



“Unwrapped” | Christmas Kindness: Tied With Love Not Strings

Luke 2:8-12

Have you ever swaddled a baby?→Why was a swaddled Jesus a sign?

In the ultimate act of kindness towards humanity, God shows up. The “good news” of Jesus’ birth, announced to the shepherds, marked the beginning of God’s restoration plan. Jesus would grow up to live a perfect life and lead a ministry of healing, deliverance, & life giving teaching. The pinnacle of God’s plan? The crescendo of that swaddled baby’s life? A cross. Friends, there can be no Christmas, without a cross. It all leads to the cross.

Luke 2:8-12: *8 That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. 9 Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord’s glory surrounded them. They were terrified, 10 but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. 11 The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! 12 And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger.”*

God shows up with a plan.

- At the RFKC Christmas, I told the kids that the way i’ve known someone REALLY loves me, is if they show up.
- ...but he shows up as a baby!→The Angels have to reinforce the plan with a “sign.”→Strips of cloth/manger!
- **God’s love was wrapped in strips of cloth & laid in a manger. But it doesn’t stay that way!**

God’s plan for our lives is Jesus.

- Jesus, God in the flesh, was a born a baby...just like each and everyone of us. But where we have failed, He lived a morally perfect life...fulfilling all the Laws of Scripture.
- Jesus would show us the way HOME.

God’s plan for Jesus was to die.

- These hills in Bethlehem likely produced the Paschal lambs for Passover, when God “passed over.”
 - **John 1:29** - *“The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, ‘Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!’”*
 - **1 Peter 1:19-20** - *“It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but he has now revealed him to you in these last days.”*
 - **God’s love was wrapped in strips of cloth & laid in a tomb. But it doesn’t stay that way!**
 - But after 3 days...the Angels again had good news.→**A gift...is not meant to stay wrapped!**
- **God’s plan for Jesus was to die & be resurrected...so we can die & be resurrected.**
- **1 Corinthians 11:23-26** - *“For I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took some bread and gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces and said, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this to remember me.’ In the same way, he took the cup of wine after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant between God and his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it.’ For every time you eat this bread and drink this cup, you are announcing the Lord’s death until he comes again.”*

→**God’s love was wrapped in strips of cloth but it doesn’t stay that way!**

TALK ABOUT IT - Questions to GROW through with family, friends, & myself.

1. How has God shown up in my life? Where have I experienced His love and kindness in my story?
2. How does Christmas reveal God’s ultimate act of kindness and love toward humanity?
3. Was there a connection to baby Jesus wrapped in strips of cloth and laid in a manger to the paschal lambs?
4. Have I received the free gift of salvation, Jesus’ forgiveness, & Lordship over my life? If not, WHY NOT?!
5. **PRAYER:** “Father, save me from my sins and help me to follow Jesus the rest of my life!”

QUOTES / SONGS:

- "For it is good to be children sometimes, and never better than at Christmas, when its mighty Founder was a child Himself." - **Charles Dickens**
- "Kindness is a gift everyone can afford to give." - **Unknown**
- "In a 2018 Lifeway Research study, 65% of Americans said Christmas should be more about Jesus. While 2 in 3 may want more Christ in Christmas, most couldn't give you all the details of Jesus' birth story. Slightly more than 1 in 5 Americans (22%) say they could accurately tell the Christmas story found in the Bible from memory. A plurality of U.S. adults (31%) say they could tell the story but may miss some details or get others wrong. Another quarter (25%) could only give a quick overview and 17% say they couldn't tell any of it." - **Aaron Earls**
- "We preach not one advent only of Christ, but a second also, far more glorious than the former ... For all things, for the most part, are twofold in our Lord Jesus Christ: a twofold generation; one, of God, before the ages; and one, of a Virgin, at the close of the ages: His descents twofold; one, the unobserved, like rain on a fleece; and a second His open coming, which is to be. In His former advent, He was wrapped in swaddling clothes in the manger; in His second, He covers Himself with light as with a garment." - **Cyril of Jerusalem**, 4th century, commenting on Daniel.

ARTICLES:

- "The Parable of the Birds" - <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/paulharveychristmasparable.htm>

SCRIPTURES: New Living Translation unless otherwise noted.

- **Micah 5:2** - "But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf."
- **Romans 2:4-5** - 4 Don't you see how wonderfully **kind**, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his **kindness** is intended to turn you from your sin? 5 But because you are stubborn and refuse to turn from your sin, you are storing up terrible punishment for yourself. For a day of anger is coming, when God's righteous judgment will be revealed.
- **1 Peter 1:18-20** - "For you know that God paid a ransom to save you from the empty life you inherited from your ancestors. And the ransom he paid was not mere gold or silver. It was the precious blood of Christ, the sinless, spotless Lamb of God. God chose him as your ransom long before the world began, but he has now revealed him to you in these last days."
- **John 1:29** - "The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, 'Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

THE ROMANS ROAD:

- **Romans 3:23**: "For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God's glorious standard."
- **Romans 6:23**: "For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord."
- **Romans 5:8**: "But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners."
- **Romans 10:9**: "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved."
- **Romans 10:13**: "For 'Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

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