon Rometti's home.

## Book of Luke Challenge

We took part in a wonderful Christmas tradition a few years ago and we will do it again in 2024. The Gospel of Luke is full of joy, from the opening phrases until the final words of the book of Luke.

Beginning December 1st, together let's read one chapter of Luke each day through December 24th. 24 days. 24 chapters. Perfect!

By Christmas Eve, we will have read all 24 chapters – an entire account of the birth, ministry, sacrifice on the cross, and resurrection of

Jesus.

We will wake up on Christmas day knowing WHO and WHY we celebrate! JOY to the WORLD!

As you read, begin with prayer. Ask God to open your eyes and heart to the things in this book.

Also, get a notebook. Write down the things that you learn. What is God teaching you? Share these truths with others.

## Summary of the Gospel of Luke (from [gotquestions.org](http://gotquestions.org))

**Author:** The Gospel of Luke does not identify its author. From Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-3, it is clear that the same author wrote both Luke and Acts, addressing both to "most excellent Theophilus." The tradition from the earliest days of the church has been that Luke, a physician and a close companion of the Apostle Paul, wrote both Luke and Acts (Colossians 4:14; 2 Timothy 4:11). This would make Luke the only Gentile to pen any books of Scripture.

**Date of Writing:** The Gospel of Luke was likely written between A.D. 58 and 65.

**Brief Summary:** Called the most beautiful book ever written, the Gospel of Luke begins by telling us about Jesus' parents; the birth of His cousin, John the Baptist; Mary and Joseph's journey to Bethlehem, where Jesus is

born; and the genealogy of Christ through Mary. Jesus' public ministry reveals His perfect compassion and forgiveness through the stories of the prodigal son, the rich man and Lazarus, and the Good Samaritan. While many believe in this unprejudiced love that surpasses all human limits, many others—especially the religious leaders—challenge and oppose the claims of Jesus. Christ's followers are encouraged to count the cost of discipleship, while His enemies seek His death on the cross. Finally, Jesus is betrayed, tried, sentenced and crucified. But the grave cannot hold Him! His Resurrection assures the continuation of His ministry of seeking and saving the lost.

**Missionary Report:** Each month we will update our missionaries.  
**Jan and Cheryl Bast (retired missionaries with New Tribes Missions)**

Dear friends,

Just earlier today Jan and I were discussing the Lord's goodness in our lives. We were privileged to grow up in America and had the opportunity to pursue our dreams. Those dreams ended up in our life's mission to be followers of Jesus. It's been a life's journey of incredible blessing mixed with heartache along the way. But we know that this earthly life cannot compare with God's plan for the ages yet to come. So, we face each day with hope!

As we all assess our own situations, we do well to consider and pray for those who are facing what seem like insurmountable obstacles. (Who knows what we in the USA will yet have to face in the months and years ahead?) Every day we are bombarded with news from around the world exposing the hatred man spews on those who do not align with their cause or beliefs. Our hearts ache watching the conflicts going on around us here and abroad. It is hard to find peace in turmoil, yet, that is what Jesus offers each one of us. Our prayer is that each one of you is experiencing peace from The Prince of Peace.

We want to also let you know that we appreciate each one of you who has been a part of our lives from childhood to 'older' age. We wouldn't be where we are now without the counsel, prayers, encouragement and support from you. May we all continue "running the race set before us" even if our legs don't move that fast anymore!

Love, Jan and Cheryl Bast

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do not know when the time is."

I know exactly what I am supposed to do as a Christian right now. I am supposed to edify Jesus' church (2 Corinthians 12:19). I am supposed to keep praying "for all the saints" (Ephesians 6:18). I am supposed to be "zealous for good works" (Titus 2:14). I am supposed to "Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace" (Ephesians 4:2-3 NIV).

Another way to understand what patience and trusting God are like is by calling attention to what they are not. If we exhibit irritation, anger, bitterness, fear, worry, frustration and the like,

then perhaps we are not allowing the Holy Spirit to produce His calm fruit of patience in our lives. Danger! Don't grieve or quench the Holy Spirit. We do so to our own peril! These are not innocent symptoms, "common to man," they are warning signs of deeper problems. Paul could have easily had these symptoms: so could Daniel, Joseph or Timothy. But as far as we know, they were directed by the Holy Spirit into lives of calm patience.

When we exhibit these negative symptoms which are not from God, it is important to know what the real problem is. The answer to our prayers is not always that our circumstances get "fixed" by God. (Sometimes He does do

## Pursued by the Father

by Lee Rometti

I was a very blessed child. I grew up in a loving family. My mom got saved when I was very young. Then she led me into a relationship with Jesus at the age of 4. I have no doubt that it was real. At a young age, I was motivated to tell everyone how they too could be saved. This testimony is not about my Salvation, but more about how God continued to love me even when I strayed from Him.

My whole life revolved around the church and friends from the church. I lived a pretty obedient life. My parents had strict rules and I followed them. But, though I mostly did right on the outside, I did not develop my own convictions at a young age.

When I went to college and was on my own, able to make my own decisions, I slowly strayed from God. I quit following many of the things that I knew to be true from the Bible. I never quit loving God. But, I did allow others to influence my day to day life in a way that took me from God's plan.

I am so thankful, that although I did not deserve it, He never stopped loving or pursuing me. The further I moved from God, the more unhappy I became.

Through a series of relationships and situations, I hit rock bottom. I was completely depressed. At this point, God brought believers into my life to redirect me back to God. And just like the father in the parable of the prodigal son, God welcomed me back with open arms.

With His help, I never want to stray again. Thank you Father.

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this in amazing ways!) But perhaps the answer is that *we grow* in our capacity to appropriate more of God's grace. Read and meditate on 2 Corinthians 12:9 ("... most gladly I will rather boast in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.") Paul was brought to this point in his life. Then read 2 Corinthians 9:8 where we see that our purpose is to "have an abundance for every good work." While we "wait" with "patience" for our circumstances to change, we know exactly what we should be doing. Let's do it with all our might and in the power of the Holy Spirit.

So, what is the conclusion of the matter? God

wants us to ... Wait a little longer. Don't worry about what you don't know or about the trials you must endure. Use your waiting time to be more and more obedient to the direction of the Holy Spirit by building up those around you and zealously doing good works for others. Witness to the unsaved and encouraged the believers. Life will be over before we know it! We will have new bodies, new circumstances, new relationships with God and people, and it will be forever! Jesus said so! We can trust Him! "Therefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thessalonians 4:18).

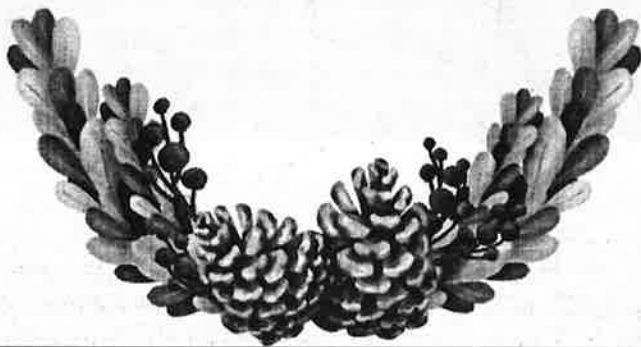
## Church Christmas Activities

Youth Group Christmas Party	6:00 PM	12/4
Ladies Christmas Party	6:30 PM	12/6
Youth Group Christmas Shopping	7:00 AM	12/7
Caroling - IR Care Center	5:50 PM	12/11
Christmas Program	6:00 PM	12/15
Christmas Eve Service	5:00 PM	12/24

## Kids' Corner with Miss Abby

### CHRISTMAS Bible Scavenger Hunt

Luke 2:1-3 - Who made the decree?  
Luke 2:4-5 - Where did Mary and Joseph travel from?  
Luke 2:8-9 - Who did the angel appear to?  
Luke 2:10-11 - Who was born in the City of David?  
Luke 2:12 - The shepherds found Jesus in a what?  
Luke 2:13-14 - The Angels said "on earth...?"  
Matthew 2:1-2 - What city did the Wisemen arrive in?  
Matthew 2:3 - What king was troubled?  
Matthew 2:11 - What gifts did the Wisemen give Jesus?  
Luke 2:39-40 - What city did Jesus grow up in?



**Memory Verse:** Luke 2:7

*And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.*

Kids' Recipe

### Candied Puffcorn

Ingredients

2 bags butter flavored puff-corn

1 box vanilla flavored candy coating

Sprinkles

Instructions

Add the puff corn to a very large pan or bowl. Spread two large sheets of wax paper out onto the counter.

Melt the candy coating in the microwave according to the package instructions. Drizzle it over the puff corn.

Quickly stir to combine and coat the puff corn. Spread the mixture out on the wax paper in a single layer. Add colorful sprinkles, if desired. Allow to cool. Store in an airtight container for up to a week.