

# The Original Christmas Miracle

12-14-22

## 3. The Miracle of the Method

### I. Announce:

A. Slide1,2 CK Christmas. Christmas Eve & Day.

B. Prayer: Lord, forgive us for trying to fit You into *a neat, a little box*. Lord we confess our *frustration* and *confusion* by the things that happen in our lives. Lord, we reminder ourselves You **love us**. Are at work **in us**. You are good. And it is all for **Your glory**.

### II. Slide3 Intro: The Miracle of the Method

A. We've been looking at *The Original Christmas Miracle*. (4 parts)

1. The Miracle of the **Moment** (fullness of time, Gal.4). The Miracle of the **Message** (Jesus, Heb.1). **The Miracle of the Method** (tonight). The Miracle of the **Manger** (next week).

B. **The Miracle of the Method** - we'll break up into **3 parts**:

1. God's Methods **Transcend Us**. God's Methods **Include Us**. God's Methods **Sanctify Us**.

### III. Slide4a **GOD'S METHODS TRANSCEND US** (Romans 11:30-36) *esp.33*

A. Part of the miracle of Christmas is *the Miracle of His Method*. And God's methods are *beyond our comprehension*. Which takes us to our text in **Rom.11:30-36**.

1. Here is the **appropriate finale** of the *doctrinal portion* of Romans ... a Doxology (hymn of praise)

B. (32) **Who but God** could have conceived a plan that would turn **disobedience** into an occasion for **mercy**, reaching out universally to all who would believe?<sup>1</sup>

1. Dwight Pentecost referred to **mercy** as, **God's ministry to the miserable**.
2. God's **mercy** is His *Active Compassion*.

<sup>1</sup> Shepherd's Notes, pg.67.

3. Only a God of such **unsearchable mercy** would have reached **so low to lift them so high.**<sup>2</sup> Swindoll

C. **Consigned all** – bound, shut them up. Here Paul uses it in the figure of a **prison**.

1. Our **disobedience** that has locked us in a **spiritual prison** ... in which there is **no possibility of escape** ... **until God's mercy** springs the prisons lock.

D. (33) He praises God's knowledge & wisdom, **yet** while at the same time saying they are **beyond human understanding**.

1. It's unwise to **fathom the unfathomable or unscrew the inscrutable** (imp to understand).

E. **Depth** – Things that are hidden in **deep mystery**, **so deep** that no human knowledge will ever reach it.

F. **Unsearchable & Inscrutable** (past *finding* out & beyond *tracing* out)

1. **Both are hunting terms.**

2. **Unsearchable** = indicates an animal that is **untrackable**.

3. **Unfathomable** = describes one that is **untraceable**.

a) **We can't track God's thoughts**. And even if you could, it would probably be so foreign to us, that we wouldn't even recognize them.

4. When it comes to the Christmas story **or** Jesus' 1st advent, God's methods are **beyond our understanding**.

a) **He came into the world as a helpless, defenseless baby**. The place, a small **insignificant** village. He chose **2 young inexperienced** teenagers to parent Him, who also were just **plain, ordinary, obscure** individuals.

He chose **untrustworthy** shepherds as his promotional committee. And on top of that, the few **directionally challenged** foreigners to bring him **strange** baby gifts. [is that how you would have wrote the script?]

b) **Slide4b** Is.55:8,9 **My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts, says the Lord. And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine. 9 For just as the**

<sup>2</sup> Chuck Swindoll, pg.107.

*heavens are higher than the earth, so my ways are higher than your ways and my thoughts higher than your thoughts.*

c) In Genesis, God chose, **Joseph**, whom all of his brothers hated, to become **the savior of his family**. God chose **Israel**, the least significant nation, to be *a special people*. He chose **David** the shepherd boy, and not any of his older brothers to become *the king of Israel*.

5. **Are you picking up on any patterns here?** Over and over again, *God chose plain, ordinary people, through whom He could do His extraordinary work.*

G. (34,35) **3 Questions that don't need answers:**

1. Can anyone **explain** God? Anyone smart enough to **tell Him what to do?** Has anyone done God such a big favor that **God owes them** now?

H. We cannot explain all the purposes & plans of God, **but** we can **worship & praise Him** for who He is.

I. **Slide5** (36) **From Him** – He is the **source** (or, *Origin*)

1. It is **God** who **set everything into motion** **by** His creative Word.

J. **Through Him** – He is the **agent** (or, *Channel*)

1. Everything that exists is **sustained & directed** by Him.

K. **To Him** – He is the **goal** (or, *Destiny*)

1. All things consist for **His Glory!**

L. The end result of all bible study (studying doctrines) is **Worship!**

#### **IV. Slide6a GOD'S METHODS INCLUDE US**

A. **Sticking with our Christmas story** - God sends **angels** to announce the news of Jesus's birth ... **but** *who do they go share this wonderful news with?* That's right **shepherds**.

1. **Not** kings and queens, **not even** the religious leaders **or** military leaders.

2. God chose to make His *grand announcement* to simple **shepherds**.

B. Slide6b God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. *But Why?*

C. Paul said in 1 Cor.1:26-29 *Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. 27 Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. 28 God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important. 29 As a result, no one can ever boast in the presence of God.*

1. Think about not only his birth story (M/J, Shep, Bethlehem) but his life story (disciples whom He chose) & the Res story (women).

## V. Slide7a GOD'S METHODS SANCTIFY US

A. There's one last aspect of this miracle of the method that we need to understand.

1. Gods at work in our lives in ways that we *don't & cannot* fully comprehend
2. It's in this area of sanctification / *being made holy*.
3. If we wrote the script for our holiness, I doubt if we'd add any **problems** to our lives.

B. Slide7b Problems, Pain, and Pressures! (add: struggles, sickness, temptation, failures)

1. But there are many *victories and celebrations*, accompanied by *defeat and despair*.
2. Of course, I *can't* tell you why certain things have happened *or* are happening in your life. *But I can promise you*, you are not left to *despair*.
  - a) You can **trust** that God is at work *in your life* and *for your good*.
3. Rom.8:28 *And we know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.*

C. **Slide7c Illus: Butterfly & Cocoon.** You must allow the butterfly to *struggle* on its way out, otherwise there will be no growth or development (forcing fluid into wings so not stunted).

D. **Illus: Oak Tree grain.** (high winds stronger, called *reaction wood or stress wood*)

E. God's at work in our lives in ways that we *don't & cannot* fully comprehend.

1. In the Christmas story ... **Mary** couldn't have predicted all that her revelation would mean for her life. **Joseph** had no idea what would be involved, but responded obediently to everything (not to divorce Mary, called his name Jesus, listened to the angel to go to Egypt & to return).
  - a) But they also experienced the miracle of seeing *God become flesh* right before their eyes. They saw God!

F. **Slide8** God is at work in our lives to produce a beautiful *tapestry*.

1. From our perspective **here on earth**, we only see the back of the embroidery. It's the front that reveals a beautiful picture.
2. Stop judging life by **the underneath side**, wondering why sometimes it looks *so ugly, so confusing, so many knots, such randomness*.
3. **One day**, we will finally be able to see it from **the top side**, this tapestry God has been weaving **of us**.
4. **One day**, we will be able to see how that **seasons of pain** brought some *rich, vibrant colors* to our tapestry!

G. **Continue to trust God** even when you don't understand. **Continue to follow Him** when the way seems dark. **Remember**, in *the miracle of His method*, *God uses ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things*, for the sake of **His kingdom**.

H. Keywords: miracle, sanctify, temptation.