

Sermon Series: When God Enters

12/21/25 “Celebration,” Luke 2:1-20, MEV

INTRODUCTION *Experienced reward as result of hardship?
WGEL & our being here today*

God is good & sovereign. Has given free will & holds each of us accountable for how we use it, but He is not taken hostage by it. He will achieve His purposes, somehow incorporating our free will.

MAIN IDEA: God is working to bring us good. How? Here are three things He is involved in.

I. First, directing events (1-4)

A. through leaders...*local, national, world*

Romans 13:1, MEV: 1 Let every person be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except from God, and those that exist are appointed by God. **2** Therefore whoever resists the authority resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment.

1. using their natural bents & willful choices
2. but holding them accountable for their sin

B. affecting groups of people & individuals

1. bringing change...*which can bring hardship*
2. testing our willingness to submit to authority
3. in the face of our prayers to the contrary

Titus 3:1 MEV: Remind them to be subject to rulers and authorities, to obey them, to be ready for every good work,

C. working toward His purposes, which we cannot see

Micah 5:2, MEV: But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, although you are small among the tribes of Judah, from you will come forth for Me one who will be ruler over Israel.

ILLUSTRATION: Sissy Spacek & bull; Babylon

II. Second, developing humility (4-7)

A. through obedience... in face of hardship...*~90 miles, likely took about a week by foot*

B. through commitment...with great responsibility

1. traveling with betrothed, pregnant Mary
2. finding a place for her & childbirth, baby...*in crowded city, as poor family*

C. through humbling...child born...*reinforces obedience & commitment*

1. His child...*they get to participate & have great responsibility*
2. shepherds testify who child is, tell of angels
3. when God moves in our lives, we are humbled as well as joyful

ILLUSTRATION: young man to Louisville; peaches

III. Finally, sending messengers (8-17)

A. of His choosing to serve in prophetic obedience...*angels*

1. bearing His glory...*nothing special about us*
2. going to unknowing people
3. sharing His message... *what He is doing, who He is, what is coming—forgiveness, salvation*

B. adding new servants (shepherds) resulting from His shared word

1. who respond by obeying
 - till achieve goal...*see child*
 - & experience joy as a result of obeying
2. who share widely what they have heard & seen

ILLUSTRATION: bacon & corn meal; vine

CONCLUSION: even now God is working for our good, directing people, developing humility within us, actively sending messengers—will you be one of His messengers?

ALTAR: Have you received forgiveness, life, Spirit? Come forward if willing to tell others as Shepherds did all God has done for you.

479 *Which Direction?*

A young man was walking along a country road. Along came a farmer driving a wagon. Without asking permission, the young man jumped upon the wagon and said, “I’m going to ride along with you to Louisville.” The farmer just looked at him and said nothing. They rode for ten miles. The young man began to feel uneasy. He turned to the farmer and said, “I say, old pop, how much farther is it to Louisville?” The farmer replied, “If you keep in the direction you are going, it is about 25,000 miles, but if you want to get off and walk back the other way, it is about sixteen miles—six miles from where you jumped on.”

Sometimes in life we just jump on for a ride without really finding out where the ride is going to take us. God has a ride mapped out for us already as we follow His divine will. Are you going in the right direction?

peaches

A young man who was trying to establish himself as a peach grower had worked hard and invested all his money in a peach orchard. It blossomed wonderfully but then came a killing frost. He didn’t go to church the next Sunday, nor the next, nor the next. His minister went to see him to discover the reason. The young fellow exclaimed, “I’m not coming any more. Do you think I can worship a God who cares for me so little that He would let a frost kill all my peaches?” The old minister looked at him a few moments in silence, then said kindly, “God loves you better than He does your peaches. He knows that while peaches do better without frosts, it is impossible to grow the best men without frosts. His object is to grow men, not peaches.” We are sometimes so concerned about our material possessions that we fail to realize that setting our hearts upon them can stunt our spiritual **development**. God often has to open our eyes to life’s real values by taking from us its lesser ones.

656 *The Lord Sent It*

Years ago an old lady had no money to buy food. She prayed, “Dear Lord, please send me a side of bacon and a sack of corn meal.” Over and over again she prayed the same prayer aloud. One of the town’s unscrupulous citizens decided to play a trick on her. He dropped a side of bacon and a sack of corn meal down her chimney. It landed in front of her as she knelt in prayer.

Jumping to her feet, she exclaimed, “Oh Lord! You have answered my prayer!” Then she went all over town telling everyone the good news.

This was too much for the scoundrel who dropped the food down her chimney. He ridiculed her publicly and told her that God did not answer her prayer; he did. The old lady replied, “Well, the *devil* may have *brought* it, but it was the *Lord* who *sent* it!”

God answers prayers in many ways.

657 *Sometime—Somewhere*

A young woman, a great lover of flowers, had set out a rare vine at the base of a stone wall. It grew vigorously, but it did not seem to bloom. Day after day she cultivated it and tried every possible way to coax it to bloom.

One morning, as she examined the vine disappointedly, her invalid neighbor called to her and said. “You cannot imagine how much I have been enjoying the blooms of that vine you planted.” The owner followed her neighbor’s gaze and on the other side of the wall was a mass of blooms. The vine had crept through the crevices and produced flowers on the other side.

How often we think our efforts are thrown away because we do not see fruit! We need to learn that in God’s service our prayers, our toil, our crosses are never in vain. They will bear fruit and hearts will receive blessings and joy, sometimes, somewhere.