

The Lord's Message: The Miracle of Christmas: The Miracle of the Method

Date: December 15, 2024

Where: Tilghman Methodist Church

Scripture Reference: Romans 11:33-36

We have been looking at the Miracle of Christmas. We started with the Moment. God sent His Son, Jesus to earth at the right moment. Not too early and not too late. Right on time. Last Sunday, we looked at the Miracle of the Message. Jesus is the Message of Christmas. That God would send His Son to be one of us. He gave His life for us because He loves us. He was resurrected from the grave, and He sits at the right hand of God the Father. He is coming back. This was told by God through the prophets, it was written down, it was proclaimed by the miracles and in other ways. The Miracle of the Message is Jesus.

Today, we are going to be studying about the Miracle of Christmas is the Miracle of the Method.

Let us pray.

The other day I turned on the TV and what did I see but the show, This Old House? I had not seen it in years. I used to watch this almost every week. The show is about a group of contractors specializing in carpentry, wood working, HVAC, plumbing and electrical that work with homeowners to update their old house. I love watching the restorations taking place. It dawned on me that God is in the restoration business. God has been in the restoration business ever since Adam and Eve disobeyed Him and sin entered into humanity. God chose to send His Son, Jesus, to restore the broken relationship that we have with God.

Now the method that God used still seems strange today. To have His Son be born, a vulnerable baby in a stable, in a small town called Bethlehem is quite the strange method. Not only that, but born to a poor unknown, but faithful, couple that were from Nazareth. Even Nathanael, when he hears about Jesus coming from Nazareth, says in **John 1:46**. If I were going to save the world, Jesus would come down in a fiery chariot just like Elijah was taken to heaven. All eyes would see this. Jesus would drive out the Romans and sit on the throne of David. The temple of God would be rebuilt. Worship of God would be reestablished. There would be peace throughout the world. People would be filled with joy. The Messiah had come.

God, what were You thinking about when You came up with this plan of salvation? When I started thinking this way, I am reminded of what the Apostle Paul says about the mind of God, **Romans 11:33-34**. God always uses the lowly, the forgotten, the humble, and the undesirable people to carry out His plans. David was the last of the sons of Jesse. Even though when Samuel the Prophet saw all his other brothers, he thought that God would pick them to be the next king of Israel. God told Samuel in **1 Samuel 16:7**. Moses was a murderer and God chose him to lead the Israelites out of slavery. God took a pagan worshipper in Abram and told him to leave the country that he was in and go to a foreign place he knew nothing about. Abram was obedient to God and God changed his name to Abraham and made him the father of many nations, including Israel. In fact, he is also the father of three major religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. God used a prostitute, Rahab, to protect the Israelite spies in Jericho. It was God who made a young, adopted girl, named Esther, queen of the Medes and Persian empire to save His people. God would use fishermen, tax collectors, and zealots, and later a tent maker, to carry on the Gospel Message when Jesus returned to heaven. Isaiah said it the best in **Isaiah 55:8-9**. God transcends our thinking and understanding. His methods are always right, **Luke 2:1-7**.

The Good News for us is that God includes all of us in His plan. After Jesus was born, to whom did the angels make the birth announcement? Did they make it to King Herod or a queen? Did they make it to a military leader like Caesar Augustus? Did they make it to the leader of the synagogue or the High Priest? No, they make it to the lowly shepherds keeping watch over the sheep. The more that you think about God's method, the more miraculous and comforting the method is. Part of the Miracle of Christmas is that God uses ordinary people like all of us to spread His message far and wide.

I want you to think about this for a moment. Who did Jesus appear to after He was resurrected from the dead? Women! The testimony of women at His time was not consider valid, only the testimony of two men was consider valid. He did not appear to the Sanhedrin. If He did, he might have mocked them and said so you thought that you had gotten rid of Me. I do not think Jesus would have done that. You and I might. He did not appear to Pontus Pilate. He did not even appear to the disciples until later on. He appeared to women.

God's plan was different. After appearing to the disciples and others for 40 days after His resurrection, Jesus gave them these final instructions, **Matthew 28:18-20**. Jesus entrusted this small group of followers with the most important message, the Good News. The miraculous method is that God is still entrusting us with this message. The message of the salvation of the world rests in ordinary people like you and me.

The Apostle Paul commented on this miraculous method of God in **1 Corinthians 1:26-29**. The miraculous method of Christmas is that God uses us not because we are righteous or without sin. The opposite is that God can use us because we understand that we are sinners in need of a Savior. God also uses us not because of our skills but because of attitude and availability. God will equip us for whatever need He has. Jesus says in **Mark 13:11**.

There is another aspect that we need to understand about the miracle of God's method. God is always at work within us, even when we do not understand or are aware of God's working in us. This is called sanctification. In the same way that we would have written a different script about God's method of salvation, we would also write a different script about God sanctifying us. The script would be that we would start off believing in Jesus and our faith would continue to grow and grow. We would never have setbacks. We would never take one step forward and three steps backward. We would never have any problems. Every day would be a wonderful bliss filled day until we reached eternal life.

Life in Christ is far different than that script. We have problems. We have doubts. We fall into sin. We have less victories than we have failures. I can tell you that this is because we are fallen creatures and live in a fallen creation with other fallen creatures, but this does not explain away the heartache, suffering, and pain. I can tell you that when you turn this over to God, God will walk with you through the struggles and tough times. In this process of sanctification, God is continuing to mold and shape us to be more like Jesus. The Apostle Paul says in **Romans 8:28**.

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, she could not have known what her life was going to be like. Traveling from Nazareth to Bethlehem while you are 9 months pregnant. Fleeing to Egypt soon after giving birth. Coming back to Nazareth several years later. Raising the Son of God. Seeing your son hanging on the cross. Being ridiculed, shamed, embarrassed, and falsely accused. Many, many times, Mary must have wondered if God's method of salvation is crazy.

But then she saw God in the flesh. When she held her son, she was holding God. When her son skinned His knee, she cleaned and dressed the wound. She was also very instrumental in the work of her Son in the world. She is the one that knew that His time had come for His work to begin. She told her son, Jesus, that there is no more wine. She told the servants in Cana to listen and do what Jesus says. She knew that Jesus had performed His first miracle in Cana. She obediently followed the plan of God and was rewarded in the end.

I watch my wife make quilts. She cuts the fabrics into pieces to make something more beautiful than the fabric would be by itself. That is the way that God is working in our lives. The times of pain and sorrow in our lives, God always walks with us through them. We learn to be more patient and understanding with those that are going through those times. Through those times of testing, we develop trust and strength. This matures our walk with Christ. James says this best in **James 1:2-4**. Sometimes, we do not realize that God is working in our lives, but He is. In the end, we will look back on our lives and see what beauty God has made of us.

The miracle of Christmas is the miracle of the method. God sent His Son to be born as a baby in a stable in a forgotten place called Bethlehem. God chose Mary a poor, ordinary, young girl to be Jesus' mother. His birth announcement would be to ordinary people, shepherds. God would use ordinary people to spread His message of salvation to all the world. The miracle of the method is that God is working in the lives of believers in Jesus every day, whether we realize it or not. God uses us, not because of our abilities, but because of our attitude and availability. God is in the restoration business. God is restoring us to look more like Jesus. One day, we will look back on our lives and see that God made something beautiful out of us.

This is how we all grow together in faith. Amen.