

Advent 4A - December 2019

Mary, Let's Go To The Barn

I love this story: A grade school class was putting on a Christmas play which included the story of Mary and Joseph coming to the inn. In that class was one little boy who wanted very much to be Joseph. But when the parts were handed out, his biggest rival was given that part, and he was assigned to be the inn keeper instead. He was really bitter about this. So during all the rehearsals he kept plotting in his mind what he might do the night of performance to get even with his rival who was Joseph. Finally, the night of the performance, Mary and Joseph came walking across the stage. They knocked on the door of the inn, and the inn-keeper opened the door and asked them gruffly what they wanted. Joseph answered, "We'd like to have a room for the night."

Suddenly the inn-keeper threw the door open wide and said, "Great, come on in and I'll give you the best room in the house." For a few seconds poor little Joseph didn't know what to do, and a long silence ensued. Finally though, thinking quickly on his feet, Joseph looked in past the inn-keeper, first to the left and then to the right and said, "No wife of mine is going to stay in a dump like this. Come on, Mary, let's go to the barn." And once again the play was back on course.

It is obvious that Joseph cared deeply for Mary. He would not have risked his own reputation and protected hers if he did not. But his love was deeper and grounded on more than love for his bride to be. For you see he understood that obedience to God, even in the most dire of circumstances creates a life of substance and character. (by Brett Blair, www.eSermons.com. Adapted from a Story by John Simmons)

An Angel Came to Joseph

We too often forget about poor Joseph. Every year, we tend to focus on the story of Mary. But this year, it's Joseph. Now, if the angel can appear to Mary, and then also appear to Joseph, there's a lesson in that. That means that the angel can appear to you and me, too. In the Bible, the annunciation does not occur only once, but twice-not just to a woman, but also to a man. The Bible, then, carries an implicit message that God does appear over and

over again, to various sorts of folks. Matthew and Luke both have it right, but they are different stories. God continues to come into the world, but we have to trust other sources! What are you giving for Christmas this year? I do not mean what are you getting. We all want something wonderful, I am sure. But what are you giving for Christmas? The greatest gift you can give this year is to believe in someone's dreams. The greatest gift you can give is to have faith in someone else; believe in their dreams.

Believe in the dreams of the person you love.

Believe in the dream of your husband.

Believe in the dream of your wife.

Believe in the dreams of your children.

Believe in the dream of your hero, your leader, your friend.

Believe in their dreams! (by Samuel G. Candler from *Believe in the Dreams of the Person You Love*)

It Is Easy for You

The great writer Max Lucado tells about his neighbor who was trying to teach his six-year-old son how to shoot a basketball. They were out in the backyard. The father shot a couple of times, saying, "Do it just like that, son; it's real easy." The little boy tried very hard but he couldn't get the ball ten feet into the air. The little fellow got more and more frustrated. Finally, after hearing his father talk about how easy it was for the tenth time, the boy said, "It's easy for you up there. You don't know how hard it is from down here." You and I can never say that about God. When Jesus became man and lived among us, he walked where we walked, he suffered what we suffer, he was tempted as we are tempted. He was Emmanuel which means "God is with us." (by Bill Bouknight from *Collected Sermons*, www.Sermons.com)