

Advent 2021 - Week 4, Love
The Coming of Love...to all people.
Luke 2:1-20
Dec. 19th, 2021

I. REFLECTING on the Bethlehem JOURNEY. (v.1-7)

- A. The EPITOME of POWERLESSNESS. (v.1-5)**
- B. The BEST they could with what they HAD. (v.6-7)**

It's a story we hear every year. A young Jewish couple make their way to their ancestral home town, and while they are there she has a baby. But maybe, just maybe, our familiarity with the story causes us to minimize what was going on here. Maybe the fact that this gets played out on fireplace mantels this time of year causes us to miss what's really happening.

1. Kid's Question: When have you made a long trip that you wished you didn't have to make?
2. When have you felt powerless in your life? Did you sense God's presence or absence?
3. When have you felt you had nothing to offer God? How did that turn out?

II. The MOST unlikely SCENARIO. (v.8-20)

- A. A TERRIFYING experience of GLORY. (v.8-9)**
- B. A WORD of GRACE comes in the glory. (v.10-14)**
- C. GLORY plus GRACE yields DESIRE. (v.15-20)**

Talk about an odd pairing - the host of angels and the shepherds in the field were the last people you would ever expect to find talking with each other. Yet that's how it often is what God intervenes in our world. He does it in ways that seem unusual and unexpected.

4. Have you ever had an experience with God that made you afraid? What was that like?
5. Jeff said "Glory plus grace yields desire." Have you found that true in your own life? When?

III. LEARNING the way that love COMES. (1 Jn 4:19)

- A. It ALLOWS for REJECTION. (v.1-8,17-18; Is. 53:2-3; Mt. 2:3)**
- B. To and THROUGH the OPPRESSED. (v.1-20; Is 53:3-5; Ps. 34:18)**
- C. To BLESS and EMPOWER the OUTSIDERS. (v.8-20; 1 Cor. 1:27-29)**

D. Inspiring ACTION and ongoing CONTEMPLATION. (v.15-20; Eph. 3:17-19; 4:1)

You've no doubt heard the phrase, "Love came down at Christmas." While the sentiment is true, we need to think about how love came down. The way God chooses to make this move of love toward humanity is fascinating and helps us to understand that the way He loves us now often follows the same methods and pathways.

6. When have you offered love and found rejection? How does that help you to understand the way that God loves in spite of rejection?
7. Who are the oppressed and outsiders in today's world? How are the vehicles for the love of God to you and the world?
8. What's the relationship of "action" and "contemplation" when it comes to the love of God?