

Luke 2:1-20 – Christmas Eve Children’s Service – December 24, 2025

+In Nomine Iesu+

In case you hadn’t noticed, Christmas Eve is here. I hope you can stop for just a moment. Be still. And take it all in. I know, it’s a busy time of the year. There are Christmas programs, pageants, concerts, and services. I appreciate all the practice our kids and parents—and all our adult volunteers—put into this night.

But in addition, we have been buying, wrapping, writing, sending, decorating, cooking, preparing, traveling, waiting, hoping, *and hopefully*, pondering the Nativity of Jesus Christ, our Immanuel—God with us—our Savior and King.

For lots of us, today and tomorrow are our very favorite days of the year. And let’s be honest, much of the importance of Christmas is the gifts. We just can’t wait to get those presents opened.

And there are good gifts to receive this Christmas. I imagine that right now, there are gifts under your tree at home. Hopefully you haven’t peeked—looking in your parents closet—or on their Amazon account—to see what you are going to get. Hopefully you haven’t been at home shaking your presents to figure out what they are. Now, it is good to anticipate the good gifts we will receive. In the words of Scripture, it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of our God.

Now, some of you will open your gifts tonight, and some will wait until tomorrow morning. And for others, gift giving and receiving stretches out into several days as the celebration extends to different parts of our families.

As you might expect on Christmas Eve with us, tonight we focus on the gift who is the Christ Child born for us in the manger in Bethlehem. He has wonderful gifts to give, and he gives us the opportunity to give gifts to one another.

And tonight, I would like to focus on one distinct gift that Christ has given us in His holy Nativity. The gift of humility. By definition, humility means, “the quality of having a modest view of one’s value or importance.” Humility in Scripture is about setting aside our own self-interests for the good of others. It is taking the lowest place—while thinking about God’s priorities. Humility means we don’t think about ourselves so much.

In Philippians 2, Paul says, “Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.”

Perhaps this is not the kind of gift we are used to receiving. It might not even be something that we want. This is not something that you will find under the tree. We like things wrapped. Things tangible. Things. But humility is a gift. And God gives it to us.

Humility is the quality of being meek, reverent, even submissive, and never being conceited, prideful, or rude. Humility is not a character trait that many are looking for these days. We admire the most confident, the most influential, even the arrogant. Actors, musical stars, sports figures, politicians. We tend to admire people who succeed and find wealth, power, and fame.

But this is not the way of Christ. And it is not the way of humility. Jesus, who from eternity is true and very God, came to us in the humblest of circumstances. Mary and Joseph were not rich, powerful, or successful. They didn’t have money, and they lived in Nazareth, a poverty-stricken backward town.

Even as they arrived in Bethlehem, they were not popular. We know they were excluded from the inn on this cold night. Now, this *inn* was probably more like a guest room or sleeping room. But no one was willing to give them the space. It was admittedly crowded because the census brought so many people to Bethlehem. You would think that these people should have made room for Mary—who was great with Child—but they didn't. And the only possible explanation was because people were only thinking about themselves.

This would be the reception that Jesus would get throughout His life. And we will talk more about this on the Sundays to come. But, on the very first Christmas, the holy family was far from home—because of the greed of Caesar. They are lodged with the animals—no one would make room for them. A manger is not a crib, rather it is a feeding trough. Humble shepherds visit them—not Caesar or Herod or some high priest. These are humble, poor conditions. The world has abandoned them.

So why was Jesus born in this way? It's a good question to ponder. It really could have been so much more grand. He could have come in glory and power. He could have exploded onto the scene and got everyone's attention. He could have been born in a palace or in a temple. He had every right.

But something quite grand is going on in these humble circumstances. In the midst of all the simplicity, something hidden, mysterious, and miraculous is taking place. Mary and Joseph knew. Zechariah and Elizabeth knew. The Angels knew.

This Child was the promised King. The Christ. The Savior. The God of the universe, taking on human flesh. But this humble beginning was for you. It was a gift to you and all who believe in this humble Child.

He was a human Child, so that He might redeem your humanity. He was wrapped in swaddling cloths, so that you might be wrapped in His righteousness. He was in a manger, so that you might kneel at His altar. He was on earth that you may be in the heavens. He had no place in the inn, so that you might have a place in eternity.

He, being rich, became poor for your sake, that through His poverty you might be rich in His mercy. Therefore His poverty is our inheritance, and the Lord's weakness is our virtue. He chose to lack for Himself, that He may abound for us all.

St. Paul says it this way, "Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth."

For our sake He took upon Himself our fate. He was numbered with us who need His rescue. Because Jesus humbled Himself to be born in such simple circumstances—because He reached down into our world and became human—we may be lifted out of our humiliation, and be raised with Him to the highest Heaven. Through His Cross, we have been forgiven and are lifted up out of our own humility, and are freed to bow before the King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

So, if you are still looking for a gift to give to your family this year, perhaps you could follow in the steps of Christ. Give the gift humility. Be kind to one another today—and tomorrow. Don't count gifts to see who got more. Be content—even if things don't go your way—even if you don't get what you want.

It is okay if we don't get a white Christmas. Or if we are not home for the holidays. Serve in your family and in your home—with no thought of return. Celebrate with one another as God supplies us all that we need—and really—so much more than we need.

Remind yourself—and one another—that Christmas is all about Christ—and His gifts. Anything else will leave us disappointed. Tell the story our kids so capably retold tonight. Focus on Christ's humility in His Nativity—and again at the Cross. This is the gift that each of us need. Christ the Savior has come. And He comes into our world in great humility to rescue us from pride and selfishness and thinking only of ourselves. He sets us free from such things. He sets us free from all our sins. And what a gift that is. In the name of Jesus. Amen.

+Soli Deo Gloria+