



The Cross At The Cradle **Sunday December 19, 2010**

A messy manger, A feeble cradle

About two thousand years ago, in a little village in Galilee called Nazareth, a man named Joseph, engaged to be married to a young lady named Mary had a totally unexpected event interject their lives. An angel appeared to Mary and told her [*please narrate Luke 1:30-35*]

When Joseph discovered that his wife-to-be was pregnant, he was very embarrassed and wanted to quickly get this matter over with and put Mary away. But then, he had a dream: [*please narrate Matthew 1:20-24*]

[*please narrate the story contained in these passages*]
Luke 2:1-19 Matthew 2:1-11

Who was this baby?

Who was this baby

...a baby born supernaturally by Divine intervention

...a baby whose parents had angels visit them and inform them that this Child was going to be great, a King whose Kingdom will never end

....a baby whose birth was announced by angels with the message that there will be peace on earth and good will to me, whose birth was good news of great joy to all people

....a baby whom wise men came to worship

...being born in a humble manger.

The Bible clearly tells us that the Eternal God, the One who created all things, who held all things in place, laid aside His eternal powers of Deity and became a Man. This was God who had become Man. He is Immanuel, "God with us".

The prophet Isaiah said about Jesus: For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of His government and peace There will be no end,....

When Deity wrapped Himself with humanity to step in to our world, He chose not the luxury of a palace but the lowliness of a feeble cradle set in a messy manger.

The life-mission of Jesus

Jesus lived a holy, pure sinless life.

He loved the ordinary, broken, hurting people.

He taught the things of an eternal kingdom which He said would invade our world.

He cast out devils, healed the sick, calmed storms, multiplied food to feed hungry people and radically transformed lives.

But then He told His disciples – that the primary assignment for which He had come, was to suffer and be crucified.



Joh 10:11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

Mat 20:28 just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many."

The Bible also says:

1Ti 1:15 This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,

1Ti 2:5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,
1Ti 2:6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,

The baby in the cradle was destined for a death on the Cross.

What happened on the cross.

This Jesus, who was sinless, holy and pure, God who had become Man, was nailed to a cross. On that cross He took the sins of the whole world. The Holy Scriptures state that All of us like sheep have gone astray, but all our sins were laid upon Him. The Bible says that He became the payment of our sins and for the sins of the whole world.

On the cross He defeated all demonic powers Colossians 2:14,15 and Hebrews 2:14

All that He did, He did on our behalf. All of us have sinned. Our sins have separated us from God who is holy and who cannot tolerate sin. Sin has to be punished. The ultimate punishment for sin, the Bible tells us is eternal separation from God in a place called hell. It is appointed for all of us to die, and then we face judgment. On our own, we have nothing that can assure us a place in God's presence, and by default our own wrong doing will take us to eternal hell.

However, the good news of great joy is that Jesus Christ on the cross took upon Himself the punishment and judgment we deserve. He died in our place. He was buried and after three days He rose up from the dead, as death could not hold Him. He showed Himself alive with many infallible proofs and then commanded that the good news be proclaimed all over the world. He then went up into heaven, with the promise of returning again.

The Cross is a place of great triumph. The Cross and the resurrection that followed, is the greatest triumph ever known.

- ✓ Man could be forgiven
- ✓ Satan had been defeated
- ✓ Death and hell had been conquered
- ✓ God had made a way for lost and sinful men to come back to Him.
- ✓ The way had been paved for God's healing, restoring power to flow into human lives.
- ✓ The curse had been reversed and a blessing would be released
- ✓ Men and women could now become sons and daughters of God.
- ✓ Men and women could become co-workers with God, ambassadors of His kingdom, bearers of His name, etc.



In the future of that feeble cradle, set in a messy manger, hung a cross – a place of great triumph and victory.

His place in History

I wonder if any of those kneeling in that dirty manger beside the cradle, watching the feeble, almost helpless Christ child, ever imagined the mark this child would leave on human history.

One Solitary Life (excerpt)

This man never went to college or seminary. He never wrote a book. He never held a public office. He never had a family nor owned a home. He never put His foot inside a big city nor traveled even 200 miles from His birthplace. And though He never did any of the things that usually accompany greatness, throngs of people followed Him. He had no credentials but Himself.

While He was still young, the tide of public opinion turned against Him. His followers ran away. He was turned over to His enemies and sentenced to death on a cross between two thieves. While He was dying, His executioners gambled for the only piece of property He had on earth – the simple coat He had worn. His body was laid in a borrowed grave provided by a compassionate friend.

But three days later this Man arose from the dead – living proof that He was, as He had claimed, the Savior whom God had sent, the Incarnate Son of God.

Over Nineteen centuries have come and gone and today the risen Lord Jesus Christ is the central figure of the human race. On our calendars His birth divides history into two eras. One day of every week is set aside in remembrance of Him. And our two most important holidays celebrate His birth and resurrection. On church steeples around the world, His cross has become the symbol of victory over sin and death.

This one Man's life has furnished the theme for more songs, books, poems, dramas, movies and paintings than any other person or event in history. Thousands of colleges, hospitals, orphanages and other institutions have been founded in honor of this One who gave His life for us.

All the armies that ever marched, all the navies that ever sailed, all the governments that ever sat, all the kings that ever reigned have not changed the course of history as much as this One Solitary Life.

The triumph of the Cross and the indelible mark on human history, began in a feeble cradle, set in a dirty, messy manger!

Although it was conceived in the mind of God way before time, in history this is where it began.

Application

This is the way God works in our lives.

In the messy mangers of our lives, He sets His cradle, where He births His purposes through us. The Cradle has the promise of a Cross – great triumph and victory - ahead of it.



Life is not a bed of roses.
Life is not a cruise on still waters.
Life is not a blissful sleep in a hammock set on a sunny sea side resort.
What we all learn is that roses come with thorns, the still waters can have storms, and blissful hammocks can get rocked by windy weather.

The Manger

What are the messy mangers in our lives?
Our individual flaws and weaknesses
The wounds, hurts and scars left by life's struggles, traumas and tragedies
Our failures, our mistakes, our wrong choices
It could even be the contempt, the ridicule, the misdeeds, the injustice of people toward you
All these have created a messy manger in our lives.

The Cradle

And yet in the messy mangers of our lives, God sets up a cradle.
Your cradle is anything that will cause the release of divine purpose here on earth.
What are the cradles God is setting up in our lives
Opportunities
Unexpected doors
Contacts
Special talents and skills, perhaps some yet undiscovered, etc.

The Cross

And there is a Cross at your cradle...a place of fulfillment, a place of triumph, a place where purposes, dreams and destinies are realized and usher heaven on earth.

What are the purposes/destinies that God has in store....
The dreams that God wants you to pursue.

The Cross that God sets at your Cradle is far bigger than what you can do on your own.
Sometimes it seems unreal, unbelievable, unachievable, impossible.

Luke 1:37 But with God nothing is impossible.

The Cross is God's declaration of the end from the beginning.

Isa 46:10 Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,'

The journey to the cross is not always easy.
There may be pain, humiliation, cruel mocking, etc.

Joh 12:24 Most assuredly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain.
Many times the road to fruitfulness is paved with a thousand deaths.

But then victory comes, triumph comes, God makes things beautiful in its time.



Ecc 3:11 He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.

Your present situation is no indication of your final destination.

The Christ

The most important thing is not the messy manger, it is not the feeble cradle, it is not even the cross lifted up – the most important in The Christ.

Without the Christ, the manger is just a mess, the cradle is just an empty stand, and the cross is just a hollow symbol.

It is the Christ who gives meaning to the mess in the manger, who creates purposes and destinies in a feeble cradle, and who causes great victory and triumph on the Cross.

Will you let the Christ be born in your messy manger today? Will you invite the Christ into you feeble cradle, so that when you arrive at your place of triumph, He can give heavenly significance to your cross.

1, Prayer for messy mangers

Invitation to experience Christ to receive forgiveness of sins, deliverance from demonic powers, healing from sicknesses,

2, Prayer for feeble cradles

3, Prayer to see the cross at your cradle.

INVITATION TO RECEIVE CHRIST

We like to end our services by giving an invitation to any one here who has never experienced the power of Jesus Christ in their lives to do so. The Lord Jesus Christ, who is God – came into this world about 2000 years ago, as a Man. He was crucified on a cross where He took upon Him the sins of the whole world and paid for them. He died and rose up again, and ascended back into heaven. He is alive today. If you will believe in Him you will be saved.