

# **God Hasn't Given Up on Us Yet**

By: Meagan McLaughlin

December 24, 2021. On this Christmas Eve, Pastor Meagan's message is on how Jesus in all his humanity comes to us, so that we might begin to let God love us when loving ourselves feels impossible.

Readings: [Luke 2:1-20](#)

\*\*\* Transcript \*\*\*

All Advent, we have been waiting and watching for Christmas to come. We've been listening to the messages of hope that have come to us through so many voices this season, letting us know of God's promises to all people and all creation. And now, Christmas Eve has finally arrived, and we celebrate one more time the coming of God into the world in Jesus.

Throughout all of humanity's story, our story, as revealed in our scriptures, we hear over and over how we've been in relationship with God. God has come to us and spoken with us, made promises to us, and we've made promises to God. And over and over, humanity has fallen short. We have not loved and trusted the God who formed and loves us so well, we've not shown each other God's love the way God created us to do. And we humans haven't always lived up to God's call for us, and we've revealed ourselves to be, as Luther says, not fully saint, not perfect, but both saint and sinner.

There are those moments in scripture — like Noah and the ark, and the Israelites in the desert, and Lot and his family — where it seems God has given up on us. And at the last minute, always, something or someone changes God's mind, convinces God to give us another chance.

Often, we might think of Jesus's coming as God's final, last-ditch effort to save humanity, redeeming that which sometimes seems irredeemable... somehow emphasizing the brokenness of our humanity as compared with the divinity of God. This evening, as we come together to celebrate the coming of God in Christ, recognize the dawn of hope into our world in Jesus, there is another message that we can see in this most important story of our faith, and humanity's place among God's beloved creation.

There are so many ways God could have come to us. Look at all the ways God showed up before this. A voice in a burning bush. A whisper in wind. Angels, over and over. A pillar of fire, and cloud. In the psalms, God moves mountains and shakes the earth. I could go on. And certainly the God who has come to us in so many ways could have come to us like this again, showing up in a way that illustrates a distinction between God and humans.

But God didn't do that when they came in Jesus. Of all the ways that God could have chosen to come into our world and reveal the love they have for us, in Jesus they chose to become one of us. A human being, flesh and blood. God embodied all of the love, mercy, and joy they have for creation and for us in this tiny little human baby.

The most amazing thing about Christ's coming is that it shows us that God has not given up on us, after all. The promises of God are not beyond us. In Christ, God has shown us that human beings, along with the earth and sky and trees and water and the fellow creatures with whom we live on this planet, are God's beloved creation so much so that God chose to become human to reveal God's self to us.

God has not given up on us. God came to us in Jesus, and because of that, we know God's love for us endures no matter how much we might stumble. We know that, in all of our struggles, joys, pains, hopes, grief, and love, we have never been alone, and never will be. In Christ, God understands our human experience, claims us as part of God's beloved creation, and walks alongside us every step we take. Human and divine are not so separate as we might think. God is intimately connected to all of creation, and because Jesus came to us, we know that includes us humans, too.

And just in case we might think that God came for some and not for all, look at our gospel today tells a different story. As so often happens, when it came time to let people know that Jesus was born, the angels first brought the joyous news to the shepherds, not the emperor. It was those caring for their sheep in the fields, unseen by most, uncounted by the emperor's census, who were among the first to hear the incredible news of just how much God loves us.

Jesus came to embody God's love for all of us human creatures. And in the birth, life, and death and resurrection of Christ, we know that we are called to do the same. We can't love and serve perfectly on our own — we are saint and sinner after all — but we followers of Christ are called to be transformed by the Spirit, to let God love others through us when we can't do it ourselves. Jesus, in all his humanity, comes to us in this moment, so that we might begin to let God love us when loving ourselves feels impossible.

Fellow beloved human children of God, this is the promise of Jesus. Just when we feel the most alone, the most unworthy, the most irredeemable, just when the world around us seems to have crossed over that tipping point and is as hopeless as the world before the flood, God breaks in. Right into the beauty and the brokenness, God shows up in Jesus to make sure we know the truth, and everything changes as we enter into this promise. Hope dawns. God's love persists. God hasn't given up with us yet, and never will. And that is truly good news.

Thanks be to God.

\*\*\* Keywords \*\*\*

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