

Love Reaches! Part 10: "Love Reached!"

The Christmas Compendium!

Now the birth of Jesus began like this... When the fullness of the time had come, God sent His son to be born of a woman... She was a young girl named Mary who was engaged to a man named Joseph. An angel appeared to her saying, "You have been chosen by God for a great blessing!" When she saw and heard him she was troubled, and wondered what was coming next! "Don't worry Mary, you are the favored one of God... you are going to conceive and have a son... and you will call His name Jesus! People will say, "Unto us a child is born, a son is given," and He will rule – His name will be Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of peace, and of His kingdom and peace there will be no end, forever. Yes, He is going to be great and will be called the Son of God and God is going to give Him the throne of His ancestor David and He will rule over the house of Jacob forever and of His kingdom there will be no end..." "How can this be true since I am a virgin?" And the angel said, "the Holy Spirit will overshadow you and you will conceive the One who will be called the Son of God!" At that Mary said, "Let it be just as you have said!" Now when Joseph heard that Mary was pregnant he determined to break things off. Because he loved her and didn't want her to be publicly exposed or put at risk he had decided to do it privately, quietly! While he was still thinking how this could best be done, he dozed off. Immediately an angel appeared to him in a dream saying, "Joseph, heir of David, don't hesitate to take Mary as your wife. She hasn't sinned. The seed in her womb was placed by the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son that you will name Jesus for He will save His people from their sins..." All of this was right in line with Isaiah's prophecy, "a virgin will conceive and birth a son and they will call Him Emmanuel, God with us!" Then Joseph waking up did what

the angel from the Lord had told him; the wedding was back on and they became husband and wife...! There was a lot of activity during this same time! Wise men from the east saw a star at its rising and interpreting it as a sign of the birth of the great Messiah, they followed the star to Jerusalem. There they made inquiry about the new king's birth and were directed to Bethlehem. Because it was also the year of a national census and taxation, Joseph & a very pregnant Mary were making their way south from Nazareth of Galilee to Joseph's hometown of Bethlehem! While they were there she gave birth to her firstborn son, wrapping him up tightly because she had Him in an outdoor manger. There were shepherds in nearby fields watching over their flocks. At His birth an angel showed up, the area around them lit up with the glory of God and they were afraid! The angel said, "Fear not, I proclaim good things, joyful things for all people to hear... the Savior you have been waiting for has been born in the City of David and this is how you will know you've found the right one, he will be wrapped up tightly, laying in a manger..." And suddenly they saw their angel surrounded by multitudes of heavenly angels praising God and saying, 'Glory to God in the highest places and on earth, peace to men of good will!' As the vision faded away the shepherds said, "let's go see if what we have been told is true!" And when they found Him, just like the angel said, they went and told everyone they could find about the baby! And everyone who heard it was filled with wonder. Right about this time the Wise Men from the East found Him in His mother's arms and they came and fell down and worshipped and gave Him gifts! But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart! At His dedication in the Temple a very old man named Simeon, who had the promise that he would not die without seeing the Lord's Christ, saw Jesus and took Him up in his arms saying, "Now I can die, I have seen with my own eyes, the salvation of God..." And Joseph and Mary both marveled at what was being said. And Anna, a prophetess who prayed and fasted day and night, came and said the same things about Jesus being the Redeemer! Then Joseph, warned in another dream that Herod would try to kill Jesus, took the child and His mother to Egypt and was there until the wicked king died. In another dream he was instructed to return and settle in Nazareth, fulfilling the prophecy that He would be called a Nazarene... and this is the story we have to tell, from house to house, to every human being in our city, state, nation and to the ends of the whole world, "That God so loved the world that He gave us His precious Son, that whoever would believe in Him would not perish but have an everlasting life with God... this is the story we hold as truth that this baby born in the manger is the Christ, the Savior who came and died for our sins and the King Returning to gather together those who believe!

**That story and glory of God's love reaching down to us is received with gladness but told in resistance! That glad tidings of great joy for all men is not always self-evident and immediately embraced! And it requires love reaching and patience enduring and sometimes suffering to deliver it to those who need to hear!
Is He worth it?**

The Stories of Three... The Servant...

"Gather up all the food and take it to them..." "It's freezing outside... there are wolves on the trail... I'll never make it back!" "You don't have to make it back, you only have to go!" *Even if there is no clarity of how, why... you only have to go!*

The Sufferers... "imprisoned, beaten, starved, cold and alone..." "Why haven't you written books?" "Why haven't you made a big deal about the sun coming up in the east?" *"It's the way things are... suffering for the sake of the gospel is just a normal part of true faith!"*

The Survivors... Momma was crying so I knew something was wrong. Papa put his arms around us and said, You know I am the pastor of the church and it's what God called me to do, to tell others about Him. I have learned that I will soon be arrested to stop me from preaching about Jesus, but I can't stop, I must obey God. I will miss you very much and I will trust God to care for you while I'm gone (he hugged each one of us)... the authorities are demanding that believers deny their faith and sometimes when they refuse they are killing whole families. I don't want that to happen to our family so I am praying that once they put me in prison they will leave you and your mother alone... HOWEVER... If I am in prison and I hear that my wife and children have died rather than denying Jesus, I will be the most proud man in that prison!"

Are we so certain of the story that we are willing to live to glorify Him on the earth? Then we have taken part in the greatest story ever told to mankind... the story of "love reaching!"