

Tuesday, December 24, 2019  
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Luke 2:1-7

*Wonder and Awe*

It's the familiar story—the one we read every year, tell the same way every year, the birth of Jesus. While in Bethlehem for the census, the time came for Mary to deliver her child, she gave birth to the baby Jesus and laid him in a manger. We know this story. Most of us have heard some version of it since we were little. We could probably recite most of it in our sleep because that's how well we know it. We're comfortable with the story. We like the story. It reassures us.

But in knowing something so well; in being so comfortable with something; we can lose sight of the true impact of the story—the true impact of what is happening in these seven short verses from the gospel of Luke. For it's a very simple scene, Mary and Joseph, the delivery of the baby, the care for the baby. All of us who've cared for babies know how much attention and energy they take as infants—this is what Mary and Joseph and anyone around them would be focused on.

Yet in this very simple scene, in being focused on the baby, something miraculous has happened; something so significant that it had never happened before and hasn't happened since—God, our Creator, came to earth, took on human skin and became one of us. This is something we say all the time. As followers of Christ we talk often about the incarnation. But how often do we step back and settle into the amazement—the wonder—of what we're saying?

Think about this for a moment—consider it as if you've never heard the story of the birth of Jesus before—you know nothing of the incarnation, of God with us here on earth. And you come to celebrate Christmas Eve and you hear this story, the story of the God of the universe, the Creator of all that is, came to be born as a baby! It's unthinkable! It's unfathomable! No one

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wants to be a baby—completely dependent on others. And yet, this is exactly what God has done! Come to earth in a way that makes God fully dependent on others. What a wonderful thing! What a great gift! What an awesome event that we're invited to marvel at!

Sometimes we get so caught up in the facts or what we think we know that we forget to just sit with the wonder and awe and mystery of the great thing God has done. You know those moments—perhaps when you first see your child, or see a spectacular sunset or sunrise, or see some other miracle or thing that takes your breath away—and you just pause in the wonder and awe of it all. That's what I invite you to do this night. As we continue in this service, as we ask in amazement what child is this? and as we wander through the night, may we bask in the wonder and awe that is this holy night! May we rejoice in the miracle of what God has done—God took on flesh to repair the relationship we as humans have with God! God came to be here on earth with us!

This is a night of wonder! This is a night of awe! This is a night to stand in amazement of what God did for each us! Let us rejoice in the miracle that is the birth of Jesus! Let us celebrate Emmanuel—God with us! For as we'll hear at the end of the service, “the true light, Jesus the Christ, who enlightens everyone, came into the world and lived among us, so we might become children of God” (John 1:9, 14, 12). May we let go of the logic, stop trying to make everything make sense, and rejoice in the wonder and awe of who God is and what God has done! Friends, what child is this? This is Christ the King! Thanks be to God!

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