

THE SCANDAL OF CHRISTMAS
Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 2:1-20

Most Nativity sets are cute. They are, after all, how most of us want this time of year to be—safe and warm and cheery, with lowing cattle and humming angels in the background.

But behind those cute little Nativity sets, there are scandals and public embarrassments that threaten to derail the whole story. What are these scandals and what can they teach us today?

SCANDAL LESSON #1: God accomplishes his will not through **POWER**, **WEALTH**, and **PRIVILEGE** but through **LOVE**.

Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. ... For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."
Mark 10:42-45

SCANDAL LESSON #2: God chooses the **WEAK**, **FOOLISH**, and **VULNERABLE** to accomplish his will.

Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes or powerful or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose things that are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important.
1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NLT

SCANDAL LESSON #3: Scandal in my own life does not **DISQUALIFY ME** from **BEING USED OF GOD**.

Scandal does not destroy the work of God,
it only heightens the trust.

Next steps: What can we take away from this scandalous story?

1. Don't become enamored with power, wealth, and privilege but follow Jesus' example of **HUMILITY** and **SERVICE**.

In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Philippians 2:5-8

2. Learn to welcome God's **GRACE**—God's incredible love for you.

Three different times I begged the Lord to take it away. Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me. That's why I take pleasure in my weaknesses, and in the insults, hardships, persecutions, and troubles that I suffer for Christ. For when I am weak, then I am strong. 2 Corinthians 12:8-10 NLT

What excuses do you use that hinders God using you in a greater fashion?

3. **DO SOMETHING!** Get out and **BLESS SOMEBODY** (start small)

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. 1 John 3:18

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What is God saying to me?

What am I going to do about it?

Love God, Love Others, Learn Jesus, **DO SOMETHING!**
Today's sermon can be found on our website beaverdambaptist.org