



WESTMINSTER
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

“HILL CHURCH: HOUSE AND LINEAGE”

John Galbreath
Bible Study Series

Text: Luke 2
Date: Undated

About Westminster's Galbreath Bible Study Series:

This lesson is one taken from a sermon preached by John Galbreath at Westminster Presbyterian Church. It is undated.

To complete the lesson, we suggest that you begin by reading the designated Bible passage (Luke 2).

Next, review the outline of the sermon. Reflect on the chosen scripture and how you would “fill in” the remainder of the message from the chosen passage.

Then, review the study questions posed about the lesson — whether by yourself or in your small group.

Finally, share your thoughts on the Galbreath Bible Study blog on the Westminster Intranet.

I. Introduction

A. The role of tradition in Scripture.

1. Jesus' genealogy included in Matthew and Luke.
 - a) *"House and lineage" played a prominent part in the account.*
2. Not only because this week marks the turn of the year , but because of the role of tradition , in the Christmas story, we are taking this occasion to underline the religious -- and Presbyterian -- tradition of this area.

B. In design of the narthex, we felt the need for fine paintings.

1. Biblical scenes have left us unsatisfied.
2. Much contemporary impressionistic art meets the feelings of very few.
3. It would provide an opportunity to remind our people of the oak from which we were hewn.
4. "IONA ABBEY" depicts our Scottish background, for at this spot, Columba came from Ireland, and on this island, 60 Scottish kings are reputedly buried.
5. "HILL CHURCH": -- a familiar scene, for it stands on Washington Road about nine miles south of us at the Canonsburg cloverleaf.
 - a) *It is pictured as it appeared when built in 1846 -- without the little tower now on it.*
 - b) *The artist, John Shryock, an elder of our congregation, put considerable historical research, not only into details of structure, but of costume and transportation.*
 - c) *He was commissioned by a family of our congregation, and the painting has been given to the church in memory of my father, Dr. Robert F. Galbreath, who held pastorates in Colorado, Pittsburgh, New Castle and was President of Westminster 1932-1946. A happy, welcome painting.*
6. Our concern is not so much for the architecture as the history behind it.

II. John McMillan

A. It is nearly impossible to discuss the origin of any of the old congregations of this area without the mention of John McMillan.

1. Some twenty or so congregations founded nearby owed their beginnings in part to him, but the congregation with which he was most closely associated was Chartiers or "Hill Church" of Canonsburg.

B. McMillan was 23 when, as a very young itinerate pastor, he rode across the mountains in 1775 to bring the gospel and sacrament to the widely scattered frontiersmen.

1. No Presbyterian church buildings existed, but neighbors would meet together when ministers on horseback would be in the vicinity, and probably the layment themselves led worship in absence of a parson.

2. Married Catherine Brown, Faggs Manor.

3. 1776 -- September -- set out again for back woods.

4. Indian problems prevented his bringing his wife for two years.

5. 1778 -- brought his wife to "Shirtee" to a cabin with no floor, roof or furniture.

C. First church at "Shirtee" -- 1778 -- logs, no stove. About one in ten owned a coat, but wore blankets to services.

1. Pittsburgh before 1800

a) *Census -- 1786 one stone house, one frame, 36 log houses and six small stores*

"The people were poor, lazy, ravenously greedy and unwilling to work for reasonable wages. They preferred to live by extorting exorbitant prices from travelers and strangers." a German physician.

1. End of Revolution brought many Scotch-Irish to the frontier.

D. Whiskey Rebellion

1. Mid-July saw the burning of Bower Hill.
2. In August, 5000 farmers marched into Pittsburgh, burned a barn, drank four barrels of Dr. Brackenridge's whiskey.
3. Ballot in four counties as to whether to submit to Federal government.
 - a) *Early votes were 6-1 against.*
4. Baptist pastor -- for secession. Clark of Bethel and McMillan against secession.
 - a) *McMillan threatened to withhold the sacrament from anyone who voted for secession.*

E. Family

1. Seven children.
2. "Moon lighting" -- a farm of 600-1000 acres

F. Education

1. "Log cabin school," erected near his home to train young men, primarily for the ministry.
2. Eventuated into Canonsburg Academy and Jefferson College
3. Pittsburgh, too, felt the need of education and McMillan along with Hugh Brackenridge, minister turned lawyer and journalist, began Pittsburgh Academy in 1787.
4. Washington, PA, also started their academy in 1787 in the courthouse.
5. Western Theological Seminary, 1825, established by the Synod largely at McMillan's instigation.

G. Revival.

1. The turn of the century brought revival to Western PA, as other frontier areas.

H. Church as social factor -- "Sessioning member" -- JP rebuked for marrying a couple in jest.

I. Buildings -- Integration 1815

1. 1800 -- a stone church, built of rocks from nearby Indian mound.

J. Death -- at 82 (1833)

III. Later Chapters in Chartiers

A. 1841 -- present church was built

B. James R. Wilson, father of Woodrow Wilson 1849-51

1. Moved to Staunton, VA because he was a southern sympathizer.

IV. Role of Church

A. Presbyterians are entrenched in Pittsburgh not just because Scotch-Irish settled, but because they gave leadership to the political, educational, cultural life of the community.

Study Questions -- Part I*Bible Reading: Luke 2*

Luke 2:1 through 5 says: ¹ Now it came to pass in those days, there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be enrolled. ² This was the first enrolment made when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And all went to enrol themselves, every one to his own city. ⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David; ⁵ to enrol himself with Mary, who was betrothed to him, being great with child.

- Think about your own heritage. Where would you be called to enroll?

Luke 2:6 through 14 says: ⁶ And it came to pass, while they were there, the days were fulfilled that she should be delivered. ⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. ⁸ And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. ¹⁰ And the angel said unto them, Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: ¹¹ for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ¹⁴ Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace among men in whom he is well pleased.

- As you read this familiar passage, think of how it might have sounded to you, living near Hill Church in the 1846. If you were sitting in church wrapped in a blanket, how might your perception of the stable and the manger been different?
- How might your perception of a heavenly angel been different?

Luke 2:15 through 20 says: ¹⁵ And it came to pass, when the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing that is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. ¹⁶ And they came with haste, and found both Mary and Joseph, and the babe lying in the manger. ¹⁷ And when they saw it, they made known concerning the saying which was spoken to them about this child. ¹⁸ And all that heard it wondered at the things which were spoken unto them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, even as it was spoken unto them.

- How might the people of Canonsburg perceived the idea of making such a journey? What hardships would it have meant for them?

Luke 2:21 through 24 says: ²¹ And when eight days were fulfilled for circumcising him, his name was called JESUS, which was so called by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ²² And when the days of their purification according to the law of Moses were fulfilled, they brought him up to Jerusalem, to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, Every male that openeth the womb shall be called holy to the Lord), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to that which is said in the law of the Lord, A pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.

- Why do you think the gospel is so specific about describing the Jewish customs that were followed at Jesus' birth?
- If that was important at the time, do you think that remains important today?

Luke 2:25 through 32 says: ²⁵ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel: and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ And he came in the Spirit into the temple: and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, that they might do concerning him after the custom of the law, ²⁸ then he received him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, ²⁹ Now lettest thou thy servant depart, Lord, According to thy word, in peace; ³⁰ For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, ³¹ Which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples; ³² A light for revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of thy people Israel.

- What must it have been like to be Simeon and be one of the first to recognize that Jesus was bringing salvation?
- Why do you think the writer was already mentioning the inclusion of Gentiles along with the people of Israel?

Luke 2:33 through 38 says: ³³ And his father and his mother were marvelling at the things which were spoken concerning him; ³⁴ and Simeon blessed them, and said unto Mary his mother, Behold, this child is set for the falling and the rising of many in Israel; and for a sign which is spoken against; ³⁵ yea and a sword shall pierce through thine own soul; that thoughts out of many hearts may be revealed. ³⁶ And there was one Anna, a prophetess, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (she was of a great age, having lived with a husband seven years from her virginity, ³⁷ and she had been a widow even unto fourscore and four years), who departed not from the temple, worshipping with fastings and supplications night and day. ³⁸ And coming up at that very hour she gave thanks unto God, and spake of him to all them that were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

- Considering the gender roles at the time, why do you think there is such specific detail included about a woman's experience?

Luke 2:39 through 44 says: ³⁹ And when they had accomplished all things that were according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew, and waxed strong, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him. ⁴¹ And his parents went every year to Jerusalem at the feast of the passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up after the custom of the feast; ⁴³ and when they had fulfilled the days, as they were returning, the boy Jesus tarried behind in Jerusalem; and his parents knew it not; ⁴⁴ but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey; and they sought for him among their kinsfolk and acquaintance: ⁴⁵ and when they found him not, they returned to Jerusalem, seeking for him.

- What do you think is the importance that Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem at such a young age?

Luke 2:46 through 52 says: ⁴⁶ And it came to pass, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both hearing them, and asking them questions: ⁴⁷ and all that heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ And when they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? behold, thy father and I sought thee sorrowing. ⁴⁹ And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? knew ye not that I must be in my Father's house? ⁵⁰ And they understood not the saying which he spake unto them. ⁵¹ And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth; and he was subject unto them: and his mother kept all these sayings in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus advanced in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

- Why do you think the writer noted both that Jesus listened to the teaching of others and asking questions?
- What does it tell us about the times that the teachers were surprised at the understanding and answers of a twelve-year-old boy? How might the others in the synagogue reacted to that?
- What does it say that even Jesus needed to advance in wisdom? In stature? And with *both* God and men?

Study Questions -- Part II

Sermon :

I.A. What, if any, religious traditions did your family maintain as you were growing up? What religious traditions do you maintain today?

I.B. Someday, walk through Westminster and look at the art. Which pieces speak to you?

I.B.4. The Iona Abbey painting is now in the stairwell near the Chapel. Take some time to look at it.

I.B.5. The Hill Church painting remains in the Narthex today. As you look at it, think about the service those people were attending. Think about what outreach would have meant to them. How would their service be similar to the service you attend? How would it be different? What might the people in that painting make of our church building, our service and the outreach we do? What do you think services 200 years from now might be like? What would you want to see maintained?

I.B.5.c. There is a note saying: "do not touch the painting -- wet". This gives us a clue to the date of this sermon.

II. In the early 70's Westminster's Traveling Freshmen would attend a service at the Hill Church, Why do you think that congregation was chosen over other Presbyterian congregations to visit? Consider choosing a Sunday and attending a service at the Hill Church.

II.B.1. There is a handwritten note: John McDaniel

II.E. -- Originally, Dr. Galbreath was going to speak about education before family.

IV. What role do you think the Presbyterian churches of this area play in today's world? What role should we play? How can we get to that place?