

December 19, 2021

Texts: Micah 5: 2-5a; Luke 1:39-45

Title: “Mary’s Message to Us”

Do you have a Christmas wish this year? Do you have one? My favorite Christmas song is “Grown Up Christmas List” by Amy Grant. What’s on her list? Things like peace, joy, no more wars, and the healing of our hearts. It’s really a beautiful song. I get chills every time I hear it. I guess those are my wishes. Maybe they are your wishes also.

But children, have a simpler world, thank God, we’re in no hurry to educate them on the trials and problems of our world. Kids are still writing their letters to Santa and trying to convince him that they’ve been good this year. Maybe you noticed that we had a mailbox here in town for letters to Santa this year. I’d like to share a few that I came across with you.

Dear Santa Claus, when you come to my house there will be cookies for you. But if you are real hungry you can use our phone and order a pizza to go. Dear Santa, I want a Puppy. I want a playhouse. Thank you. I’ve been good most of the time. Sometimes I’m wild. This one’s from a four-year-old: Dear Santa, I’ll take anything because I haven’t been *that* good. Honesty.

I’ve got some good news for you this morning. It doesn’t matter if you haven’t been that good this year. Jesus still came for you! The Christmas story is the most amazing story ever written. The young bride-to-be of Joseph knew that God was at work in her life. Her cousin Elizabeth knew, too. She greeted Mary with a blessing. “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your

womb...”

We often read Luke chapter two at Christmas, but we really should read chapter one also. I call it the long version of Jesus’ birth, chapters 1 and 2. Our confirmands are going to discuss it today. I recommend that you read it too. And reflect on the lessons that this young woman named Mary, wise beyond her years learned. And if she were with us today, what would her message to us be?

I think the first lesson she would share with us is that God is working in the small things of the universe. Small things, like a baby. Almighty God, creator of the universe, set aside His own majesty and authority to be born as a tiny baby to a poor young couple. He could have come as a warrior or a king. But instead, God came as a poor and helpless baby to show us what? He loves us! He loves us enough to enter into our daily lives.

It’s easy to miss the joy of Christmas because we are looking for the big moment, the big gift, the big decorations and lights and all the hoopla. But the actual Christmas story is almost entirely composed of little, private moments of joy when angels shared the message of the coming Messiah with humble, poor, nobodies like the shepherds. Or you and me.

That’s when we see God most clearly, when His light and hope shine through humble people and simple acts of love. And God stands ready to use you and me to do just that; to share His joy and hope and love to others. God’s working, often in the small things.

Another lesson that Mary might share with us is God is working in difficult

circumstances. Read through the Bible and you will see that God never chooses the easiest path to get things done.

Jesus was born to a young couple who hadn't even been consummated their marriage yet. Don't you think Mary and Joseph's family and friends and neighbors wondered and worried and gossiped about her premature pregnancy? And Jesus was born during the reign of King Herod, a ruthless kind of guy who was willing to kill all the infant boys in the region to get rid of any competition. What was God's logic in sending the Christ Child, the Messiah, to these people and this place at this time? Why doesn't God just choose an easier path for accomplishing His will? Because, according to God's word, God's light shines brightest in the darkness, God's power is greatest in our weakness, and God's grace shows up when we least expect it. I don't know about you that's the story of my life and I'll bet that a few of you found Christ when things were really bad.

Kaitlyn De Jesus was diagnosed with autism at age three. The neurologist told her mother that she'd never be able to speak. Mom refused to accept their diagnosis. By her teens, Kaitlyn could speak one or two words at a time with visual prompts. But that was the extent of her verbal expression—until two years ago. A neighbor on Kaitlyn's street, Don Weaver, decorates his yard every Christmas with a musical light display consisting of 200,000 lights. Kaitlyn and her mother visit every night of the Christmas season. Weaver even puts out a special chair for Kaitlyn.

During the 2019 Christmas season, as Kaitlyn and her mom were enjoying the

light display, Kaitlyn suddenly got up from her chair and said, “Mom! Look at the blue lights. Look at the snowmen. Santa’s coming!” Don Weaver and the other neighbors there were in shock. It was the first time any of them had heard her speak! Her mothers says, “At Mr. Weaver’s house she comes to life...If only Christmas could be around all year.”

God works in the small things of the world, and also in the difficult circumstances of life as He did in Kaitlyn’s life. **And finally, I think Mary would share with us is God is working in everyone who opens their heart to Him.** Isn’t it amazing that God, the Almighty, the Creator of the universe, never forces anyone to accept Him? He sent an angel to speak to Mary and Joseph ahead of time. He came in the most unlikely manner to the most unlikely people at the most unlikely time so that we wouldn’t be overwhelmed by His power but overjoyed by His love.

What about you? Have you opened your heart to the working of God? Are you ready to welcome Jesus, the Messiah, this Christmas? If so, you can discover the overwhelming joy of Christmas in your own life as well. Amen.