

The Lakeside



Message in a bottle

Verse of the day for Monday December 25, 2023 - Luke 2: 11-12

11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

Read Luke 2 for meditation and inspiration.



FOURTH WEEK IN ADVENT

Dear Lakesiders and friends,

Every Christmas, the parents of three grown children divided their holiday celebrations among the three different families. But with the difficulties involved in holiday preparation and extensive travel, sometimes they were tempted to throw up their hands and say, "It's too much! It's just not worth the effort." Whenever either of the parents got that feeling of exasperation, they would give the other a wink and say, "Long walk, dear, long walk," and laugh as they continued their holiday plans.

You see, "Long walk" was a code phrase. They began using it after hearing an old story about a young native boy who gave his missionary teacher an exquisite seashell as a Christmas gift. The boy had to walk miles to a particular bay which was the only place where such shells existed. "How wonderful of you to have traveled so far for this present," the teacher said. The boy's eyes lit up as he replied, "Long walk is part of the gift." For the missionary teacher, this was a gift of infinite value that no other could ever surpass.

John's powerful description of the gift of the Incarnation Event is unsurpassed. It is the gift of the infinite God who comes to us and reveals Himself to us in the Person of a tiny, vulnerable human Child. "In Him was life and the life was the Light of men". John is telling us that in and through the Lord Jesus, God has made it possible for us to experience His Power and Love in the depths of our existence so that we may have fullness of life. But did you notice the unexpected turn John makes in the middle of his description? Turning from this scheme of grace and light and life, John suddenly says, "To His own, He came, yet His own did not accept Him". Then just as unexpectedly, John returns once again to the theme of Grace, saying, "The word was made flesh, he lived among us, and we have seen His glory. The

glory of an only Son coming from the Father, filled with enduring love". John is emphasizing the miracle of the persistence of God's Grace. Despite the rejection, He keeps coming; He keeps returning. He keeps trying to break through to offer us His love despite the resistance. And, as John says, to those who finally say "Yes," -- those who receive Him -- "He empowers to become the children of God". No more beautiful or important Christmas story has ever been written.

Once upon a Christmas Eve, a man sat in reflective silence before the fireplace, pondering the meaning of Christmas. "There is no point to a God who becomes man," he mused. "Why would an all-powerful God want to share even one of His precious moments with the likes of man? And even if He did, why would He choose to be born in an animal stall? No way! The whole thing is absurd! I'm sure that if God really wanted to come down to earth, He would have chosen some other way." Suddenly, the man was roused from his reverie by a strange sound outside. He went to the window and saw a small gaggle of blue geese frantically honking and aimlessly flopping about in the snow. They seemed dazed and confused. Apparently, they had dropped out in exhaustion from the flight formations of a larger flock on its way from the Arctic Islands to the warmer climes of the Gulf of Mexico. Moved to compassion, the man tried to "shoo" the poor geese into his warm garage, but the more he "shooed" the more they panicked. "If they only realized I'm only trying to do what's best for them," he thought to himself. "How can I make them understand my concern for their well-being?" Then, this thought came to him: "If for just a minute, I could become one of them, an ordinary goose, and communicate with them in their own language, they would know what I am trying to do." And suddenly ... suddenly, he remembered Christmas and a smile came over his face. Suddenly, the Christmas story no longer seemed absurd. Suddenly, he pictured that ordinary-looking infant, lying in the manger, in that stable in Bethlehem, and he knew the answer to his Christmas problem: God had become one of us to tell us that He loves us.

God became one of us in Jesus –
to rescue and to save us.

In the 'Christmas Miracle,'



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Thanks to Dad Hengeveld (See Luke 2:1-16)

12-20-2001

SORRY FOLKS, WE'RE BOOKED SOLID ... GOD
HIMSELF COULDN'T GET A ROOM HERE TONIGHT



Thanks to John Michael Sullivan (See Luke 2:1-16) 12-23-2005

AT LEAST WE CAN SAY THAT HE WAS BROUGHT UP IN A STABLE HOME

THE RECTOR DROPS IN ON THE PAGEANT REHEARSAL

