

Let us pray,

Lord, we give thanks for your grace, your humility and your example of love through Jesus Christ.

Amen.

---

Today a child is born, a child with the power and essence of God.

A child who was, is and ever will be.

A child that to the observer looks no different than any other child.

A child who is completely helpless and completely dependent on his parents, Mary and Joseph.

Today a seemingly ordinary, non-extraordinary child is born.

---

But we know different.

We know that this is the beginning of the greatest story ever told.

You see, Jesus, Yeshua, Ἰησοῦς, however he is known, came into the world in the most unremarkable way.

Or the most remarkable way, depending on how you think about it.

You see, Mary and Joseph were forced to leave their homes, by order of the government, to enter into a land that was not their own.

Mary was then forced to give birth in a common area at the hotel they were staying at because there were no more rooms available.

Mary and Joseph, were likely with other people and animals in this common area.

It was far from hygienic, and not a place to give birth.

And yet, that is where Mary was forced to give birth to the savior of the world.

And the Baby Jesus, the God of the universe, was stripped of any dignity, and required to be placed in a manger, which is a feeding trough for animals.

Hardly a warm welcome into the world for the creator of the cosmos.

---

And yet, God was the one who decided to come into the world this way.

To show that human wealth and power are not what God prioritizes.

The first people to see God were the shepherds, outside the people who were in the common area at the hotel of course.

But that doesn't sound as dramatic.

But anyway,

The point of mentioning the shepherds was to show just how anti-glamour, God really is.

You see Shepherds were lepers, non-violent criminals, and people that the masses didn't want around them.

Even when Jesus was a helpless little baby, his presence drew in those that the world pushed out.

---

This Christmas tradition of ours is a reminder that God so often flips on its head our understanding of what is important in this life.

Wealth, power, prestige, are not the markers of divine favor. If they were, then Jesus would be on the very bottom of the list of divine favor!

And yet, he is the highest form of divine favor, and was born into this world in a town that was not his parents home, removed of dignity of being born in even a private room, and laid in a dirty trough that animals feed from.

Surrounded not by family and friends, but strangers and outcasts.

---

I think it is kind of poetic, that the first people to welcome Jesus into this world were shepherds, who people considered criminals and outcasts.

And the person who joined Jesus in heaven on the day of his death, was also a criminal.

---

The good news of this story is that Jesus didn't come for the righteous.

Jesus came for the unrighteous.

Jesus came to be a light for those whose lives live in darkness.

Jesus came into this world, not to affirm those on top.

But to lift up those at the very bottom.

---

This is the greatest story ever told, because it proclaims that the God of the universe cares for even the worst of us, the least of us, the ones whom the world wishes to wipe away or forget about.

Its a proclamation that God cares about every human life.

---

Today a child is born,

One who is born with us, for us, and among us.

One who understands the gravity of sin and the darkness of life.

One who came not to proclaim judgement, but to forgive and provide mercy to all people.

Not based on merit, but based on God's love for God's creation.

---

May we be reminded to see God in every human being.

Especially those on the margins of society, just like the baby Jesus was in his time.

The light of God shines brightest, not on the mountaintops, but in the valleys and the caves.

Be a light to those in the darkness, let the Christ child shine bright for those the world wishes to hide.

And always be reminded that God came into this world for and with the least of these.

The Christmas story reminds us that salvation isn't won through strength, power, or wealth.

But true Salvation is won through humility, grace, vulnerability and unconditional love for all of creation.

Merry Christmas, our savior is born. Amen.