



Christmas Reflection: December 25, 2018

*So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the LORD made her conceive, and she bore a son...They named him Obed; he became the father of Jesse, the father of David.
Ruth 4.13, 17b*

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David... Matthew 1.1

Friends and Colleagues in ministry in God's mission within Riverside Presbytery greetings:

And now it is Christmas, the annual celebration of Jesus' birth, when God took the risk of taking on flesh: "...the Word became flesh and lived among us..." (John 1.14a). The story that ends Ruth is begun anew in the Scriptures that witness to God's gift of Jesus.

In addition to John's poetic depiction of Jesus' origins, Luke and Matthew share birth narratives. Luke is intentional in an indirect way about themes that will be found in his Gospel: the role the Roman government will play in Jesus' life with the census; how even before he is born there is no ready place to stay; how angels of God remind the listener to not "be afraid" while sharing the good news; how shepherds, whose work at lambing season would have kept them from regular religious practice, represent other persons who are marginalized to whom Jesus will attend; and how shepherds become the first evangelists. Matthew shares his birth narrative in a direct fashion, affirming that the birth of Jesus the Messiah is a fulfillment of prophecy credited to Isaiah in which Emmanuel (which means "God is with us") appears. Emmanuel/God With Us: Yes, it is Christmas!

How many Christmases have you be present for? How many Christmases has the faith community you gather with been present for? What is making this Christmas unique for you? For the faith community you gather with? What risks is God in Jesus' name through the power and passion of the Spirit inviting you and the faith community to participate in?

To speak of risk during Advent and in preparing for Christmas, as I have been doing for the past month, may seem foreign for you. And yet, what greater initial risk is there than a pregnancy? For those of us who have had the privilege of being parents, the birth of our children best help us identify with the risks involved in God taking on flesh in the person of Jesus the Christ, Jesus the Messiah. Many of us have experienced pregnancies that didn't go to term, for a whatever reason. Jesus' birth, like every birth, is testimony from God that God is not done with humankind, that God is not finished taking risks. Thanks be to God! May you experience as fully as possible God's blessings this Christmas!

Thank you for reflecting on these questions as you once again inter into celebrating God's great risk in the presence and presents of Jesus. May you find them helpful amidst your commitment to thriving as well as surviving as children of God.

Be Well...
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