
The King of Kings...In Rags

Luke 2:1ff

“Now when he saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, and he began to teach them, saying.... " Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted..." Matthew 5:1-2,4 (NIV)



Close your eyes with me as we visualize Christmas.

The first thing we visualize is a Castle, golden castle, afar off. It's on top of a mountain. We hear remarkable sounds of trumpets and cheering and come closer, wondering what's going on. As we get closer and closer to the castle, we get caught up with the crowds celebrating.

Then imagine that we are entering through this amazing medieval gate...the main gate, pushing and shoving, hearing the sound, “A Child is born!” The King and Queen have a child!” Looking down the main causeway, we see the palace, high up the steps. We look up and, coming down with great regality and the royal entourage of guards and servants, come the King and queen come out of their palace...The queen is holding the baby. “It's a boy!” the herald announces. The people rejoice.

Amazing experience, isn't it! Let's do it again.

This time you're out in the middle of one of the most forsaken and barren deserts in the world. It's past midnight. There isn't a cloud in the sky, the stars are bright. But you've been walking for days—with little water. You're tired, exhausted...and yes, there's a medical emergency. You're pregnant. Not just pregnant...but your about to deliver. No doctor in sight. Even the people in the little villages afar off haven't been helpful. No, you're all on your own. So you find a cave. You kick side the dirt. You shoo away the animals—goats, cows, sheep. Oooohhh how they smell. But with nowhere else to you, you set the pregnant mother, in the mist of childbirth. A few hours later, just before dawn, the baby is born. It's a boy.

Open your eyes. Now here's the question: Which is the proper birth for a King? It depends...on whether you're simply a human being looking to enjoy the spoils of the world—power, wealth and dominion ...or if you're a loving God, bent on saving the world,

What we celebrate this night is just that: a loving God, bent on saving the world. We recall the familiar words.

“For unto you is born this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign to you. You shall find the Babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.”

Christmas has many lessons for us. It tells of God's love. It tells of how God will stop at nothing to save us. It demonstrates that God is faithful in His promises. It is, after all, a celebration of His grace to us.

Christmas also has a lesson for life. That lesson is simply this: God's way of doing things is not our way. On psychiatrist on the Mitch Album show this afternoon talked about how expectations seem to get so high right a Christmas. Sometimes they get so high that these expectations cause stress...enormous stress. We expect, the psychiatrist said, that we'll have dinner, and family and

love and celebrations...but we done. We expect to have holiday cheer...but it eludes us. It's as if, he said, "we expect to celebrate Christmas like they would on "Leave it to Beaver" or like Ozzie and Harriet did. Instead, Christmas celebration can be more like being at Ozzie Ozborns...than being at the Waltons.

Perhaps that's one of the most applications of Christmas. God's ways are not our ways. To show us how radical this can be, God sent His son—the King of Kings—to be born in a cave in the wilderness.

That radicalness is what God wants to happen in our life.

CHRISTMAS - I CORINTHIANS 13 STYLE

Author Unknown

If I decorate my house perfectly with plaid bows, strands of twinkling lights and shiny balls, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another decorator.

If I slave away in the kitchen, baking dozens of Christmas cookies, preparing gourmet meals and arranging a beautifully adorned table at mealtime, but do not show love to my family, I'm just another cook.

If I work at the soup kitchen, carol in the nursing home and give all that I have to charity, but do not show love to my family, it profits me nothing.

If I trim the spruce with shimmering angels and crocheted snowflakes, attend a myriad of holiday parties and sing in the choir's cantata but do not focus on Christ, I have missed the point.

Love stops the cooking to hug the child. Love sets aside the decorating to kiss the husband. Love is kind, though harried and tired. Love doesn't envy another's home that has coordinated Christmas china and table linens. Love doesn't yell at the kids to get out of the way. Love doesn't give only to those who are able to give in return but rejoices in giving to those who can't. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails. Video games will break, pearl necklaces will be lost, golf clubs will rust. But giving the gift of love will endure.

Christmas. It's a festival—and celebration of love... God's love for us. A love unanticipated, a love unexpected, a love unnatural...but a love beyond anything we could experience...from a Baby. Yes, there is light tonight. And where do we find it? In the darkness.