



CHRISTMAS

“A Strange Way to Save the World”

Luke 2:1-20

December 18, 2011 A.M. Service

The Society

- ✓ The Silence
- ✓ The Scandal
- ✓ The Satisfaction of Prophecy

The Setting: A Stable in Bethlehem

The Story: People

- ✓ The Servants – Joseph and Mary
- ✓ The Supernatural – The Angels
- ✓ The Shepherds
- ✓ The Seekers & A Star

The Surprise

- ✓ The Savior – The Spotless Lamb of God
- ✓ Swapped Heaven for Earth
- ✓ Seek Him For Who He Was, Not Just For What He Could Do For Us
- ✓ Show Us What God Was Like
- ✓ Show Us How Great His Love Was
- ✓ Show Us He Desired a Relationship with Everyone

Our Situation

- ✓ Separated From God
- ✓ Slaves to Sin & Self
- ✓ Spare Us from Death (Here and in the life to come)
- ✓ Sacrifice Was Required
- ✓ Salvation for Our Souls
- ✓ Surrender

Our Response:

1. Have you given your heart and life to Jesus Christ – Are You a Fan or are you a Follower? You can become a follower by accepting this free gift of God if you will by faith believe and surrender your heart and life to Him! It's as simple as ABC. **Admit** to God you are a sinner, **Ask** for His forgiveness, **Believe** Jesus is God's Son, **Confess** Him as Savior & **Commit** Your Life to Him as Lord for the rest of your life & being His fully devoted follower!
2. Have you asked Christ into you heart, but never made it public? Have you been baptized – identified with Christ & His church through Baptism? If not, you can make that decision today & be obedient & follow through & become a part of the Bethsalem Family. Step out and tell everyone, I am signing up for Duty!
3. Do you need a church home? – a proper foundation – without one a Christian is a soldier with no army to fight with him or to help him fight. Don't just attend – step over the line today and join this church family!
4. Do you really realize the great lengths that God went to save your soul and mine? When we really think about it, it really is absurd – why would God love us that much? Not sure, but so grateful that He did. What is our response this Christmas – to Worship; Be Thankful; and Surrender everything to Him!! He swapped heaven for earth – will you swap your old for the new one He wants to give to you? Do it today! It will be the greatest “Gift” exchange in your whole life!

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Strange, absurd, weird, amazing, defies explanation

Each of these really defy what our expectations would have been, if we had written the story, in fact some have even called it absurd – doesn't even seem possible – why would God do such a thing, and in such a way?

Society

- ✓ **Silence** – 400 years of silence – it was if God was silent – yet God was at work preparing the way for the coming of the Savior!!
- ✓ **Scandal** – Big deal of how God brought the birth of His Son about
- ✓ **Season** - Fulfill Prophecy – Satisfied - It was the right and perfect time for Jesus to come – and it is the right time for you and me today too! Jesus is always right one time – His 1st coming, His 2nd coming and right on time in your life today!

The Setting: A Stable in Bethlehem Wanted to make our hearts His home – because our hearts were or are just like that stable!! We might like to think that our hearts are a wonderful beautiful throne ready for the King to sit on, but really – our hearts were just like that stinky stable, filled with our sin and filth – not ready for a King – but by His grace and sweet mercy He chose to make our hearts His home if we would let Him.

The Story: People

- ✓ **The Servants** – Joseph and Mary – Obedience, Faithfulness - 2 common ordinary people through whom God did the extraordinary – *Could God use you and me in such a way?*
- ✓ **The Supernatural** – There was Singing & Rejoicing and Celebration – Angels Shine into the darkness announcing the True Light was coming into the world that would dispel the darkness forever– Their Message Savior Has Been Born. That was what Jesus left by the way – we get a glimpse of the glory, wonder, majesty, and worship that Jesus left to come to earth!
- ✓ **The Shepherds**– the Lowest – He was the Great Shepherd

- ✓ **The Seekers & Star** (Wise Men) Star – Wise men He was the True King – in some ways the highest, royalty

The Surprise

- ✓ **The Savior Had Been Born** – The Spotless Lamb of God born of a virgin girl. History was forever changed that night!!
- ✓ **Swapped Heaven for Earth** – The only thing we could compare it too – would be the richest, most expensive and beautiful place on earth and swap it for a slum in the dirtiest filthiest place on earth! Wasn't there another way this could happen? Why come and live among us, come down to what some would have called “this God forsaken place”? Why come this way Lord? Why not come as a King and everyone would have seen and known, could have received the worship you deserved! Why, Why, Why? 4 Reasons! It makes sense when you read the Old Testament of why He had to come, but why did He have to come this way?
- ✓ **Seek Him For Who He Was, Not Just For What He Could Do For Us** ILLUS: Man whose father owned department store, trading his job to become a janitor so that he could begin the search for his wife.
- ✓ **Show Us What God Was Like** His name, Immanuel – God with Us. Jesus said it to his disciples, if you have seen me, You have seen the Father.
- ✓ **Show Us How Great His Love Was** I can tell someone all day long how much I love them, from a distance, on a phone call, over skype, video conference, tell them of all I want to do for them – but to show up in person and actually show that love in action changes everything! That's exactly what He did for you and me!
- ✓ **Show Us He Desired a Relationship with Everyone** – even me and you – From the lowest to the highest – He came to give His life for all!

Our Situation

- ✓ **Spruce Us Up** – Gives us decorative makeover, help our tree look a little better, a few ornaments here, a few more lights there and it looks great! But that is not what we needed. As we have seen in our series, Not a Fan the last 2 months, We need a transformation – a complete overhaul from the inside out! Why is that?
- ✓ **Separated From God** [Romans 3:23](#) “All have sinned...

- ✓ **Slaves to Sin & Self** We were hopelessly lost and enslaved to our sin and the desires of our flesh – we only want to please ourselves – we needed someone that can free us!!
- ✓ **Spare Us from Death** (Here and in the life to come) [Romans 6:23 & 10:9-10](#) Even more, because of that sin, I was separated and a slave, that will ultimately bring death.
- ✓ **Sacrifice Was Required** The only way that can happen is that a sacrifice would be required to satisfy God's justice, the price had to be paid and we couldn't pay it!
- ✓ **Salvation for our Souls** The price was great to purchase salvation for our souls and that is exactly what He did for you and me and the most amazing part of all is what our response is.
- ✓ **Surrender** And Christmas is the best time to talk about – it makes the most sense when we are giving gifts – even though it cost Jesus everything this gift of salvation costs us nothing, we can't earn it, we can't buy it, we can't be good enough, we can be religious enough, we simply have to humble ourselves and accept this free gift and surrender our hearts and lives to Him forever!

I'm sure he must have been surprised At where this road had taken him
 'Cause never in a million lives Would he have dreamed of Bethlehem
 And standing at the manger He saw with his own eyes
 The message from the angel come alive And Joseph said...

Why me (why me), I'm just a simple man of trade?
 Why Him with all the rulers in the world? (rulers in the world)
 Why here (why here) inside this stable filled with hay?
 Why her, she's just an ordinary girl (ordinary girl)
 Now, I'm not one to second guess what angel's have to say
 But this is such a strange way to save the world

To think of how it could have been If Jesus had come as He deserved
 There would have been no Bethlehem No lowly shepherds at His birth
 But Joseph knew the reason Love had to reach so far
 And as he held the Savior in his arms He must have thought...