

SERMON NOTES

DECEMBER 6, 2020

Start by praying and asking for God's help as you seek to grow as authentic followers of Jesus.

LISTENING TO GOD'S WORD

1. Read 2 Samuel 12:16–25. What do you find difficult in these verses? What do you learn from David's grief? Where do you see grace in these verses?

2. In his sermon, Jeff said:

To face our suffering, we have to hold two ends of God's goodness together —
"God is near to the broken-hearted" (Psalm 34:18)
and
"He works all things together for good" (Romans 8:28)
— both are true at the same time.

How do these two truths work together to give us balance and stability?

3. In the genealogy of Matthew 1:1-17, consider how all of Old Testament history pointed to the arrival of Jesus. What names stood out to you? Where do you see God's grace? What does it mean that Jesus entered such a messy family tree?
4. *Incarnation* is the theological term for the mystery that Jesus took on flesh to become fully human while also remaining fully divine. Read and discuss the following quote from Dorothy Sayers. As you consider this quote, what most amazes you about Jesus incarnation?

"The incarnation means that for whatever reason God chose to let us fall into a condition of being limited, to suffer, to be subject to sorrows and death—he has nonetheless had the honesty and the courage to take his own medicine.... He himself has gone through the whole of human experience—from the trivial irritations of family life and the cramping restrictions of hard work and lack of money to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation, defeat, despair, and death.... He was born in poverty and suffered infinite pain—all for us—and thought it well worth his while."

LIVING IT OUT

5. When you struggle or doubt, which of the following is more difficult for you to truly trust:
 - Christ is near to the broken-hearted? (Psalm 34:18)
 - God works all things together for your good? (Romans 8:28)
6. Are you facing any suffering, loneliness or discouragement right now that would benefit from the prayer and encouragement of friends? Who would you be willing to share that news with today?
7. Because Christ has come, we all have hope which tells us:
 - You do not yet know the end of your story
 - You do not yet know what grace may change
 - You do not yet know what joy may come

How does taking a long view or eternal view of your life bring you hope for today, even in this moment?

8. This Christmas, what is one way that you might invite Christ into your messy story or messy family?