

“Hope Found in Humble Places”

Hope Incarnate (Pt. 2)

December 10, 2017

INTRO – it can often seem that our particular circumstances or setting of life,
simply Cannot Get us Where we want to be in life or Cannot Make us who we
Hope to Be! ...We don't have Enough Resources ...We don't know The Right
People ...This isn't the Right Timing

...How Can We Find HOPE in Such HUMBLE Circumstances?

Philippians 2:5-8 Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, ⁶ who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, ⁷ but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. ⁸ Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.

...Have this attitude & approach in yourselves—for it is the attitude & approach that Jesus had ...it was an unshakable Hope in God, even in the most Humble of Circumstances and Conditions!

Take NOTE: The Most Important, Fulfilling, Purposeful, Meaningful, Unrestricted Life ever lived—came forth out of the most Humble of Settings, Circumstances, and Postures!!

...God is going to script the ultimate human existence to meet the ultimate human need—and it is going to seem Strange to Us!

Passages Describing the Humble Elements & Settings of the Incarnation

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Matthew 2:4-6 and assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. ⁵ They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet:
⁶ "And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

Luke 2:6-14 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.
⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger." ¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,
¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

What all these familiar 'Christmas Story' passages have in common is that they Strangely describe the rather 'Humble beginnings/settings' from which our Hope arises!

"Everything connected with this birth was humble and poor. It seems to have been an especial design of divine providence to teach us, from this circumstance, how sunken and degraded were the whole of humanity. Mankind universally were so bad, that what was reckoned best by themselves, was in reality the worst. ...Few of the great men of the earth possessed earnestness or humility, or any other quality which God would approve. Princes, priests and doctors, were too high in station to be related to him who was to make the last first, and the first last. And even though, here and there, a Zacharias, a Nicodemus, or a Saul might be found, they were too much entangled with the vicious systems to which they belonged. ...Nothing could possibly convey a more striking rebuke of the complicated evils affecting mankind, than the favor thus shown by God to a poor family, settled in a village of no consideration in one of the most obscure provinces of the

civilized world. ... The virgin took up her abode in a stable; where, cradled in a manger, with the litter of cattle for a bed, the baby was born, who was to reform every social institution, change the face of the earth, and through whose working, human wills should be recovered to the divine will, and the image of God restored to sinful flesh.”
William Henry Johnstone, “The Image of the Invisible”, p. 14 (Chaplain in Church of England, 1856)

Observations of the Humble Setting from Which our Great Hope was Birthed:

(1) A little minority, 'non-empire' race of people who are living under the shadow of the powers of the age!—How STRANGE!!

Matt 2:6 “And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

- o **Bethlehem** ...needs to be told it is ‘not the least’

“Observe here that when the Son of God was born into the world, it was in a very lowly village, the village of Bethlehem. Very naturally, the wise men supposed that “the King of the Jews” would be born in the palace, in the metropolis of the country, at Jerusalem. But it pleased the Lord that everything about Christ's birth should have the stamp of lowliness, ...Hence Jesus was born of a lowly virgin and was but roughly cradled in a manger, and the village chosen as the place of His birth was Bethlehem.” **Charles Spurgeon** (Spurgeon's Sermons Complete 63V)

- o ‘My people Israel’

Deut 7:6-7 “For you are a people holy to the Lord your God. The Lord your God has chosen you to be a people for his treasured possession, out of all the peoples who are on the face of the earth. ⁷ It was not because you were more in number than any other people that the Lord set his love on you and chose you, for you were the fewest of all peoples,

(2) A lowly, average family—How STRANGE...

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

Matt 13:55 “Is not this the carpenter’s son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶ And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all these things?” ⁵⁷ And they took offense at him.

In the Greco-Roman world, most would have regarded a person in such a craft as uneducated and uncouth.the skillful artisan who works with his hands is commended, but it is assumed that his business keeps him from ever becoming wise like the scribe. The scribe has greater leisure and can devote himself to the study of the law to gain greater wisdom. (Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary of the NT)

...the story of Jesus life is a living illustration that one doesn't need all the latest gadgets or the ultimate in education or an unusual level of notoriety or to be the talk of the town growing up in order to accomplish the highest of meaningful existence and achievement!

(3) A setting that is "unprepared and uninterested and unwelcoming"—How Strange, the level of 'insignificance' is assigned by nearly everyone to this event!!

Luke 2:6-14 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

⁸ And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. ¹⁰ And the angel said to them, “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. ¹¹ For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² And

this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.”¹³ And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

¹⁴ “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

- (4) **A life that was filled with ‘average and typical everydayness’**—How Strange ...to consider that 90% of Jesus incarnate life isn’t recorded or highlighted

>NOTE TO SELF - THE *ultimate human being who lived the ultimate existence and achieved the ultimate that a life could ever achieve, spent 90% of his life doing common, unnoticed, Facebook boring, everyday stuff!*

- (5) **A humble, confining body for an infinite creator!**—How Strange ...for the infinite, omnipresent, eternal God—to put on the limitations & restrictions of ‘human form’...

Php 2:6-7 who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped,⁷ but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men.

...the Ultimate Life that fulfilled the Ultimate Purpose for the Ultimate Glory of God—Was lived out of some SEVERELY Downgraded Conditions!

- **NOTE:** *You may have to live aspects of your life in a ‘downgraded’, “less than all that it could be” condition—in order to accomplish something that God deems necessary, important, and glorious!!*

You can only ‘let this mind be in you’ if you are free to be obsessed with an audience of ONE—rather than to play to the crowd of the confused!