

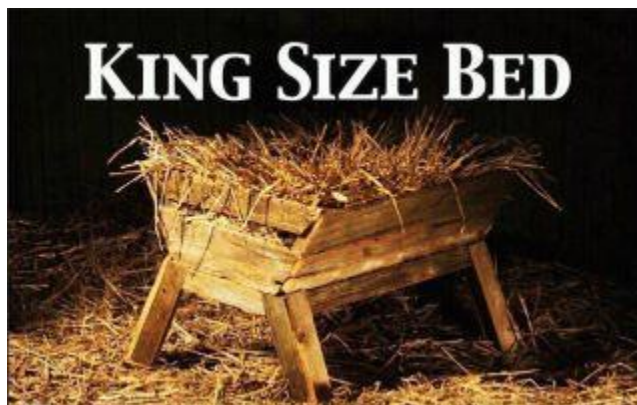
“A King Size Christmas”

Luke 2:1-7

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December 13, 2020

I saw a picture on a Christmas card, and it grabbed my attention. It was a picture of a manger. The manger plays a central role in the Christmas story. The angel promises the shepherds they will find in Bethlehem, a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. They hurry off to Bethlehem and sure enough, they find Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus, who is lying in the manger. Of course, the manger is a huge part of the Christmas story. But what captivated me, what intrigued me, and what touched me deeply was the caption that accompanies the picture of the manger. It says, “King Size Bed.”



Now, anyone who has any experience with a king size bed knows a manger is not a king size bed. That is part of what I found so intriguing. A king size bed connotes largess, luxury, comfort, status, and a certain degree of privilege and prestige. A manger is not a king size bed, not by any stretch of the imagination. There is nothing about the birth of Jesus Christ in a manger that is remotely connected to largess, luxury, comfort, status, privilege, or prestige. Instead, his birth was clouded with rumor and scandal and his parents couldn't even swing a room at the inn. A manger is definitely not a king size bed.

But then this child named Jesus was born. And because of Jesus, countless people from all over the world gather on a night we call Christmas Eve, and they look right at a lowly manger and say with joy and gratitude, with wonder and awe, “Oh yes, that is a king size bed.” If you do not understand what is meant by a king size bed, you might ask, “So he started out poor and became rich? He was born weak and vulnerable and became strong and powerful?” No, in fact, it is just the opposite. The Son of God started out rich and became poor for our sake. He was strong and powerful, and to save the world he became weak and vulnerable. The manger truly did hold a king, the king who created the heavens and the earth.

This morning, it is my privilege to invite you to come and spend a few moments looking closely at this manger that is actually a king size bed. Imagine that this manger holds a baby boy. Come near to this manger and open the eyes of your heart. Look in the manger and see that this one named Jesus comes with a king size message. Jesus would preach in synagogues and by the seashore, on mountain tops and out on the plain, and his message was always king size. He proclaimed, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” He preached a king size message and he came on a king size mission. To any who would listen he would say, “I have come to seek and to save the lost.” And he meant every single one of the children who belong to his Heavenly Father. To help us understand his king size mission he would tell about one lost sheep, one lost coin, and one lost son, one lost daughter, out of a world filled with people who are alone, isolated, wandering, searching, and desperate for a king who could change their life. And for this king, every single, solitary, life meant the whole world to him. His mission was to save each and every man and woman and boy and girl. That is a king size mission.

He brought a king size joy to that mission. He said that when even one lamb was rescued, when one coin was retrieved the

angels in heaven rejoiced. Can you imagine the king size joy that is present when heaven throws a party? And then this king told a story about a father whose son was lost, whose son had rebelled, whose son had rejected and turned his back on everything dear to the father. But when that son came home the father was filled with joy, embracing his son, wrapping him in arms of love, and shedding tears of great gladness. Jesus came on a king size mission, and he came with king size joy.

But the king came because there was a king size problem. This wonderful world we live in, this wonderful world created by our wonderful God, was living in the shadow of sin and death. The problem of sin and death was so great it demanded more than a simple solution. It demanded more than simply saying, "I'm sorry." It demanded more than doing some form of penance and trying harder. The problem of sin demanded a solution that only God himself could provide. That solution was for sin to be completely forgiven, wiped away once and for all, for death to be defeated and banished forever. The problem of sin demanded a king size solution. So that little child born into a king size bed grew up to become a king size Savior.

One day that king size Savior named Jesus put on his king size crown. It was a crown made of thorns. As God had hinted at years before the king size solution would involve a servant who suffered. He would be wounded. But by his very wounds this world would find healing. After he put on his king size crown, Jesus climbed up on his king size throne, the cross. On that cross he died. His death was God's king size solution to the problem of sin and death, and to the problem of being separated from God.

Did God's king size solution work? Did it ever! When Jesus died on the cross, he solved the problem of sin. On the cross, "God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting our sins against us." Christ died once and for all, the king who was

righteous, our king, for us, the unrighteous, and his death brings us to God. When Jesus rose from the dead, it was a king size victory. “Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death is your sting?” Gone. Gone, Forever gone. Death is not the victor. God has triumphed in Jesus Christ. He is God’s king size solution and he brings king size life. One day heaven will proclaim with shouts of joy that are like the roar of rushing waters and like loud peals of thunder. “Hallelujah! The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth.” Hallelujah. And he shall reign forever, and ever, and ever, and ever. Hallelujah. This world was faced with a king size problem. God had a king size solution.

This morning we gather around a king size bed. It seems appropriate to give a king size invitation. Is there room in your heart for this king size bed, which holds the one who is God’s king size solution, who is God’s king size Son, Jesus Christ, who is this world’s king size Savior? Is there room in your heart for this Jesus to come and set up his king size throne? We have lit candles welcoming Christ. Would you be willing to invite Christ Jesus into your life and let his candle of light burn bright right in your very heart of hearts? Could your heart be a king size bed? And could today be the day you invite the King of kings to come and make your heart his home?