

Planning for a Big Celebration

What are some big events in our lives that we may celebrate?

How might we make these celebrations into wonderful events?

What did God do to celebrate His greatest miracle?

What does that tell us about Him and what He values?

What does that tell us about what it's like to follow Him?

Pray: bring us great joy in seeing your glory in humility

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Luke 2:1-7

In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world. (This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria.) And everyone went to their own town to register.

So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

manger = feeding box for animals

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Luke 2:1-20**1-7: The lowly birth of the Son of God**

- Contrasts

Caesar Augustus _____ **Jesus**

Emperor _____ **Peasant**

Rome _____ **Small towns (1,000 people?)**

Ruler of the Roman Empire _____ **Poor infant**

Issued decrees _____ **Followed those decrees**

All must obey him _____ **Poor parents paid taxes to Caesar**

Lived in a palace _____ **Born with the animals**

Had a royal bed _____ **Slept in an animal feeding trough**

8-12:

13-14:

15-20:

→ The lowest gets the worst sleeping room

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Birth of the Son of God: The greatest possible event!

It is mind boggling in its greatness!

- The Son of God, the creator, the infinite, the beginning and the end, the one who is Life, all powerful & glorious
- **Became** a human being. Really!
 - “all the fullness of deity in bodily form” *Colossians 2:9*
- To be the Savior for humanity

Shocking in its lowliness!

- A baby born to a poor young couple, with the animals, sleeping in a feeding trough, ignored by humanity
- **That's it???**

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Luke 2:8-12

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

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Luke 2:1-20

1-7: The lowly birth of the Son of God

8-12: A glorious announcement brought to the lowly

- Lowly audience and setting
 - Shepherds: Dirty, untrustworthy, troublemakers
 - At night, in the fields, outside a small village
- God's angel: literally "messenger" (often appeared human)
- The glory of the Lord: His overwhelming presence
 - Above and beyond the presence of an angel
- Why rejoice? Good news (evangelism) of great joy!
 - Birth of God's Savior (Jesus) + Messiah + God

13-14: • Sign: a loved baby in the lowliest place

15-20: • who is the greatest possible being!

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Luke 2:13-14

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

“Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”

great company of the heavenly host = vast group of angels

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Luke 2:1-20

1-7: The lowly birth of the Son of God

8-12: A glorious announcement brought to the lowly

13-14: ...that got even more amazingly glorious!

- “Suddenly”: timing as well as significance
- “Great company of the heavenly host” = the angelic army of God
 - Power & majesty
- The right response to what just happened: praise!
 - Glory in the greatest place
 - Peace = full salvation to a broken world
 - The love and power of God has entered our broken

15-20: world to bring life and joy!

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Luke 2:15-20

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.”

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

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Luke 2:1-20

1-7: The lowly birth of the Son of God

8-12: A glorious announcement brought to the lowly

13-14: ...that got even more amazingly glorious!

15-20: Resulting in joyful praise and evangelism by the lowly

- Amazingly glorious announcement given only to a few lowly people (angels went back to heaven)
- They went to Bethlehem **because** they believed
- They became the ‘evangelists’ (good news tellers) of this amazing news with joy and praise
 - Event (birth) and Meaning (Savior, Christ, Lord)
- The most glorious ‘hidden’ in lowliness

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The Big Idea

**God entered humanity
by the Son of God becoming a human being
to bring light and life to a broken and dying world
through and among the lowliest
of people and conditions**

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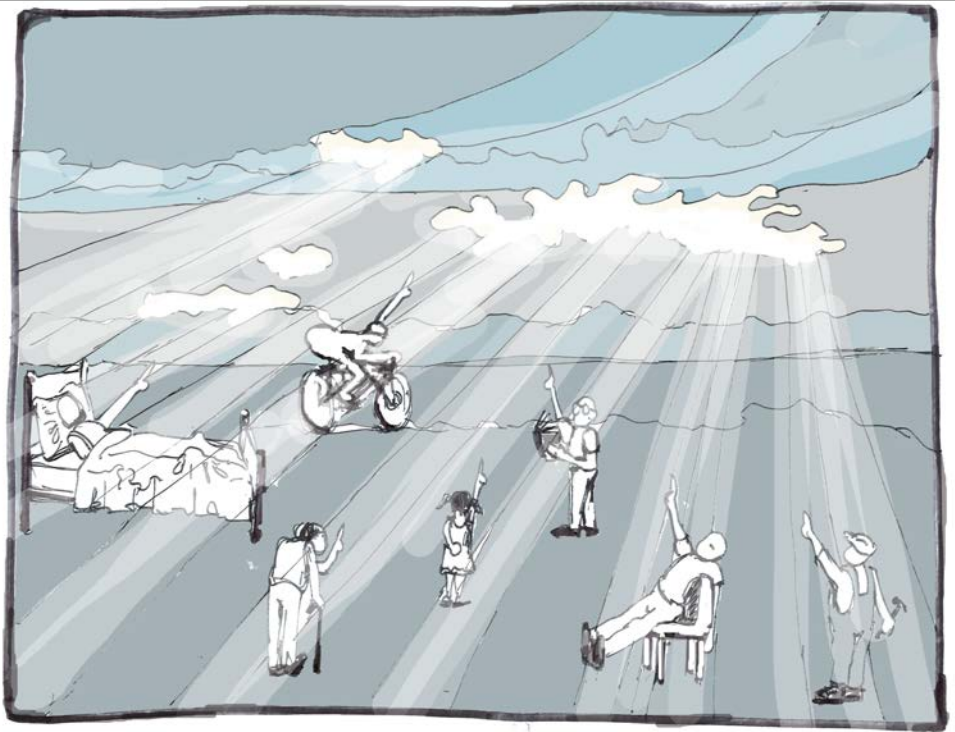
Sunbeams

Little particles, like dust or water droplets
lit up by the sun
that together point back to the sun
especially when the sun is hidden

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Sonbeams

Lowly, unimportant
people
lit up by the Son
that together point
back to the Son
especially when the
Son is less visible
with joy!



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The Big Idea

**God entered humanity
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to bring light and life to a broken and dying world
through and among the lowliest
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Sonbeams

**Unimportant people
lit up by the Son of God
who joyfully point back to Him**

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Application

Give joyful praise to the Son of God who has entered humanity in great humility to bring us life and joy

- God's solution is **not** a message, a rebuke, a threat, a pep talk, a technique, a good example to follow, ...
- It is God Himself with us: Emmanuel
- He is our salvation! Our rescue! Our hope!
- **In breathtaking humility**
 - "The Son **made himself nothing** by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, **he humbled himself** by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross!" *Philippians 2:7-8*

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Application

Give joyful praise to the Son of God who has entered humanity in great humility to bring us life and joy

- The world doesn't point us to this joy
 - It keeps pointing us to human problems and solutions
 - "Peter saw the wind and began to sink..."
- It takes faith and intention to see the work of God in lowliness. Because...
 - **God works out His purposes in human events even when appearances seem to deny His presence or power**
- It takes faith to see God's work of love among us
- Choose to give joyful praise by looking at the Son of God

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Application

Trust in God's unstoppable work, even when it is hard to see

- **So few people knew of this greatest miracle of God!**
- **So little changed in the next 30 years, then He died on a cross**
- **Powerful people imagined they could oppose it**
- **People who believed got discouraged and doubted it**
- Jesus said: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on earth." *Mark 4:31*
- "But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations." *Psalms 33:11*

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Application

Trust in God's unstoppable work, even when it is hard to see

- Where is **God's work** hard for you to see today?
- The work of God is like yeast that seems to get lost in the dough...until it affects the whole batch! *Matthew 13:33*
- The kingdom of God “grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches that the birds can perch in its shade.” *Mark 4:32*

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Application

Be a Sonbeam

- Unimportant people → **Humility**
God is opposed to the proud!
He is not impressed by what impresses people!
- lit up by the Son of God
- who joyfully point back to Him

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Not many of you were wise by human standards; **not many were influential; not many were of noble birth.** But God chose the **foolish things** of the world to shame the wise; God chose the **weak things** of the world to shame the strong. God chose the **lowly things** of this world and the **despised things**—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. **It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus**, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “**Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.**” *1 Corinthians 1:26-31*

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Application

Be a Sonbeam

- Unimportant people → **Humility**
God is opposed to the proud!
He is not impressed by what impresses people!
- lit up by the Son of God → **Standing in the light of God**
- who joyfully point back to Him

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For God, who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," **made his light shine in our hearts to give us the light of the knowledge of God's glory** displayed in the face of Christ. *2 Corinthians 4:6*

And we all, who with unveiled faces **contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory**, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. *2 Corinthians 3:18*

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Application

Be a Sonbeam

- Unimportant people → Humility
God is opposed to the proud!
He is not impressed by what impresses people!
- lit up by the Son of God → Standing in the light of God
Contemplating the Lord's glory in His Spirit among us
Walking in Christ's ways in fellowship with the Holy Spirit
- who joyfully point back to Him → for His name and fame
We are merely dust particles, lit up by the Son
Make sure we never forget His glory
& our insignificance except that we are God's loved children!

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And whatever you do, whether in word or deed,
do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks
to God the Father through him. *Colossians 3:17*

- Do everything like Jesus did things & how He taught us
- By His power in the Spirit
- For His glory not ours

In the same way, let your light shine before others,
that they may see your good deeds and

glorify your Father in heaven. *Matthew 5:16*

- Be a Sonbeam!

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The Big Idea

**God entered humanity
by the Son of God becoming a human being
to bring light and life to a broken and dying world
through and among the lowliest
of people and conditions**

Sonbeams

**Unimportant people
lit up by the Son of God
who joyfully point back to Him**

**Especially in darker days!
Trust the unstoppable
work of God
For His good purposes
that can never fail**

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