

Luke's Second Story

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[0 : 00] Father, we ask that you gently but deeply pour out the Holy Spirit upon us and bring the story of Christmas deeply to our heart, to the command center of our lives, where we might know you, Father, and we might be more and more and more shaped by the gospel.

And all these things we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. So, my Christmas Eve sermons are always a bit weird. I know there's lots of little ones. I know they're very, very wiggly.

And so we try to intersperse the sermon with some videos. Andrew, do you have the first video sort of lined up? Okay. Okay. Oh, Christmas tree.

How lovely are we herening. Oh, Christmas tree. Oh, Christmas tree. In forest madness springing. Then in the name of Christmas joy, We speak your life to kill this joy. Oh, Christmas tree. Oh, Christmas tree.

[1 : 23] Now meet our answers swinging. Oh, Christmas tree. Oh, Christmas tree.

With fire and rose now fairly. Oh, Christmas tree. Oh, Christmas tree. And from your home it's fairly. Set that a song with new friends. For long, for long, as you just best. Oh, Christmas tree. Oh, Christmas tree.

Rest from your native dwelling. Oh, Christmas tree. Oh, Christmas tree.

Oh, Christmas tree. With every hour decaying. Oh, Christmas tree. Oh, Christmas tree. Silver and altar reigning.

[2 : 22] With gentle trays to hide the crown. We blew the needles from the ground. Oh, Christmas tree. Oh, Christmas tree.

Oh, Christmas tree. The rotten branch is praying. Humanity. Oh, Christmas tree. Humanity. Humanity. Humanity. Humanity. Humanity.

A flesh and bone plantation. Humanity. A feather tree. No golden decorations.

To cut and tease. And trick his pride. Surround with family through the night. Humanity. Humanity. Humanity. Oh, fall and tree.

Distant for exploration. Notivity. Notivity.

[3 : 19] The King of Heaven. Loving ability. The promise lead. Into the earth now soren.

And bringing forth our own clay The Son of God on Christmas Day Nativity, their fruitful tree Now in our midst has fallen Born to wait as popular Born to give us every love In heaven's name, rejoice and sing My true love, peace for me A couple of weeks ago

I was having a conversation with somebody in a coffee shop And it was just after that Christian missionary You know the young guy who went on an island Where they didn't like people from outside It was a complete unreached people group And he got killed Remember he got killed? His body was on the shore I think For a little while before they were able to rescue it And this fellow, this friend of mine Whom I've talked to quite a few times You know, gay, sort of vaguely Jewish And very, very secular He found himself, he was telling me He found himself completely and utterly gripped By the story of this missionary This young guy Both fascinated that this young guy Would have such a desire to go and even risk his life And at the same time just sort of bothered That something like that would go on in the Christian faith That there's something about that You know, telling other people about it Was so important Anyway, we had this conversation It was one of those odd moments He actually worked in that particular place And we had five or six or seven minutes Where nobody came to the lineup We had a bit of a conversation And he got to air some of his mis...

You know, he said certain things He thought about Christians And he trusted that I wouldn't be offended And one of the things I said to him Is that Christians Nobody who reads the Bible Should

come to the conclusion That the Bible believes the world Is divided between good people and bad people I said, the Bible doesn't teach that Christians aren't supposed to believe that It's just not what Christians believe I said, Christians believe That the line between good and evil Goes right down every individual That every human being We can do good things But everything about us is touched By evil And I said, so the gospel I said to him Isn't about how to make good Bad people good The Bible The gospel Is about how to make dead people alive Jesus didn't come To make bad people good Jesus came To make dead people alive And The wonderful thing about that funny Silly video Is that it really Tries to bring home to us

[6 : 59] The fact that We are separated from God And And we're on On the way to dying I know it came to Come here to Christmas Eve And I tell you really Really fantastic stuff You're all one closer to death Than you were the day before And it bothers lots of us To hear that But the fact of the matter is It's just unbelievably true And And so It's that type of context Where And we have to hear The The stories of Christmas So I I read from Luke If you have your Bibles It's actually going to be up there On the screen I'll just sort of Refresh your mind About the first part of it Andrew If you could just skip to On the screen To verse Verse 8 So Luke Who by the way Was born a pagan Lived a pagan As a pagan For many many years He would have Worshipped the gods of Rome And maybe the gods of Greece Just the same gods With different names We never hear about How it happens But we know that As an adult As a well educated man He was a doctor He became a Christian After having been a pagan For decades And

He ends up Writing A biography of Jesus Because he was A well educated man And as a doctor He was concerned about facts And understanding things And so he interviewed A whole pile of eyewitnesses He read Official documents And he tells us A true story of Jesus Not a story Inspired by true events Or based on true events But a true story of Jesus And we have here This just very very simple Description of how Jesus Got born We'll just sort of read that And just to bring it Right to our minds It goes Verse 1 In those days A decree went out From Caesar Augustus That all the world Should be registered This was the first registration When Quirinius Was governor of Syria And all went to be registered Each to his own town And Joseph also Went up from Galilee From the town of Nazareth To Judea To the city of David Which is called Bethlehem Because he was Of the house and lineage Of David To be registered With Mary His betrothed Who was with child And just sort of

Pause there One of the things Which is so wonderful About this story Is you know A lot of times When I talk to people About what they believe Spiritually They'll tell me Abstractions They'll tell me Principles They'll tell me Different practices That they follow They tell me Some of the ideas That they hold As being very very precious And on one hand Of course We Christians Can understand that I mean we understand Certain practices And we have certain ideas But the thing Which is so wonderful About the Christian faith Is that it's It's rooted in history It's Luke claims to be Telling us A true story About something That happens To a man named Jesus And in the story Of his birth One of the things Which is so neat About this Is that it's Just like real life You know Just like in real life You know The politicians Trump makes a decision And he can make a decision And before you know it Fleets are in motion And armies are in motion And the whole Twitter sphere Is completely and utterly enraged And there's demonstrations

On the street Or it can be the same For Putin It can be the same For Trudeau He can make a decision About who gets to have Summer jobs And the next thing you know The whole nation Has to move and bend And here we have Caesar Augustus He makes a decision That he has to have A better understanding Of who's in his empire So he can tax them better And so he can raise up Troops better And he makes this decision And before you know it Even something Joseph and Mary Whom he's never heard of And he's never heard of Jesus And he's probably never heard Of Jewish people And he's never read the Bible And he just makes this decision Of his own free will And people are moving All over the empire And in the process of it He causes events To just transpire So that Jesus fulfills In his birth A whole pile of prophecies Written anywhere from 400 to a thousand years earlier And that's really cool And so Joseph and Mary Find themselves in Bethlehem And in verse 7 And she gave birth To her firstborn son And wrapped him In swaddling cloths And laid him in a manger Because there was no place

For them in the inn And you know I talked about this A little bit yesterday Probably what's going on Here partially It doesn't have to be an inn It could just be a room Somewhere And the city was Piled with people And Joseph probably Had some relatives there But he was also Facing social ostracism

Because he didn't divorce Or put Mary aside When she had a baby Because she was pregnant Out of wedlock And both of them Are living with that stigma And that social ostracism So the baby And it's very interesting Because this story Is going to tell us Remarkable things About who Jesus is But it tells us That Jesus is born Outside Not inside any room Or shelter But outside And after his birth They put him in a feeding trough Where animals would be fed Now one of the things Which is so cool About the Christian faith So neat about it Is that We believe That God keeps doing things And acting In our world

[12:01] And when God acts He doesn't just sort of act I mean sometimes He acts just in our lives Like that But in the Bible What it is Is that God acts And then he helps us To understand what he's done He tells us This is what I've done And this is what it means And often he tells us And this is how You're supposed to respond To respond correctly And so Luke Here gives us A bit of an explanation About the birth And it comes in the next few verses Look at verse 8 And in the same region There were shepherds Out in the field Keeping watch over their flock By night And an angel of the Lord Appeared to them And the glory of the Lord Shone around them And they were filled With great fear Now just pause here For a second One of the things You need to understand About these shepherds Is that there's nothing Holy about them Now Maybe you could ask Major The Reverend Major Turner Or a couple of other things What's it like When there's a whole pile Of guys out in the bush And there's no women around I'm sure they're probably

Spending all their time Praying Reading Shakespeare Some knitting Maybe So the thing about it Is you have to get rid Of all of this Pious imagery That we have About the Bible What Jesus is What the Bible is saying here Is there's a bunch of guys Out in the bush Without any women around And they were acting Like guys in the bush With no women around That's what they were doing And you can talk To a couple of guys About what that might have been At a bare minimum One of the ways That working class guys When they're in the bush Away from the woman One of the bare minimum Things they would do Is if they talked to each other They'd be insulting each other All the time Because that's how You communicate affection If you're a guy You insult the other person And there was probably Anyway We won't go any further with that But this is a before picture This isn't a whole pile Of people who were picked Because they were especially holy And that's probably part of the reason Why they're afraid An angel shows up Who knows what they were doing And they are completely And utterly terrified by it

And in verse 10 And the angel said to them Fear not For behold I bring you good news Of great joy That will be for all the people For unto you is born this day In the city of David A savior Who is Christ the Lord And this will be a sign for you You will find a baby Wrapped in swaddling cloths And lying in a manger Now just sort of pause there I don't know if you noticed The huge disconnect The angel said Listen First of all It's an angel who shows up To talk to these shepherds The original language Is he stands right He gets right in their face He stands right in front of them So the shepherds are all here The angel isn't sort of like Way back a kilometer Yelling at them The angel gets right in their face And the angel says I bring you good news Of great joy And he says In the city Is born a savior And he is the Lord And he is Christ It means that all of the Old Testament prophecies About however they worked About God's deliver It's all been fulfilled That baby is being born Just down the hill

And then you'd expect to say And this is going to be the sign And the sign might be That if you go down there There's a thousand angels around him If you go down The whole village has come around And they're all praying And they're singing psalms Or maybe there's a whole pile Of army people Or there's some great majestic thing And that's what you expect him to say But the story takes a very, very funny turn This person who is the Savior And the Christ And the Lord He's lying in a manger He's lying in a feeding trough And so then in verse 13 It says And suddenly there was With the angel A multitude of the heavenly host Praising God And by the way Whenever you see that word Heavenly host You know what it means It means an angel army It's one of those things That in a lot of modern liturgies They get rid of any reference To a host Because we have to all be pacifists nowadays And you can't have any reference To the military But what is there It's an angel army And the angel army Is singing And what are they saying?

Glory to God in the highest And on earth peace Among those with whom he is pleased When the angels went away From them into heaven The shepherds said to one another Let us go over to Bethlehem And see this thing That has happened Which the Lord has made known to us And they went with haste And found Mary and Joseph And the babe lying in a manger And when they saw it

They made known the saying That had been told them Concerning this child And all who heard it Wondered at what the shepherds told them So they Here's one of the things Which is so cool about this You know My When you have a remarkable event You remember things Some of you know I have nine kids So I don't know There's Thousands of times You pushed a kid In a stroller Like I had thousands of times Where I did that But there's one particular time I was pushing with my wife Some of our kids in the stroller And I always remember That particular event

[17:08] Why do I remember that particular event? Because it happened Remember I don't know how many years ago Was it when all of the eastern seaboard Of Canada and the United States Lost their power? I can't remember how long ago that was But then everybody lost their power You might remember that And so we didn't have any power And it was really, really, really dark In the city It was very unusual Because there's no electricity anywhere And I remember We decided we'd go out for a walk It was like a July night or something We went out for a walk Pushing our little kids in the stroller And I can't remember which one was in the stroller But all of a sudden He excitedly or she excitedly said Look, the power's come back on And it was because a car was coming around the corner And my child thought That because the car had lights on It meant the power was coming back on And I mean, that's a nothing story But I always remember that I always remember that Because of the context of us having no power And the thing which is so neat about this story Is that in a sense Caesar Augustus organized And orchestrated a story So that 40 years later 30 years later

When people are looking out at eyewitnesses They'd say Do you remember back When Caesar Augustus Made us all go back to Bethlehem And was there anything weird That happened that night And people would all go Oh yeah I could hardly get any sleep that night Because a woman who was outside Was giving birth to a baby And she kept screaming Because babies, when they get born It's not usually quiet Like without any drugs It's like there's lots of screaming And so probably for decades afterwards You know, people might not remember All sorts of other births But that birth They would remember And because they would remember that birth And because they hadn't been able To have any sleep There were probably lots of people Coming down to see What was going on with the woman And they would have seen the shepherds And they would have heard All the things that the shepherds had to say And it's one of the things Which is remarkable about this story That makes it so believable That when Luke was going to look For eyewitnesses to find out What happened He'd have all sorts of people Who could remember Because of that unique set Of circumstances Before we go any further

Next video So, just to sort of bring this to Start to bring it to a bit of a conclusion What we hear in the Christmas story What Christmas Christmas is all about In secular Christmas Not that there's anything wrong With secular Christmas It's not that there's anything wrong With Canadian Christmas But Christian Christmas Is something different It emerges out of remembering And reconnecting And rejoicing In these foundational stories About the birth of Jesus At the heart of this Is, if you could put up The first point, Andrew At the heart of this Is Luke's story Is what the angels say The baby is It's what the angels tell the shepherds Who the baby is And the angels say That when we hear God We hear good news We hear good news from God That's what the angels say And the good news from God Is that our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ Is born It's news that comes from God

It's news about who Jesus is And it's news that All of the prophecies are fulfilled That he is going to be the one Who is going to save us And it opens up this other thing That ultimately only God can save us And so when it says That he is Lord It has this double meaning It means that he is to be Lord of our lives But it also points to the fact That it's not just a human being Who has been born But that it is God The Son of God himself Who has been born Who has come to save us If we could see the next video Which is silence and fury That will help bring this home If you could put up the next point One of the things Which is so remarkable About this story Is not just that God himself comes And is born in a stable Not just that he is the one Who is going to save us Not just that he is the one Who is Lord Not just that he is the one Who is keeping God is showing That God has kept All of his promises To send a Savior And deliver But hidden in this story

And a part that often Gives us lots of trouble Is this other idea That everything about What God is doing In the person of Jesus Is all grace We hear good news from God Our faith in him Is all grace From beginning to end And every moment in between It's all grace And it comes in this odd part Of the angel song Which often troubles people But it shouldn't trouble you Because what it's saying Is

exactly what I have Up there It says in the song Of the angels Glory to God in the highest And on earth peace Among those with whom He is pleased And the message is Is that because of The birth of this baby There is going to be A means that God Has provided Whereby human beings Can once again Be at peace with God We've been at enmity With God We have been enemies Of God God himself Is doing something To make peace With himself And it says On those whom He has favor And whom he has blessing And the wonderful thing Is this news

[22 : 11] All comes to shepherds They're once again A group of guys Out in the bush Without the women Not doing holy things Probably And the message Comes to them And this is the wonderful thing It's out of God's grace That you hear about Jesus It's out of God's grace That you turn your heart to him When you turn your heart to him What he gives you is grace Which is unmerited kindness And what it is And so at every point in time It's not as if you have to Live a good life And finally God Will show you grace It's not as if you have to Be successful It's not as if you have to Be a winner It's not as if you have to Be beautiful It's not as if you have to Be just anything like that You can be broken You can be anything And that God Comes to you With unmerited kindness That you might turn to him And when you turn to him You only receive Unmerited kindness And when you walk with Jesus All you ever receive from him Is unmerited kindness And mercy And that's what the angels Are saying

God is providing The means by which We can be at peace With him And everything about this Is grace Unmerited favor Unmerited favor You don't have to become Purified Before you know something And before you can Have peace with God It begins with having Peace with God And that begins To have a way By which you can start To see the world Different And start to live A different type of life If you could put up The next point Andrew That would be very Very great You see What we need to do Is to pray That the Lord Will grow in us A new sense Of identity and self As I receive As you receive As we receive And ponder Your good news God's good news You see Because what happens Is the way That all religions Sean did a wonderful sermon I don't know how many years ago How many months ago it was Where he talks about How every different system Of thought Or religion Or ideology It's all about a matter Of you have to Purify yourself In some way And after you've Purified yourself In some way Then maybe you start To get some type Of illumination And knowledge And after you've Been purified And you have Some illumination And knowledge Then you can finally Have union with God And the good news Of the gospel Is that it's The complete Opposite process That what happens Is completely And utterly Out of grace You put your faith And trust in Jesus And you have peace With God And union with God And as that starts To grip your identity And your self Understanding of who you are It starts to illuminate you You have the security To start to look within you And you see the things Within you That have to be dealt with And have to be changed And it gives illumination About how generosity Has to have a bigger part Of your life Or love Or forgiveness And as this story Grips you It starts to give you A way of seeing yourself And identifying yourself And understanding who you are That creates the energy To start to change How you live That's the gospel So folks We're going to have One more video

To wrap this up If you could just Put up the final point Though before we have The video Here's how Here's You see The Christmas stories Are to start To free us And form us Into how we celebrate Christmas And this is the entire Old Testament pattern About how you do that That we celebrate By remembering with others That's what we're doing tonight We remember who Jesus is And what he did for us With others We rejoice with others We recommit to Jesus With others Well and then Most of us Will do this either tonight Or tomorrow We feast Hopefully with others Make sure you invite others along And that's what we do We come together To remember Jesus And as we remember Jesus We get more and more Gripped by it And it starts to form us This wonderful video Which we'll have In closing It's just a wonderful Telling of the Christmas story And it's a wonderful Testimony of a person Who just realized That even though She was a Christian She was finding her identity And self Sense of worth In all the wrong places

And she needed to be Once again Just gripped by the gospel This will be We'll see you with this And then we'll close in prayer I know It's no one's fault It's no one's fault That someone is born With a disability But then you still feel like But why did this happen to us?

[26 : 29] Welcome to all of you Please take a seat We want to now share A nativity treat This story of Christmas We tell it in rhyme Some actors have lines While some of us mime I was overwhelmed With grief At the loss I thought A beautiful baby Has got down syndrome And it's such a disaster Meanwhile Great Caesar Augustus In rhyme Made a decree Return to your home For Joseph's

ruling Met Wesleyan town So they rode on their donkey All the way down God didn't give me A straightforward answer Of why this happened It just took time For me to realise God's answer was It wasn't so much What was wrong with Lever As much as there was

Something wrong With the way I was thinking Mary was speechless She didn't know How these things Could have happened But still she bowed I think of Mary Of all she goes through It's not her plan It's God's plan She just goes with it She's humble She's calm She's reassured By the fact That everything's Going to be okay For he has remembered me His lonely servant From now on All the people Will call me happy He has brought down My king from the throne And lift up the lonely What we learnt Was that God was with us God suffered with us And he gave us The most beautiful child And there was no reason For me to grieve Or compare her Or you know Feel sorry for her In my old view Before she taught me I thought she would lack

She's not lacking So gathered around That we may be void All people are welcome To know heaven's joy From angels to donkeys From shepherds to kings The little Lord Jesus God's miracle he brings He came to our darkness From heaven above He stooped to the prim And the cross out of love He shed in our weakness And weakness and mess And still he embraced us Nevertheless If you're feeling rejected Exclude you to stranger Remember the one Who came down to the manger That a repente About who came into The Skywalker Only now The man I wish The Lord And still there Is none That we Send God's And still there To rest Our ██████████ello This His Is ██████████ Or Michele Further centimetersriteanche Year Amen. Please stand and we'll just close this with a prayer.

Let's stand. Father, thank you for the gift of Jesus. Thank you that he comes down to share the mess and the complexity of our lives, that he comes to bear the sin that we cannot deal with.

[30 : 21] He comes to bear the shame that we cannot deal with. He comes to deal with the accusations that we cannot deal with. And we thank you, Father, that he deals with all of these things when he dies on the cross.

But we also thank you that, Father, his perfect life clothes us as well. That when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, it's not just what he takes away, but what he gives us.

And we thank and praise you, Father, that when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, he is with us every day. And he is with us in our weakness. And he's with us when we're anxious. And so we ask, Father, that the Holy Spirit would grip us with this story of who Jesus is, remembering that the cradle reveals what his lordship is like in our lives.

And grant us a deeper trust in him that he might form how we understand who we are and what our hope is. And all these things we ask in the name of Jesus, your son and your savior.

Amen.