

MENS LIFE BLOOMINGTON

Tuesday, December 13, 2022

Biblical Basis | Journey to A Manger

Overview: Christmas is a wonderful time of year. The story of the birth of a Savior is all around. Even the mall plays songs about Jesus. But have you looked at the journey it took to get there? We are going to change the pace a bit here in December. We will only be meeting one time on the second Tuesday (the 13th). And frankly, I think we all need a break from the fast pace of the fall. So we are going to take some time on Tuesday to just pause and think about what took place a little over 2000 years ago when Mary and Joseph took their *Journey to A Manger*.

Focus Verse: All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child. | Luke 2:3-5 NLT

Video: Bible Project Reference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v= OLezoUvOEQ>

Segment Questions: (References are on back)

- What is the longest journey you have ever taken in a car? What is the longest distance you've ever walked?
- The journey that Mary and Joseph took was because of a government mandate. How do you think you would have responded if the government demanded that you do something as difficult as this? What kind of conversations do you think Mary and Joseph would have had enroute?
- You never know the surprising ways God will work when you trust Him. If Mary had not responded in faith and trust, our lives would look very different today. What is an example where you had to trust God with something unexpected in your life?

The first Christmas with Jesus is a lot like some of our Christmases today. They can be chaotic. We travel great distances only to arrive at a place with more people than beds. We return to our home towns and things get a little crowded. But in the midst of the chaos, someone offered them a place to stay out of kindness. The gesture must have seemed so small and insignificant at the time, but look at the impact it has made thousands of years later.

Consider for a moment that we are looking at the birth of a prophesied King. A King above kings, Lord above lords. What would you expect out of this story? You expect feasts, luxurious goods, crowds of people to celebrate. But no feasts are mentioned. Jesus is born in a manger lined with hay. His family is in the presence of animals. What we do see is a story that is so unique and humbling. And it is **all embodied by one act of kindness that has been echoed for years**. God had a creative way of using someone's kindness to change a regular situation into something incredible. You **never know when that one small thing you do** out of kindness will affect someone, or in this case everyone, so greatly.

- Remember a time when someone did something for you. What did it mean to you and how did it affect your life?
- What are some opportunities you can think of for you to offer a small act of kindness to someone this Christmas season?

In the quiet stillness, a group of men spread out on the hard ground. Their eyes adjust to the darkness as they keep watch to protect the sheep. Suddenly, dazzling lights appear and an angel is before them with an amazing proclamation! This is a very familiar part of the Christmas story. Pause for a second to think about it. It is easy to forget **how extraordinary it must have been**. In fact, it almost sounds like a Hollywood epic! But even screenwriters cannot come up with a story that tops what God can do!

- When you think of the Christmas story, what part of the Christmas story is most dazzling to you? What part makes you stop and go “wow” just as you think about it?

Action Questions:

- What are your plans for Christmas?
- Is there a specific prayer request you have for this Christmas season?

Closing Personal Prayer:

Here we are Lord talking to you about your birthday that we celebrate at Christmas. I know we celebrate it every year and in some ways it is predictable. Help this Christmas to be a little bit different. May we experience some of the “wow” factor as we think about the epic nature of the story that took a teenage girl and her husband a long ways from home. May the wonder, awe and trust of their journey be a reminder that we can experience the same. Help us to have our own personal, journey to a manger this Christmas. Amen.