Or, as one of the shepherds of Bethlehem put it:
What Just Happened?

Every year we tell the story of Christmas...

The Incarnation is the hinge point of human history.

"Unfathomable" God's Gift Exchange

What happened when God became Man...
When the Creator invaded Creation...

"Unfathomable" God's Gift Exchange

How did the incarnation impact the people who were associated with the event?

How do you tell a story?
How did the events surrounding the Incarnation take place?

The Cast of Characters
• Herod
• The Wise Men
• The Religious Scholars
• The Shepherds
• The Innkeeper
• The People of Bethlehem

"Unfathomable" God’s Gift Exchange
The Wise Men became Worshipers.

"Unfathomable" God’s Gift Exchange
Herod who was a winner became a loser (he failed to find the child).

"Unfathomable" God’s Gift Exchange
The Shepherds who were generally considered losers became winners (they found the child).

"Unfathomable" God’s Gift Exchange
The religious scholars who knew the answer to where the child was to be born never even looked!
The innkeeper found that the guests who had the most fuss made over them were not the rich folks in the “imperial suite” but the poor folks in the stable.

The people of Bethlehem (where nothing ever happened) had an event of Biblical proportion happen in their town.

The shepherds became invited guests of honor, with an invitation delivered by some very high class messengers.

But you, Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times.”

Micah 5:2

The Humble were exalted.
The Exalted were humbled.
The Lowly were lifted up.

You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart.

Jeremiah 29:13
Do you see how the Incarnation turned everything upside down?

The gift you get says a lot about the person who gave it to you.

“Unfathomable”
God’s Gift Exchange

Jesus exchanged a palace for a stable, a throne for a manger.

“Unfathomable”
God’s Gift Exchange

Jesus came to Bethlehem, not Jerusalem.

“Unfathomable”
God’s Gift Exchange

Jesus went to Galilee, not Judea.

Leaving Nazareth, he went and lived in Capernaum, which was by the lake in the area of Zebulun and Naphtali— to fulfill what was said through the prophet Isaiah:

“Land of Zebulun and land of Naphtali, the way to the sea, along the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles— the people living in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.” Matthew 4:15-16
God’s Gift Exchange

Jesus hung out with “publicans and sinners” not Pharisees.

So what does that say about the character of God?

Do you begin to get the picture here?

Jesus entry into our world has a way of upending the established order of things and defying or destroying human expectations.

The humble are exalted.
The exalted are humbled.
Those that seek find.
The prisoners are set free.
The outcasts become sons.

The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD’s favor.

Isaiah 61:1-2
How would you describe the effect of what God has done in choosing the Incarnation as His way of Salvation?

Jesus used this phrase as the tag line at least three times in his ministry:

- The parable of the workers in the vineyard
- To his disciples after the conversation with the rich young ruler
- At the end of the parable about the narrow door

The last will be first, and the first will be last.


Both Peter and James thought this verse from Proverbs was important enough to quote in their epistles.

That is why Scripture says: “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. James 4:6-8,10

When you come to The Exchange what will you bring? What will you receive in return?
The Exchanges of Christmas
Advent 2018 – Week #3
How will the Incarnation impact you?