

“Roots - Jesus Comes to Us from a Story”

Scripture: Matthew 1:46-55

Graphics: manger, roots, family tree, Mary

Big Truth: Advent is a season of anticipation of Christ’s coming celebrated at Christmas, and is a time of opening ourselves once again to the living Christ coming to us in a new and unanticipated way. The story of Jesus, his family, his hometown, and his circumstance tell of a God who is redeeming and renewing the world through Jesus. The family story of Jesus intersects with your family’s story and invites us to invite Him deeper into our lives this season.

Focus Phrase: Jesus’ covenant story is YOUR story.

1. Scripture

- A. Today is the fourth and final Sunday in Advent. Next Sunday, we will celebrate Christmas Day - and there will be JOY in the house of the Lord!
- B. So far, this Advent season, we’ve focused in on the family story of Jesus...his people (Israel) and his birthplace (Bethlehem). God’s people throughout time have been and are a people who wrestle with God and transform the world. And, God chose the small, powerless, and hidden - like the little town of Bethlehem and a tiny baby - to bring His glory to the world!
- C. Today, we’ll look at the final piece of this series - Jesus Comes to Us from a Story. And, in a few minutes, the choir will be telling us all about this story.
- D. It’s a story about a promise that God made. In biblical terms, that promise is called a *covenant*. Jesus’ story is of a covenant between the Creator of the Universe and humankind. But even more amazing, that covenant bond with humanity was fulfilled in the person of the “Word made flesh,” Jesus, the Son of God...our Lord and Savior.
- E. Jesus is King of Kings and Lord and Lords, and as the Great High Priest of Humanity, Jesus fulfills the longing of every human heart for a Savior.
- F. Nowhere is the covenant story of Jesus told better than the tender words of Jesus’ mother, Mary. Right before Jesus was born, after Mary had visited with her cousin Elizabeth - who would give birth to John the Baptizer - Mary sang these words in her heart.
- G. Turn with me to Luke 1:46-55...Mary’s Song. Let’s hear these words as they come from Mary’s heart...filled with hope for what has been, what is, and what is to come!
- H. **READ Luke 1:46-55**
- I. We know that throughout the history of the world, from Creation until today, God has been working to invite people into **relationship**. And that relationship was never simply us acknowledging that God exists. God has always desired for us to be **participants** in that relationship.

- J. Jesus' story is Israel's Covenant story - which is all about that relationship of a people with their God. Before Jesus, God made covenants with Noah, Abraham, and Moses so that the people would actively enter into that relationship with Him. God pursued His people each time He promised to be WITH them.
- K. And then, at the right time, God sent Jesus as the final covenant promise. God was repairing, for all who struggle with God, the relationship only one who was God and Human could mend. Advent and Christmas are truly all about reaching all the way back to Creation to tell us the story of Jesus - the New Covenant.
- L. Jesus' story - his birth, death, resurrection, and ascension, is humanity's covenant story.
- M. When Mary sang that song of joy, pregnant with her child by the Holy Spirit, she told us the story of her people...and all humanity. WE are included in this story...in Mary's song...and in Jesus' very heart.
- N. And this covenant story is not just for us who follow Jesus. It's for your neighbor. It's for your co-workers. Your cousin. Your friend. Across time and space...through the millennia. There are many who are yet to say, "YES" to the God who loves them...a simple yes that would begin God's transforming work in their lives. You and I are called to follow Him and lead others to Him.
- O. See, because Jesus' covenant story is YOUR story.
- P. Advent is a season to renew your part in the covenant story God has made with you through Jesus. **It's YOUR name that is on God's lips when he speaks about His promise to the world...to YOU.**
- Q. This season, own it, embrace it, as YOUR story. A Way has been made for you to come into the wholeness that only the Love of God can bring in your life.

2. Conclusion

- A. Dan Wilt said this, "We are the bearers of a covenant story with humanity in which God is the Loving Pursuer of the Heart, and we are the pursued. Could we begin to take the essential message of that story, that you and I are loved by the Creator of the universe, and that he has come in flesh and blood so that we can know that God knows our name, our needs, our real struggles, and can give us hope? Jesus is the name God goes by at Christmas, and it is in Jesus that you, your family, your neighbors, your co-workers, and the world, will find the life for which we are all looking."
- B. Blessings to you as we move from the anticipation that is Advent, into the celebration that is Christmas. Light has come into the world, and the darkness has not overcome it (John 3:19; John 1:5).
- C. Let's pray...
- D. **PRAY!**