

Luke 2:8-20

Love's Arrival

Love is born in the flesh.

The Word of God incarnate.

God with us.

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.

These are all phrases you have heard said in this service already. They seem like code, but each is saying that in Jesus, God has come to us, as one of us. And why in the world would God feel the need to become human? What God goes to that length for a mere mortal? The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob – pillars of the Jewish faith, people of God. The God of our faith. The Christian faith is one where God's love for those he has created is so overflowing that God chose to become human flesh and blood that we might be able to recognize God. That in word, deed, and story, we could know how God walks in the world and trust that God knows our pain, trouble, frail love and commitment, our longing and desire, through Christ Jesus' eyes and lived experience.

The Gospels are full with accounts of Jesus, and throughout the over 2000 years since Jesus' death, these words continue to speak truth in love to those who would take the time to read them, hear them, learn, and seek out God. God sent Jesus so that the chasm between God and people, God and each of us, would be bridged. Jesus, come as a tiny babe into a family of little means, was love's arrival. God's love arrived in the world in a new way through the birth of Jesus. This love would grow, learn, and teach...heal, experience betrayal and harm, grief and friendship, as well as supply the need of many and change the world.

In a time when the Christian faith is under attack or deemed irrelevant, we forget the changes that have come about in the world because of the faith of Christians who have fought to bring about justice and equity for all. Are Christians notorious for also bringing hurt into the world, there is no doubt, but Jesus' example was one of provision not of domination. Jesus spent his time with a ragtag group of people who did not have power or prestige and yet their lives were forever changed as they carried their lived experience and understanding of the man into new places and situations.

Jesus healed the children of the powerless and the powerful as love does not differentiate, love sees people as people, vulnerable and hurting. Love sees the hungry and the destitute, the sick and the heart-broken, the angry and the lost, and says, "You

are worthy, you are valuable, you are mine.” This love incarnate, born in flesh, born to a young mom, away from her home and the safety of the women who she had known would care for her in this time of giving birth, and born to a man who desired to provide for his family, this love is God’s love come to us in Jesus.

This is what we celebrate when we speak about Christmas. We celebrate love’s arrival into the human condition. God’s presence and example. God’s peace, hope, joy and love all wrapped up in a baby, Jesus.

As you unwrap presents may you ponder how each gift represents love...God’s love for us. Again this year, this is Christmas, Love has arrived!