

# *Overwhelming and Ordinary - God, Mary & Us (V)*

Bible Reading:  
[Luke 2: 1-20](#)



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**Scripture:** Luke 2:1-20

**Monologue - *Thirteen and Understanding***

Nine months pregnant, riding a hundred miles on the back of bony donkey. I felt like a sack of badly loaded cabbages tossed and jolted from one step to the next. I walked as much as I could, but that was slow going because I got tired easily. It took us ten days.

I was glad for the rolling to stop, believe me. In Bethlehem, we trudged from place to place, everything full to overcrowding. I was getting more and more desperate, knowing my time was near.

An innkeeper's wife took pity on us when she saw my condition. She made her husband sweep out the stable at the back for us. With a bit of clean straw, it wasn't too bad. I was glad of the peace and quiet, away from the drinkers around the front.

We were settled in none too soon. My labor pains began almost immediately. Joseph, bless him, did his best to make me comfortable, but he's no midwife. I don't know what I would have done if the innkeeper's wife had not returned. She had obviously delivered many babies in her time; to her this was just another one, a break from routine before she hurried back to her guests out front.

To hold that baby--how can words describe the wonder? Every baby is a miracle. All the pain, the discomfort, the ordeal vanished as I held him. But you know what was almost more of a miracle? After Joseph and I were married I could not shake a great fear--had he done it only out of duty, and how would he react to the child?

So when he asked to hold him, I could scarcely breathe. His calloused carpenter's hands reached down and took the baby and brought it up to his face. And then the miracle happened. A look of mingled wonder, awe, and love spread across Joseph's face as he cradled the child. And then he wept. Tears of joy fell without shame, and Joseph knelt beside me. He put the baby back in my arms and held the two of us in his strong embrace.

At first I was astonished, but as I listened to his words, I came to see that he too had been visited by an angel. I realized that God had indeed been with me and had given me what I needed. Joseph knew that the baby had been conceived by the Holy Spirit. He knew that the baby would grow to be the Messiah. He even knew the name by which the child is to be called--Jesus!

**Message**

Welcome to Christmas. The richness and beauty of the birth of a baby. Welcome.

Welcome to what would become earth-shaking, history-shaping, eternity-changing events. Amid the hubub of a nation in the midst of travel and census taking; away from the echos of angel choirs - two poor people, a rough carpenter and a teenage virgin wipe off a newborn in the back of a stable.

Joseph and Mary - both had been visited by angels, messengers from heaven.

Both had been told that this child would be the Saviour of the world;

the One for whom believers in God had waited countless generations;

the One who would reverse the curse of the Fall into Sin;

the One who would rebuild the broken link between earth and heaven,  
between this life and eternity.

The event has occurred.

And the ones who serve as God's agents of grace are folks that for all intents and purposes are stuck at the bottom of the social ladder.

Royalty is born in the presence of paupers.

Does it make sense? Can you understand why God the Father would choose to have very common, ordinary, socially limited, politically powerless, economically limited folk be guardians of His Son's nursery?

"What a special, miraculous thing," we exclaim. "How touching! God used such poor people. And invited equally poor guests - those shepherds, who had a choir invitation, no less."

But now stop. Was it **so** out of the ordinary that shepherds be the first to come? Any more out of the ordinary than if princes and kings had been the key players in Christ's birth?

Have you ever been in the mountains? If you have and you stand at the base, the top seems unreachable - huge, towering into the sky. The difference between you on the ground and one standing on the peak is immense.

However, if you fly over those mountains in a jet, suddenly it all looks different. The mountains seem to be but tiny little lumps on the ground. The top of the mountains and the base of the valley seem equally as distant to you in that plane, high overhead.

Mary and friends - the lowest in the valley of life.  
Kings, princes, powerbrokers of commerce -  
those on the mountain peak of life.

From our vantage point we say - "What a difference!"

From **GOD'S** vantage point he says, "they are the same."

That paupers are chosen to be the key

players in the Saviour's birth is so to make a divine point -

to show the rest of us what a great thing it is that God is doing in sending his son to become a human being - doing what is unthinkable to us!

Christmas is a stark event, so drastic, so extreme!

We need to see the lowest of the low placed in such a central role -

We need to be made to say, "Wow, God did **that** for **them**

We need that.....

....in order to realize what God did **for us**.

For you see, to come from heaven and become a child of a poor teen and her blue collar husband, to be greeted by shepherds

to have that happen is no greater a descent for the Son of God than to become one among princes or kings or power brokers of commerce.... **or us**.

The Great Descent from heaven to earth

God become human for poor and rich, weak and powerful, old and young, woman and man.

God become human for all.

Today is Christmas.

We believe that on this day God was born - God and humanity have been forever fused; inseparably linked in this one person. Christ has bridged the otherwise uncrossable gap between heaven and earth.

He has made the great descent, stooping low, oh so low

reaching down, all the way down, to Mary;

reaching equally far down to **us**.

Heaven has come to share with us the good moments of life

Heaven has come to join us in the struggles

Heaven has stooped to join in human life  
Heaven has come to join us all the way through the final  
    shadows of the valley of death.  
Heaven has come, never to leave!

Can you fathom the meaning of this?

As you think of the almost absurd fact documented in Luke 2 --- Mary, Joseph, a stable, manger, shepherds and angels -- as you think of that, consider how humanity as a whole was mired in the muck of a bungled existence, an existence stained by sin and destined to doom.

Consider how God did not merely watch from heaven, arms folded, shaking his head in amazement at our foolishness - or turning his back on us, not wanting to be seen in the same company as us.

No.

He rolled up his sleeves and came to this muck. He stepped in the middle of it to pick us out, to hold us, and finally one day to take us home.

That's the miracle of Christmas.

The baby whom Mary holds, whom shepherds behold, will one day, as Divine King, hold the believer - hold you and me - cradle us as we pass through death's door, and he will present us as a new life in heaven to his Father, our Father.

We are some 2000 years after this most wonderful of events. Much time has past. It is said that the passing of time is good, at least for hurting people -- "time heals." And it's true. Time tends to dull the pain. Unfortunately, time can **and does** dull more than pain. Time can also dull the sense of wonder and excitement at a marvelous thing.

When a beautiful painting is hung in the living room we admire it and give it special attention for the first while.

After a time, it doesn't have quite the attraction to us.  
Eventually we hardly even notice it anymore.

I wonder sometimes - could the same thing be said about the birth of our Saviour?

Could we have grown so used to year after year of saying "*Merry Christmas*" and singing "*Silent Night*" that we are no longer awe-struck by the weighty significance of it all?

*"Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord."*

Whoever you are - Christ has come..... **for you!**

Today we celebrate that.

God-become-human:

It overwhelmed Mary, and Joseph.

It grabbed so hold of the lowly shepherds that they dropped everything and ran to take part in this greatest event of all history. And then "*they returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*"

Now is the time for us to meet him.

It is Christmas.

It is a time to join our sister in faith, the mother of the Saviour, in joy and amazement and thanksgiving, around a manger.

To quote the angel -

*"Do not be afraid. I bring you - people of Ottawa -  
    good news  
    of **GREAT** joy*

*that will be for  
**all**  
the people."*

*"Glory to God in the highest,  
and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests!"*

Mary, Joseph & Shepherds  
You  
And me.

Joy to the world!  
**Your** Lord  
has come.

Receive Him!