

# ***No Matter How Small***

**Luke 2:1-7  
Philippians 2:1-11**

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What do you do?

What **would** you do, tell me?

What **might** you do if while you were bathing, sunning, or otherwise relaxing  
enjoying yourself  
and  
while you were  
a speck floated by?

Say.

A tiny, insignificant fluff of fur, or whisp of dandillion, or dandruff from the next person on the beach -  
- say -  
if it floated past...

Would you notice?

At all?

Would it matter?

At all - no matter how small - would it matter?

And say,

just say,

that as that speck floated by  
tiny little fluff ball

just say that you heard a noise,  
a faint call for help

a faint call which you're sure came from that ball  
would you care - at all?

No matter how small, that ball,  
would you care - at all?

What would you do?

On that ball is, well, who?

Anything, anyone, nothing at all.

Would you care for that ball,  
no matter how small?

And what if someone told you to stop.

What if someone thought you were crazy.

What if they tried to get in your way?

What if they promised that they'd make you pay  
for such foolish behaviour in saving that ball  
and paying attention -  
no matter how small?

What do you do?

What **would** you do, tell me?

What **might** you do?

Yes, you'd be faced with the dilemma facing one of Theodore Geisel's favorite characters, Horton -  
*Horton Hears A Who.*

Remember the story?

Horton has really big, really keen ears.

One day, while bathing, Horton hears a small speck of dust talking to him, a small speck floating past. That speck of dust is actually a tiny planet, inhabited by microscopic inhabitants known as Whos.

Horton can hear them quite well due to his extraordinary hearing.

Chalk one up for big ears!

The Whos ask Horton to protect them, to which Horton happily obliges, proclaiming - **“a person’s a person no matter how small.”**

Well, a kangaroo and her joey happen to notice this huge elephant talking to that speck of dust, which Horton has carefully placed on a clover flower.

They think he’s crazy, and quickly spread the word.

Tricksters grab the speck-inhabited flower, and toss it into a field filled with clover flowers.

Horton, determined to keep his word, finds the flower

– and the speck – back.

He MUST protect them - because **“a person’s a person, no matter how small.”**

The by-standers are equally determined.

Led by 3 monkeys, known as the Wickersham brothers, they gang up on both Horton and the speck, which they threaten to boil in beezlenut oil.

Horton refuses to give up, because **“a person’s a person, no matter how small.”**

The tension grows, destruction looms, and Horton calls to the mayor of Who-ville to gather all the inhabitants of that tiny, tiny town and make as much noise as they can.

Perhaps, just perhaps, the kangaroo, the Wickersham brothers and the others with their little ears and poor hearing,

just perhaps

they will hear those tiny voices

and stop their mad plot to boil the speck.

Which eventually happens.

And the tiny world is saved.

*Horton Hears A Who* - by Dr. Seuss.

A silly little story?

Perhaps.

And yet a wonderful illustration, with echos of Christmas reverberating through it. For is it not so that we human beings are indeed just a speck on a tiny bit of fluff riding through the cosmos?

Psalm 8 puts it this way -

“3 When I look at the night sky and see the work of your fingers-- the moon and the stars you have set in place--

4 what are mortals that you should think of us, mere humans that you should care for us?”

Small.

Insignificant, really, in the gigantic cosmic scheme of things.

And yet - no matter how small -

NOT insignificant.

Not in God's eyes.

While our human race is careening down a mad, sin-scarred path to oblivion, God acts,  
God works,  
God intervenes.

In spite of all kinds of opposition from the evil one,  
God will not relent.

That's the heart of the Christmas story.  
Reaching down to rescue and restore us,  
no matter how small we are.

Only - and here's the real miracle of it all,  
He doesn't just reach down.

***He enters in.***

He becomes one of us.  
Right here.  
A speck on the fluff.

God becoming human -  
and not even the greatest of humans, at that.  
No birth into royalty.  
No cradle in a mansion.  
No hired attendants to care for him.

When God becomes human, it is -  
to a young woman with a poor, carpenter husband.  
Homeless, like those who live downtown under a bridge.  
Huddled out of the cold at the edge of town,  
laid in a animal's feed bin for a bed.

Remember, that child is far more than a child.  
Laying there,  
helpless,  
is the One who flung every star into its place  
who carved ocean depths and formed mountain peaks  
who spoke and caused galaxies to begin orbiting  
who commanded hoards of angels to come and go in his service  
who could start storms, and stop them with a single word.

He lays aside all of that power.  
He doesn't consider his own interests at all.  
He looks, instead, to others. And to their needs.  
Even ***IF*** they were much smaller than he was.  
Even ***IF*** their existence was insignificant, compared to his.  
Even ***IF*** it would demand that he risk everything.  
Even ***IF*** it would cost him a trip to a cross.  
Even then!

That's Christmas.  
That's the gift.  
That's the miracle.  
Something beyond anything a human story could even conceive of!  
A miracle story with a miracle ending - that's Christmas.

We know the beginning - the rescue is effected.  
Sin's curse is broken.  
Satan's claim on humanity is nullified.  
Eternal life is freely available to all who give their life to the Saviour.  
That's the miracle beginning.

The ending, also a miracle, is yet to come. That will happen on the day when Jesus returns to earth.  
Which might be this afternoon. Or another 400 years. We don't know.  
At that time all will be made good.  
All will become safe.  
All will be set right.  
No more pain, no more sorrow, no more tears, no more death.  
All gone.  
What a miracle day that will be!

In between now and then -  
Well, that's the space where we live.  
Somewhere between Luke 2 and the end of time.

And, know what?  
It's the space where lots of little miracles get lived out.  
It's the space of time where girls and boys, men and women live out little replicas of Christmas.  
They follow in the footsteps of Jesus.  
Sometimes they do it one by one, unnoticed, alone.  
Sometimes they do it as a community -  
together, encouraging each other in it.  
Sometimes they're challenging their broader community to do it;  
to live as replicas of the first Christmas miracle.

What do I mean, you ask?  
I mean imitating Jesus.  
I mean taking notice of people that others consider  
too small,  
too poor,  
too unimportant,  
too simple,  
too hard to understand,  
too sick,  
too far away  
to be of any consequence.

I mean being willing to spend time and energy and resources  
Looking to them and caring,  
really caring,  
about them.

Entering into their space, and trying to make a difference for them.  
Even if it costs.  
Even if it is risky.

It's very easy in our busy, noisy society to race right past the little people.  
Not hard to walk past a homeless person.  
Simple to flip the channel and not pay attention to the plight of war orphans.  
Easy to toss appeal letters from charities into the recycle.  
Or to not make the visit to the nursing home.  
Makes good economic sense to purchase products, cheap ones, without wondering what the  
sacrifice was of those who sweated to produce them.  
That's easy for each one of us to do.

It's simple, as a society, to not worry about environmental impacts that our present consumption  
patterns might have on little far-away island nations some years in the theoretical warmed-up  
future.

It's easy to conserve national wealth for internal use, and not worry about channeling a certain  
percentage of GDP towards international relief & development.

It's easy to develop trade ties with a country without asking questions about human rights records.

Or -

if these things do begin to nag at us a bit,  
then, it's **very** easy to say that my little voice doesn't matter.  
That whatever I do,  
the situation won't change anyway, so why bother?

But if we **REALLY** believe that Christmas happened as Luke 2 says it did,  
that the commentary which Philippians 2 provides is accurate,  
that the contrast between heaven and the manger was as concrete and as stark as the text  
suggests that it was  
that eternity and time actually did meet there  
that our saviour was born there

if we **REALLY** believe that

then ignoring little lives which float past us  
simply isn't an option.

It isn't any more of an option  
for you and me  
than ignoring us  
was an option for Jesus.

So, in the midst of packing your gifts, and tying on the ribbons,  
I wonder if you'll take some time to reflect on how much space there is in your life to notice  
and connect with the little ones who float past you.

And -

will there be some sort of gift for them?  
Perhaps a promise of time volunteered  
a phone call made  
a visit done  
a cheque sent  
a driveway shovelled  
a hug shared.

And really -

Could Christmas be complete without that?