



Luke 2:1-20

God came to stay and brought us the gift of love.

⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn. ^[c]

Text Message:

- o I'm glad the ESV uses the words "swaddling cloths."
- o This practice of swaddling babies goes as far back as 4,000 BC and even today 1 in 5 babies in the UK are swaddled.

- o It's easy to dismiss the importance of Jesus' swaddling cloths and I'm not talking about the health benefits associated with it.
- o The reference to swaddling a baby appears only one other time in all the Bible in the book of Ezekiel.
- o From Ezekiel, for a baby to be swaddled is to be loved.
- o Tonight, we remind ourselves that when God came to stay on planet earth through His Son, this was not in the apathetic way we sometimes regift or buy gifts out of obligation, but a surrender of His very Godself... because love is costly.
- o At Jesus' baptism, the words "You are my beloved Son" from above would echo across the waters of the Jordan River.
- o Jesus was God's beloved Son, and love personified.
- o And the purpose of this was not simply that we would believe in and receive His Son, but to make it our lifelong mission to demonstrate His love to the world.
- o Maybe tonight you're not "feeling the love." The best advice I can give is do what Jesus did: Embody love to another and to a world in need.

God came to stay and brought us the gift of joy.

Verse 10:

Text Message:

- o The last verse of the story tells us: "... the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen..."
- o The shepherds returned and **let loose**, glorifying and praising God for everything they had heard and seen.

THE MESSAGE

- o Earlier in this series, we saw how Mary and Elizabeth felt joy, as the baby in Elizabeth's womb leaped for joy.
- o We saw then the importance of making space for joy and being around people of joy. The shepherds had joy with one another. I pray this service, this space you've set apart, you would experience joy!

God came to stay and brought us the gift of peace.

Verses 13-14:

Text Message:

- o Peace is more than a feeling; it's a person! Jesus is Peace!
- o It's not superfluous Luke mentions Caesar Augustus in the backdrop of the story. In the Roman world in which Jesus was born, Caesar brought peace, albeit with calvary and bloodshed to any who would resist his narrative.
- o You see, Caesar brought peace that the world gives.
- o Jesus gives us peace of a different sort; a peace that is present even when we don't have all the "pieces," or as in the case of Augustus, another seems to hold the pieces!

God came to stay and brought us the gift of hope.

Verse 11:

Text Message:

- o This is the central verse of the story; what Christmas is about!
- o The words "unto you" sound a bit odd; they weren't the parents of the baby! Yet this baby and the hope He brings to the world is for all who would receive him as Savior and Lord.

o And the gifts that God gave us in Christ: Hope, Peace, Joy and Love are gifts given to anyone who would follow Him as Savior and Lord.