

BETHLEHEM PLACE OF HUMILITY

Acknowledgement of source material - Rob Fuquay On the way to Bethlehem

Monday : The House of Bread



Luke 2 : 1 – 4 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David.

Bethlehem means house of bread

Bethlehem is located in the hill country right outside of Jerusalem. A mild climate and plentiful rainfall, ensure that the town's fields, orchards, and vineyards thrive into consistently bountiful harvests. The fertile land is probably why the area was first called Bethlehem or *Beit Lehem*, which means, "house of bread." In His divine sovereignty, God would later appoint this town as the birthplace of His Son who would declare, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty." (John 6:35)
Bible Study tools Annette Griffin
Contributing Writer

Bethlehem, God's place of choice for His only Son, Jesus to be born on this earth. A humble village, a place of people who tended the land, who lived simply and whose village had nothing remarkable to put it on the map. Humble people living ordinary lives unsuspecting that the greatest event in history was about to happen right in their midst.

"But you, Bethlehem, Ephrathah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to Me the One to be Ruler in Israel, whose goings forth are from of old, from everlasting." - Micah 5:2



Prayer: God would you open my eyes to the miracle of your great love. Would you keep me looking out for signs of your presence in every aspect of my daily life. Amen

323 words

Tuesday A humble stable



Luke 2 : 5 - 7 *He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. ⁶ While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, ⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

Joseph and Mary, probably exhausted by the long journey from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem in Judea, arrive in a little village to find that many other visitors have taken all the available accommodation.

Joseph approaches an inn (in those days anyone would offer travelers a bed in their home). The husband of the house shakes his head – no room, so sorry. I wonder, does he take a second look at Mary and seeing her condition offer the only thing he has – accommodation in the stable with the animals already settled in for the night. Perhaps his wife came to the door and took pity on the couple. We will

never know how the decision was made to offer them the stable, messy and uncomfortable BUT we will always remember that place, the offer of hospitality however inconvenient, and the innkeeper who said “yes”. For the Son of God who was born that night, no place was too humble.

For reflection What about us? Are our hearts ready to welcome the King of Glory to come in? Perhaps we feel that there are areas that are too messy, too dark, too complicated. The stable was messy, dark and inhabited by animals and yet Jesus came to earth in there.



Prayer: Jesus, there is no place you would not go in search of those You came to save. Give me courage to allow You in, Amen

310 words

Wednesday A messy place



Luke 2: 6 – 7 *While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born,⁷ and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.*

The only glory Mary received on Christmas night was surviving the delivery. She nor Joseph received an ecstatic vision or heavenly display. For them, the first Christmas up to that point probably involved more questions and uncertainty than it did faith. I can imagine Mary, after giving birth, being physically and emotionally exhausted. Seeing her son lying on a bed of straw, not in a home, not on a bed, not aided by loved ones or a midwife, I can picture her breaking into tears. She and Joseph both could have wondered, “Did we get something wrong? We both heard from angels. We have been obedient. So, what are we doing here? If this is God’s Son, why wouldn’t God have looked after

us better? Have we been abandoned?” Acknowledgement
Rob Fuquay

Sometime during our lives most of us have asked similar questions of God. Did I hear you correctly? Why am I in this messy situation? Why are things not the way I expected them to be?

Common questions, not always easy to answer, and yet one thing is certain – wherever you are at present, God is there too. Sometimes we look in the wrong place for answers, Often God surprises us in the way He brings us through our difficulties. Never give up. God will never give up on you.



Dear Jesus, you were born in a messy stable, a place we would consider most unsuitable. Our world is messy, it’s violent and unpredictable yet you come to live with us and rescue us from our sin.
Thank you. Amen

Thursday Ordinary people



Luke 2: 8 - 12 *And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."*

Ordinary people. People who spent their lives in the fields, often caring for other people's sheep. Ordinary people, not wealthy, not well educated, not the people we would expect God to use to proclaim the birth of the King of Kings. Yet God chose these humble shepherds. Shepherds who were out in the field, suddenly surprised by the appearance of angels. It is doubtful that they were studying the stars while they tended their sheep. They were probably just hoping for a peaceful night. But all of a sudden the air around them was full of light-angels announcing the birth of the Christ child! They were terrified but

as they listened to the good news their response was immediate. They went with haste to Bethlehem.

Ordinary people living ordinary lives- yet God used them to bring this wonderful message to Mary and Joseph in the stable.

For reflection: Ordinary people like you and me. God can use us to share His love during this Christmas season. Who will you share the good news with today?



Prayer: God show me where I can share Your love today. Use the gifts that you have given me to speak words of encouragement, hope and peace. Amen

Friday: Mary did you know?



Luke 2: 15 - 20 *When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about." So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. **But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.** The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.*

Mary and Joseph with the brand new baby Jesus. A messy stable, noisy animals - and then, shepherds arrive, telling of the visitation and message of the angels, confirming to Mary and Joseph that this was indeed the Christ, the long awaited Messiah, the Redeemer and Saviour of the world. Humble shepherds delivering the most amazing message ever given. And Mary treasured these words and pondered them in her heart.

Mary, Did You Know?

Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would one day walk on water?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy
Would save our sons and daughters?

Did you know that your baby boy
Has come to make you new?

This child that you delivered, will
soon deliver you

Mary, did you know that your baby boy;
Will give sight to a blind man?
Mary, did you know that your baby boy;
Will calm the storm with his hand?

Did you know that your baby boy
Has walked where angels trod?

When you kiss your little baby

You kiss the face of God

Mary, did you know?

*Songwriters: Mark Lowry, Buddy Greene
Song by Pentatonix*



Prayer: Thank you Jesus that you came . Amen