

***Beyond a Two-Dimensional Faith***

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[Music Intro]

[Male voice] The following is a presentation of Artisan Church in Rochester, New York.

[Voice of Pastor Judy]

Morning growing up I watched the nightly news at 6 and 10. NBC, CBS, ABC. That's how we got our news, other than the Sunday paper which was the Minneapolis Star Tribune. It really seems, like, so archaic. Three stations at a scheduled time and new stories from one local paper. How could that have, like, been life? It's so crazy. And now I have access to the news at the touch of a button whenever I want to scroll through it and whomever I want to hear it from, I can do that. Whether it be NPR, Al-Jazeera, Huffington Post, The Wall Street Journal, BBC, CNN, not very often, Fox, and sometimes the New York Times. Facebook, Twitter, Reddit, BuzzFeed, The Daily Show with Trevor Noah, Tumblr, Google, Apple News... I mean, I can get it in whatever product, whatever package I want. We live in a world of the endless 24 hour news cycle and the options and viewpoints are also endless. Unfortunately in order to fill the 24 hours of every day and to keep people watching, more often than not most of the options that we hear lean toward bad news for the sake of ratings. And maybe you have noticed this, I don't know why we like to hear bad news, but we tend to click on it. And not only is much of the bad news for the sake of ratings, but also for the sake of ratings, news is now tailored to our viewpoint of choice, which has led to accusations of "fake news" [makes quotation marks with fingers] and partisan news.

And so now, rather than uniting us, news sadly separates us into all sorts of factions. Fractures are so deep that it can seem like those who watch CNN live in an entirely different world than those who tune into FOX. These days the news isn't only bad, it's incredibly divisive. And I know for many of you it's not just the global or local news that's bad. For many of you the news might not be good for you personally. Perhaps friends or family are struggling, and it all comes to you in real time through texts and the constant feeds on your phone. Half the posts in the blogs you're reading are filled with the pains of people you know personally or people with whom you feel like you have a connection. Many of you know just yesterday Rachel Held Evans died. A powerful, prophetic woman in ministry who encouraged and challenged so many of us - women like myself who have been raised in evangelical churches to take a deep look at our convictions,

## 2019-05-05 *Beyond a Two-Dimensional Faith*

to see, man, is really what I believe *good* news of *great* joy for *all* people? She died at 37. She leaves behind a husband, a one year old, a three year old, and a group of followers who found in her the hope of a different kind of church and a new kind of language for their faith. I didn't really know Rachael personally outside of correspondence like texts and this sort of stuff, but it feels like a personal pain when someone who has given you hope can no longer speak that over you personally. Sometimes as we scroll through it does feel all so gloomy and I know I can find myself asking the question: really, is there any kind of good news that could hold us all together? Is there anything that might unite us? And it's in the midst of this reality that I want to read again today's scripture passage. It's so short, it says:

*Do not be afraid I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all people. Today in the City of David a savior has been born to you and this is the Messiah the Lord.*

If you have ever heard this verse, as Melody mentioned, you've probably heard it at Christmas. Truth be told when God invited me about a year ago to live into this verse as the guiding scripture for more than a couple days it was like: you want me to do Christmas all year? I mean I know there's Christmas in July but it feels like excessive, you know, and so, but this is not just a Christmas passage. This is actually the Gospel in tweet form. This is summing it all up in under 280 characters - it's actually 165 wouldn't fit in the former format but now that we get 280 characters we could actually do this - this is not a passage just for December 25th. This is the introduction and the synopsis of all that's going to come next for God's people. This is a guide to what God has in store for all of us as a result of sending His Son Jesus Christ into this world. Do not be afraid. I bring you good news it's of great joy it's for everyone. Today in a *real* city and in a *real* place a *real* savior is born and this savior is the Messiah the Lord.

Now I want to pause for one second before I move completely forward to say this: small words often mean big things in the Bible. Words like "all" "no one" "nothing" and "everyone." These are game changers in the text and we can skim over them as if they mean nothing. Great joy for *all* people. All never means some. It's a very simple fact. Similarly, there is no one righteous not even one means no one. Nothing can separate you from the love that is found in Christ Jesus. Nothing simply means no thing. Everyone who calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved. It means everyone. Do not be afraid I bring you good news of joy great joy that is for all people. Today in the City of David a savior has been born to you and he is the Messiah the Lord.

So let me start with this. This is a sort of like, newsflash kind of tweet. This is the breaking news that was delivered into the world at a particular time in history. And generally speaking, when God delivers a direct message into the world it is not just some random conglomeration of information. As a rule of thumb when God speaks something it's best not to just place it on the

## 2019-05-05 *Beyond a Two-Dimensional Faith*

same that level of all the other posts. When you sense God is speaking to don't just like scroll past. Take a minute to actually read the text and see if it has anything to say to you. The news in our passage is NOT scroll past kind of news and to make that clear it is announced this way: this is *good* news, *great* joy and the original hearers clearly understood this to mean that they were going to want to swipe right on this one, you know. Like, this is something that they're hooking up with! [audience laughs] I mean they they they really thought this is the text for me! Because when the angels deliver this message from God they don't come in saying like some sort of gloominess, like, I.... I have a *little* bit of a word for you.... I mean.... I have some decent news to share. Something to say. This is not the sort of like "bottom of the glass wouldn't spill over if Jesus shook me" kind of news. This is not just like a dribbling sort of drivel coming out of God's mouth. This is not the intonation of the how the announcement is given. In fact it's like what they have to share cannot fit in the standard packaging of just one angel delivery. It required an entire choir of angels to make this heard. When this passage is declared it comes with this sort of intonation. We have, like, *good* news and it's like, of *great* joy you are not going to believe this! What we have to say, this news, is so good that the angels are bursting out of heaven bursting in, ready to share life changing, earth altering, breaking news! This is so full kind of news - this is the kind of news that's filled so full to the brim that you wouldn't even have to nudge them for it to be spilling all over the people around them.

[Pastor Judy fills up glass with water to the brim and shakes it until some spills over]

This isn't that "bottom of your glass kinda got to shake me to get some out of me" news, this is full to the brim, overflowing from the top, bursting from heaven, all you have to do is run into me a tiny little bit and it's going to, well, you're going to get wet. I bring you good news of great joy that is for all people.

You see, I believe this. I believe that there is still better news breaking into the world that in spite of, in fact maybe even better in the middle of what is taking place all around us, that because of what God has done and what God is still doing there is better news than what's showing up on our feeds all the time. Which is why I'm often spilling over into everybody's lives because I can't help myself. And this was evident from a very early moment in my walk. Since the day I met Jesus I simply have been bursting. Now I'm an evangelist, and I know that's not for everybody, but I just have not been able to help it coming out my mouth! I just like to talk about Jesus! And this is kind of a funny story. I'm married to this wonderful introvert his name is Jeff. And when we were just dating and we were going to R.E.I. - you guys have that store right? It's a sporting goods store. And when we were going in my husband said: "Judy can we not talk to anybody in the store about Jesus?" Now this really wasn't particular to Jesus, it's just like please don't talk to people, right? I mean, and I said "OK I'm not going to talk to anybody

## 2019-05-05 *Beyond a Two-Dimensional Faith*

about Jesus unless they ask.” I mean, it felt like a fair compromise, you know, in our early dating relationship. And so we went in and he went to sleeping bags and I went to tents, you know, and after about 15 minutes he came over to tents where I was talking to somebody about Jesus.

[audience laughs]

He graciously entered into the conversation which means he sat silently and nodded and after I was done were walking out the store he said: “Can I just ask you what they asked about Jesus?” I said: “Yeah - they asked me if I liked camping.” and I said “Yeah I always find Jesus when I’m camping!”

[audience laughs]

Right? Now I am an extrovert. Maybe an abnormal extrovert. I'm an evangelist! I know it doesn't go down like this, but then there are the ways for introverts to be spilling over as well. Yeah, is there like a money spilling out of your wallet? Are you, like, generous on every occasion? Because you don't have to talk to do that. You can write whatever you want in the privacy of your own home. But is there anything that is so full to the top with better news that it would actually leak on to anybody else that knows you? I often wonder if maybe the reason we as the church are are largely “bottom of the glass don't spill Jesus on anybody even if you shake us” is because we are actually quite unconvinced that we have actual better news. In fact, let me be very audacious to suggest that I think many of us are unconvinced about the better news because many of us grow up - hearing in the church or about the church - news that actually isn't that good.

I grew up hearing about the feeding of the 5000. Awesome story. I heard it in Sunday school. But you know, it probably was the feeding of the 15000? That's better news, but see, women weren't counted. As a young woman I wasn't so sure I wanted to pass on news where women didn't count. I grew up thinking I had to be able to just believe in certain spiritual things, and to be truthful, even as a child my intellect struggled with some of it. A talking serpent? The whole world flooding? The sun standing still? A God who asked a parent to sacrifice a child? An eternal lake of fire for people who didn't believe the right things? Maybe even people who never even heard the right things? I wasn't so sure I wanted to go public with this kind of news. I grew up thinking that any sort of error would lead God to abandon me and it's like a... crazy little life being on that woah woah woah [Pastor Judy mimes balancing] the little pinnacle like, I don't want to share the news with anybody - it was tortuous!

## 2019-05-05 *Beyond a Two-Dimensional Faith*

Now the better news is, I think, the Bible is so long because it had to list everybody who screwed up in every way and so you could find God in the next chapter every single time. I mean, the better news is God doesn't throw us away because we mess up! Otherwise we would be done in chapter 3 and the Bible's a whole lot longer than that. And so, but, I grew up hearing about the fear of the Lord to be honest I didn't want to be that afraid, and I didn't want to have to make people afraid. So I didn't tell many people. But there is better news we could tell. The word "fear" in scripture it's like the word "awe," to recognize your smallness in the face of God's bigness. It's to say God is God and we're not and thank the Lord. And then the better news comes when we understand that Jesus is the full revelation of this God. That when God put on skin and came in the body of Jesus he never threw his weight around, he never tried to overpower anyone. Instead, God came to serve the world and to lovingly lay down his life for the world. And Jesus is the full revelation of God which means not so much that we're so excited that Jesus is like God - but God is like Jesus! Now I'm in awe of that, because not many powerful people do such sacrificial things. Because of that I'm no longer afraid and this is why you don't have to even nudge me to spill over the better news. I want to declare that even in the midst of life and of church that there is good news of great joy. There is better news, I think, than probably we've heard or been told.

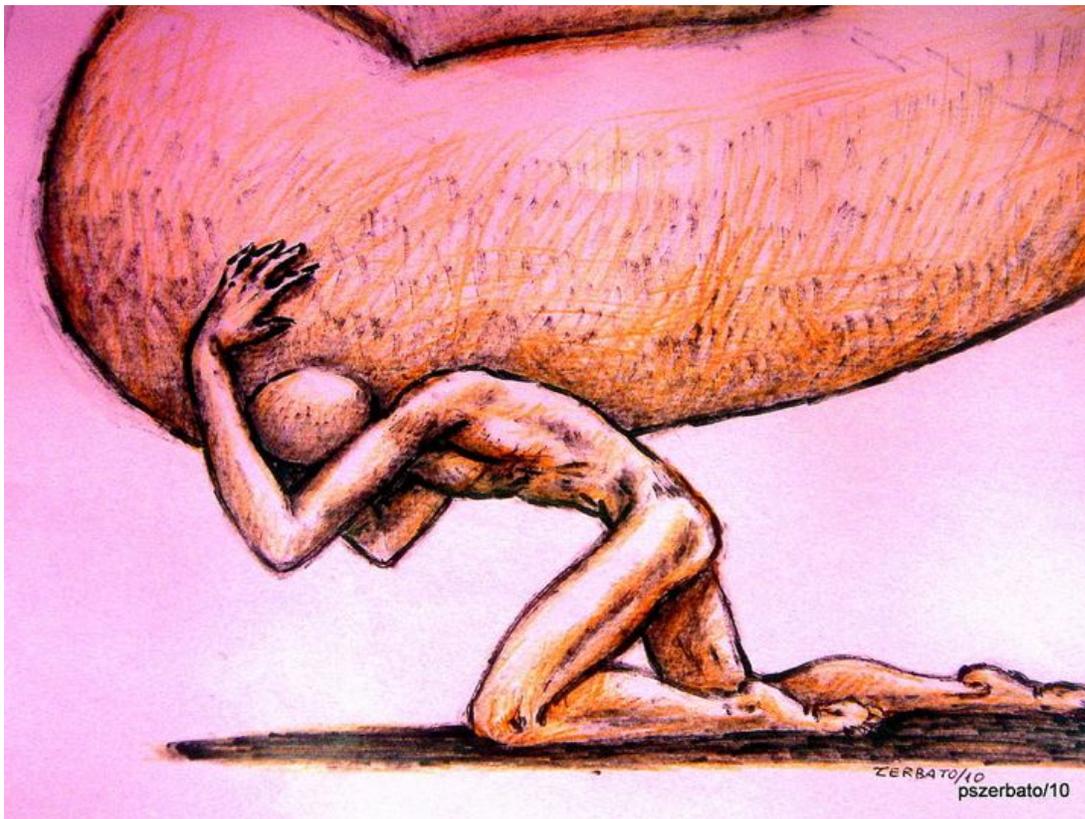
During my very brief month with you - which will go by so fast - I just want to do my best to try to share this better news with you. I want to continue to try to do the equipping work that the Pastor Scott, Pastor Jessie, and all your leaders have been doing. I just want to walk alongside you, do the best I can to equip you to go out into the world and maybe spill over just a little bit. Now that's better news. Better for a whole lot of reasons, but for today I'm going to start with just the basic better news. The tweet form better news, what we can know from the one passage. I mean think about if you read the whole thing! It's full of great news, but this is just a small 165 character passage: Do not be afraid I bring you *good* news of *great* joy that's for *all* people. Today in a real city a real savior has been born to you and he is the Messiah the Lord. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all people! What is the news? Well, the news is this: today in the City of David a savior - which means a deliver, a protector, a rescuer, a redeemer - has arrived on the scene. This is at the heart of the better news. That a savior has shown up in *real* time, in a *real* place. A savior has been born to you, he's the messiah, he's the Lord. You could pick him up and draw him close to you. The better news is that we have a God that shows up for real. For real. Our God is not a theory, our God is not a doctrine, our God is not a set of rules, but he is the reality in real life. And the God we serve is not about some day down the road but this very day. *Today* in the city of David.

Now today is another important very short word that I'm going to talk about in a minute but I want to go on. Our passage says the Savior has come - that has come - is Christ the Lord. The

Greek is Christos Kyrios and that phrase meant something to the original hearers. Christos Kyrios is the word that's translated Messiah. Now if you want to understand the true impact, the full impact of this news that's being declared, it's important that you understand the context in which Christos Kyrios mattered. The Messiah, the Christos Kyrios is the long awaited hope of the people of God. Christos Kyrios was shorthand for "The one we have been waiting for forever." You can put up that that slide real quick



This is like when they heard Christos Kyrios they were like... Like really? Could it happen? For us? When?! Right? This is like... this anticipatory sort of, life, they live on that maybe, maybe in their lifetime, they've waited 400 years, but maybe in their lifetime Christos Kyrios might just come. You see the Israelites had been waiting for rescue as an oppressed people, which means life and circumstances and people have been pressing down on them. You can put up that next slide.



Maybe, you know, this sort of feeling, I mean you can really start to feel this in grade school like, things start pressing down on you. Maybe, perhaps, you're feeling it right now. Maybe pressures at work or in life or in circumstances, or in health. When life is like this the wait for rescue, man, it seems long. And you are like Christos Kyrios, could it happen? And this is the

## **2019-05-05 *Beyond a Two-Dimensional Faith***

state of mind, the life, the emotion that the Israelites are living in. The Israelites have been living as an oppressed people and they have been waiting for the Messiah. The Christos Kyrios, whom they understood would usher in a new day in a real way in this life.

Now I told you I'd come back to the word "today" in our text because it's important. The Messiah, the Christos Kyrios, the Christ, the Lord, was not going to come save them in theory, in a future heaven. That is not what they believed about what God was going to do. They didn't think God would save them with happy thoughts and a sense of contentment while all the crap continued. That's not what they believed. This is not actually better news to an oppressed people: "God comes in and nothing will change in your life." That's not good news. People living under real pressure are looking for real help in real life. And the Israelites were confident that when the Messiah came, when Christ the Lord came, he was not going to come and save them in some like, future eternal way like a heaven out there. The Israelites believed the Messiah that they'd been long waiting for was going to enter into their real life and change their real here and now today. This is what the prophets declared was going to happen. The Messiah was going to bring actual freedom and actual peace. Captives would literally be let go. Peace was not going to be internal it was going to be actual. When the Messiah had arrived evil and oppression could not stand up against it. With the Messiah death into the dying would just be swallowed up by triumphant life. With the Messiah there was going to be no more hunger. Because of the work of the Messiah the dead were going to rise up. It was prophesied that when the Messiah came all the ruined cities of Israel were going to get rebuilt brick by brick and the weapons of war - they were all going to be destroyed. And the Messiah would take all the barren life and and make it abundant and fruitful - like actually for real.

Do not be afraid all of you who live under the weight of oppression. I bring you good news of great joy for real. In this life a savior has come to a real city in a real time and is going to do real work. This is at the heart of the better news: that a savior shows up in real time in a real place, changing real circumstances for those who live under the weight of oppression. The better news is that we have a God that shows up for real. Our God is not a theory, our God is not a doctrine, our God is not a set of rules. Our God is a flesh and blood deliverer. And the God we serve is not about just some day but is about today. Our passage says to an oppressed people: a savior has been born to you, a deliverer, a protector, a rescuer, a redeemer has come into the world in the flesh. Which means the things that are trying to crush you will not get the last word. Which is why after the Messiah arrived in a real body and died in a real body and ascended into heaven in a real body the Israelites wrote things like this. You can put up the next slide, it says this: "We are hard pressed on every side" - crazy thing - "we're not crushed. We are perplexed," - it's nuts - "but we're not in despair. We are persecuted" - but it's so insane -

## **2019-05-05 *Beyond a Two-Dimensional Faith***

“we are no longer abandoned. We are struck down,” - and it's unbelievable but - “We are not destroyed.” in real life.

The good news that would cause great joy was not a theory. It was a three dimensional reality. You see the followers of the Christos Kyrios, Christ the Lord, this becomes the better news for all of us when we're not devoted to an idea. When we're not devoted to an interpretation, we're not devoted to a text. We are devoted to a God who loved the whole world so much he put on skin to come and battle real oppression for real people in real life and I'm telling you this is better news. It's better news than so much of what the world has been proclaiming and what the church have been proclaiming. The point of the Christian faith is not to believe in an idea, it's to put your faith in a savior that took up three dimensional space on Earth. It's better news and the end goal of the Christian faith is not just to follow a few rules and be finished, to check a few boxes and it's all good. The invitation is enter into a real life with a real God and you could actually follow - as we learned in the in the children's sermon - we could follow in the footsteps of this Messiah who saves us, who wants to save all people from being oppressed by sin, temptation, anxiety, fear, and all the powers in this world that enslave people. I can assure you the news would get better for all people if Christian people quit checking a Christian box as if the goal was to get to some future heaven. And I can show you the news gets better for all people when we come into an actual relationship with the Messiah who proclaims rescue, redemption, saving, the end of oppression. Not just some day, but today.

So let me tell you my great grief. Somewhere along the way the church began to worship something very two dimensional. The truth is what began being proclaimed was as different as this piece of paper is from the tree it was made from. I mean it is the same contents in it. This actually was a tree. But it looks nothing like the organic thriving 3D sort of thing that it once was. It's been pulverized and torn up into bits. This is what has happened to our faith. This vibrant, growing, living thing has been cut down, pulverized and turned into a flat set of doctrines or truths that you're going to assent to. This is not the better news. Somewhere along the way we made our Jesus flat and lifeless and as a result the Christian faith became something we tried to get people to just wrap their mind around the statements on the page rather than to live their life around the thing in a real life. A set of written beliefs became all we had to assent to. This was the requirement. A belief in a creed. That's all you need to be one of us. A box you check, the sticker on a bumper, logo on your shirt, being on the right side of an issue. That's what we were going to do. That's what orthodox meant. And as a result this is what our Savior started to look like just theory—skinny. Actually that's not what our Savior looked like because we also made him white.



Because we didn't understand that he was a real person in a real place in a real time in a real body and that his real body was actually not white. That the people he came to, that were oppressed were brown people and the Savior was actually brown. And if we could at least acknowledge this three dimensional truth - that Jesus did not look like this - it would be better news for so many people.

In any case, this is what our Savior started to look like, and I'm telling you today something that I think you know, but perhaps you forgot. You can't really have a real relationship with this idea.

[Pastor Judy addresses photo]

How you doing? Got anything to say? Nothing? [crumples paper] Could take him in my pocket - nobody even has to know. This is what has happened to most of our faith. It's, like, two dimensional. Nobody would even have to know it's a real life for us. We could stick him in a drawer. We could sum him up in a statement. We could just control him completely. I am not following a God I can stick in a drawer, I can sum up in a statement, and that I can control. I am devoted to Jesus, the three dimensional God who loves me so much that he put on skin to walk with me. My God is ALIVE!

The good news that would create great joy for all people, the better news, was that God did not remain an idea in someone's head. He was not a good system of beliefs written down on paper, and instead he showed up in a three dimensional fleshed out life of a real person. I'm not inviting you to be devoted to an idea. I can't do that as a pastor. Have all the ideas you want! But I'd like you to be in a relationship with a real God. I think it actually could be good news of

## **2019-05-05 *Beyond a Two-Dimensional Faith***

great joy for you and for all people. A three dimensional faith is better news because it means that as the church we can be confident that God came to save wholes and not just souls, which means he cares about the actual details of our whole life. Jesus does not just care about your eternal status but about your present life and this is better news than the two dimensional faith that much of the church has been proclaiming. And the Christian faith is far better news when it doesn't reduce other people to two dimensional pulp but tends to them as the spectacular three dimensional living organisms that they are. Aren't you tired of making people "felons?" Aren't you tired of making people "illegal?" Aren't you tired of making people "gay?" As if they are just a word on a page that doesn't even have a life? A three dimensional organism that could be encountered and loved and lived with? The better news that is why we talk about and engage in conversations about justice in this actual world, because the Christos Kyrios, the Messiah, we are following cared about real flesh and blood human beings and called us to do the same. To feed the hungry, to give a cool cup of water to the thirsty, to invite in the stranger, to clothe the naked, to care for the sick, and to visit all those who are held captive by anything. These are not commitments we are making because we are liberal. We are making this because we have a three dimensional savior whom we are following. It is this conviction, I think, that compels Artisan's leadership to continually call you to live your real life as better news in the here and now. It's because we follow a three dimensional God. This is why we're fighting here and now against everything that would oppress and flatten people because this is how the better news came the first time around.

Jesus came into my real life in real time and the moment he did I knew that my past was not going to determine my future. That my circumstances were not going to get the last word because a savior was born to me in a real city. This good news of great joy isn't just for me. It really is meant to be so filled in to me so that it might have a chance of flowing over into somebody else. I am so glad you know the good news and they are filled up, but why aren't you doing this? It's so refreshing? if you actually have better news for the world the better news proclaims that whatever has been for anybody does not have to determine what they become. Because of the Savior that shows up in the middle of real life in real time and real places and he changes real lives. Do not be afraid, I bring you good news of great joy and it's for all people which means you too and today in a real city a real savior is born and he is the Christos Kyrios, the Lord, the Messiah. This is the news that was delivered by the angels the first time around and it was better news than anybody had on their feeds then too. Because you see, it came not just as a truth to assent to and not a bunch of rules to follow. It was not a doctrine to get right, it was a relationship to enter into. The good news of great joy didn't come as a word, it arrived in the flesh through a human life you could see and touch and walk alongside. Our God is not a

## 2019-05-05 *Beyond a Two-Dimensional Faith*

theory, our God is not an idea, he's way better news than that. He took up real space in real time to do that.

Now I want to show you just a quick glimpse of something that happens when we turn three dimensional things into two dimensional. Can you put that next side real quick?



This this is a possum. OK it was a possum. And I happened to see it out my window when I was driving in traffic. I'm like oh look it's a possum! OK this is what we've done to the news. We've taken something that was meant to live and we flattened it and the truth is most of the world finds it kind of hard to look at. And I'm just inviting us to take our two dimensional faith and move it back into the three dimensional form that it was intended to be. I think people might delight in that a little bit more. The better news I want to proclaim to you and through you to the world is that God is not just two dimensional, and he does not remain far away. Because of his great love God comes to us and in personal, real life ways, and puts on skin and arrives like a baby in the manger.

## 2019-05-05 *Beyond a Two-Dimensional Faith*

Think about that. That when God came he took on the most vulnerable little position like - who doesn't want to just be like "oh come here you cute little thing!" [Pastor Judy pantomimes picking up a baby] I mean, this is not a God that came to oppress people with a bunch of rules and do all that. He said no, pick me up and draw me close to you that's how we'll begin. That's why the Gospel in tweet form is not just a Christmas passage, because this is how we begin again and again, by reaching down and picking up the Christos Kyrios and drawing him close to us. The God who will not overpower you. The God who doesn't come to go to war with you, but the God who wants to be drawn close into your chest. We have this better news, a Savior who doesn't come by force or threat. No armies, no intimidation, just a birth announcement. There is a savior that's been born to you. An invitation. Perhaps you want to draw me close today. I have better news that I want to proclaim. That there is a savior who is named Jesus and you and I could pick him up any day and draw him close into my heart and be in a real relationship, not with a theory, but with a life. You will find that what has been doesn't have to be when you pick up that life. If you've been captive, you can be set free. If you've been dead, you can be alive. If your burdens are too heavy to carry, Jesus helps. If you've been orphaned, Jesus says come home to me. Can I invite you to draw this good news of great joy right close to you today? And I want you to hear today that this better news about God in the flesh is better news because it isn't just for *some* people. I bring you good news of great joy for *all* people.

And from the beginning the context in which this message is delivered makes this so clear because the better news is delivered first to shepherds. You may have played a role of the shepherd in the Christmas pageant. A nice bathrobe, a towel on your head, you were like... feeling really great about your role, right? I played Mary and I was in love with Bo, who was Joseph and I had his baby, it was so cute and I didn't have any idea how that came about at that time... but you were most likely really proud to be a shepherd. It's a big part in the play! But shepherds who heard this news for the first time were not proud of the part they were playing. At the time this good news of great joy was announced so them they were at the bottom of the social rung. They and they share the same status as tax collectors and dung sweepers. Shepherding was a menial vocation for a laboring class. They were despised in everyday life. In general, they were considered second class citizens. They were often deprived of all their civil rights and were officially labeled "sinners" which is just the technical term for "You must have done something to end up like that." But it is these sinners, to these shepherds, that the good news of great joy is first announced.

This is why we don't just do this at Christmas, because what God did, what God does even from the birth announcement is made clear that Jesus' arrival is better news for those who are going to feel left out or left behind. I assure you it is better news than the world has to offer and often even better news than the church has been proclaiming. The three dimensional God came and

## **2019-05-05 *Beyond a Two-Dimensional Faith***

said don't turn people into flat names like "shepherds." Let's go visit them and share with them some good news of great joy for all people and that all people includes us today. That everyone—which means everyone—is welcome here. That we believe everyone simply means everyone is essential here, that there are no second class people among us. That the last will be first because for those of us who have been first, we know so much about this three dimensional Savior we want to follow that we don't mind becoming last so others can be first. The dividing walls will be dismantled here. I believe our world is in dire need of this reminder of better news, the news of a rescuer breaking into the real world as good news.

My prayer for us is that, together, we would come to know this, like for real. Like, not bottom in our glass God would have to shake us for anything to come out, but overflowing with good news. That people would just have to bump into us and we would spill it on to them we. Affirm this desire to gather today as we come to a table we're invited to take part in a three dimensional practice where we remember - that word simply means to put back into your membership, like oh you were dismembered, cut apart, now you're like remembered - so we take this to remember this real three dimensional God into our life. So that our real three dimensional life might rescue, save, deliver, people from oppression too. This table is an open table. That means that anybody who says "oh I want to do this" is welcome to pick up Jesus and remember him right to yourself. And it's open to anybody. We have gluten free bread so don't let anybody stay away. We practice communion by intinction which means a fancy word for you take a piece of bread and you dip it in the cup and then you take both together. If Jesus floats away just get another piece of bread and put it in there. And we're going to come down by these aisles and then go back by the sides. And if you need a second piece you know we've got lots of leftovers and all of that.

So please and so let me offer the words of institution and pray for us before we come to the table. Children - you can get your children before communion if you'd like, they're welcome in here all the time or if you would like a moment you can leave them and then go get them afterwards. So on the night Jesus was betrayed he took bread and when he had given thanks - God we do thank you, that you took something three dimensional and not an idea - and when he'd given thanks he broke it and he said this is my body. My real body, it's broken for you. In the same way he took the cup after supper saying: This cup is the new covenant of my blood. As often as you drink it, do it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and you drink this cup you proclaim the Lord's real flesh and blood until his real flesh and blood life returns. God we're so grateful that you're invited to a real table. That we're not welcome in theory, but we're welcome as flourishing, three dimensional, wonderful lives. God, for anybody who has felt flattened this week we pray that you would acknowledge them as a whole person that you have invited to the table. For any of us who have been doing the flattening, God when

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you say we forgive us, may you come to us so we will be remembered in a way that we might become better news. That the gospel the good news of great joy for all people might be three dimensionally lived out this week. Jesus, because you've been remembered to us be in the simple thing like the bread in the cup transform it so it can transform us. I pray this in Jesus' name Amen.

Can I just, for one, just, this is, I mean, I could talk forever about Jesus! But just one other encouragement is I just don't think it's actually all that complicated not to flatten people and I think it's actually pretty easy to treat them as three dimensional humans, and maybe if we want to follow Jesus and show up that way. You'd be amazed at what it is a kind word or noticing somebody or calling them by the right name how that can take them from the pulverised two dimensional life and put them back into who they meant to were meant to be. And you can be really young and do that, and you can be kind to somebody who somebody else isn't, and so even if you don't have words if I could just encourage you this week to figure out a little of that three dimensional. Don't be a squashed possum! I should make a T. shirt. And do that. So may the God who loved the whole world so much he couldn't stay away so he put on skin to come and travel with us... may this guide whom we know most clearly as Christos Kyrios, as the Christ, may he go before you to guide the way into a life that so filled to overflowing with good news of great joy. May he go behind you to encourage you that this better news is for all people which means it definitely includes you and it means it definitely doesn't exclude anybody else. May he go above you to watch over you. May you know that there is a savior, a Messiah, who is watching over you, waiting to be drawn so close to your heart. May this God go beside you to be your most intimate travelling companion. May know what it's like to be in a real relationship with a God who shows up in real cities, in real lives, and may he go within you to give you the peace that passes all understanding. This is a peace that makes no sense at all. This is the peace that can come to the whole world when we show up in the flesh for other people as well. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit go in peace.

[end of sermon]

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