

FAITH

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“Daddy, look, Christmas lights!” she said while pointing excitedly from the backseat. “Daddy, more Christmas lights!” And on and on it went.

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That was my recent trip into town one evening with my two year old. Christmas lights are a very exciting part of life when you are two years old. And, truth be told, they have always been a very exciting part of my life too. Whether I was two, twelve or thirty-seven I’ve always enjoyed Christmas lights. They’re bright, they sparkle and they are something that always seems to signal that something exciting is about to happen.

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And something exciting is about to happen! On Christmas Eve night, once again, we can all go to a church, read in our homes, or hear proclaimed in some way these words “and she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth, and laid him in a manger” (Luke 2:7)

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Those words, oh those words, they have changed our world so much. They proclaim that we are not alone. They tell us that God has entered into our human story in a definitive way. Those words allow us to know, in all our hours of need, that God has wonderfully entered into our world so that we will no longer be alone, so that we will no longer be separated from God and each other.

They proclaim to us, those words do, that by entering the world through an unwed mother and an adoptive father, God has thrown the world on its head. God does not seek to conform to the way our world makes sense of things or values status, but rather God seeks to transform our lives and values who we are because of who God is. God came into this world in a scandalous way and valued the “least of these.” This means that you and I, in all our moments of brokenness, can know that we are claimed, loved and important.

Additionally, those words proclaim to us that we have important roles to play. We may not be Mary, we may not be Joseph, but certainly we can be a shepherd. Each of us are tending to our own business in our own fields. We are watching after our sheep. We are caring for what God has placed before us. And we can look up from our work and see the brightness, not just of Christmas lights, but of the light, “the light of the world.” We can provide powerful witness to how God’s light and love is working in the world.

In all these ways and more exciting things are happening. And whether it is Christmas lights, Christmas songs or just the love extended from neighbor to neighbor, the story of that night so long ago in Bethlehem comes alive. May we all have the excitement of two year olds and cry out with wonder, with joy, with love.

“And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors!” Luke 2:13-14