

*And the angel said to the shepherds, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger" (Luke 2:10-12).*

*F*amiliar verses, aren't they? So familiar, in fact, that it is easy to miss just how remarkable they are...

*Fear not...*

*I bring you good news...*

*A Savior is born...*

*He's lying in a manger...*

The birth of Jesus is not the way we would have planned it. No person, however poor, should have to be born in a stable. No delivery room, no doctor. Hay on the floor, animals all around. And the smell! The mess! This is no place for a royal birth.

But God sees things differently. He chose a manger over a mansion. He picked a carpenter over a king. He designed a quiet coming over a world-wide celebration. Why would God, the Creator of

heaven and earth, send his Son to be born in such a lowly place?

Perhaps Jesus, the only Son of God, was born in a stable to give hope to all whose lives look like one. We sure do make a mess of things. Sometimes our actions stink. And though we try to make the best of it, the winter wind still sneaks into the corners of our lives, and the nights get cold and dark.

Too many days too far from God? Too many years too hard on others? Too much mess? God knows... and he has some amazing words for you.

*I bring you good news...*

*I'll give you great joy...*

*I sent the Savior, Christ the Lord!*

Want to know God's answer to the deepest longings of your life? *"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).*

Here we find the answer, in the most unexpected place. Look long at heaven's barn-born baby—he's the Holy One sleeping in the hay—and listen as God