

December 4, 2005 – Second Sunday of Advent  
Patchogue Church of the Nazarene

“Where can we find... the newborn King?” – In Serving Others  
Matt 2:2 (THE MESSAGE)

The media apparently did not consider the event very newsworthy. The evening news on TV carried several more sensational stories of murder and robbery. The newspaper buried the story on page 5.

What had happened? In a large department store, in one of the busiest malls, a dead man was found beneath a rack of clothing. His body was discovered by a custodian who was sweeping the aisles before the store opened for the day. The day before, the store had held a huge pre-Christmas sale. The store had gone all out to advertise the drastically reduced prices.

People had scurried around, pushing and shoving each other, trying to snatch bargains. Many carried lists of items to buy for Mom and Dad, Grandma, Uncle Harry, and Cousin Martha. Most purchases were for family or friends from whom the givers would also receive a gift in return. Hardly anything was bought for the needy or the homeless.

Everyone was in a hurry. Patience wore thin and folks became irritable. People were so thick in the aisles that it was difficult to move. Many customers could hardly see where they were going because their arms were piled so high with purchases. Discarded paper and clothes accumulated on the floor, and folks just stepped over them and hurried along on their shopping sprees.

No one knew if the dead body had been kicked under the rack of clothes, or if the man had crawled there before he expired, in order to get out of the way. But shoeprints on his clothing indicated that he might have been trampled on while lying in the aisle.

The police found no identification on him. His fingerprints were not on file. The coroner found a salty residue on each cheek indicating that the man was weeping before he died. He found a huge scar in the man's side, as well as small pricks in a circle around his head that might have been made by sharp pins, or perhaps large thorns. And deep scars ran all the way through the palms of his hands, as if nails had once been driven through them.

What have we done to Christmas?

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This Advent we are asking the question the wise men asked in Matt 2; “Where can we find... the newborn King?”

1. We find Jesus in us

Jesus lives in the hearts of all who are willing to turn from sin and ask Jesus into their hearts.

Matt 1:23 NLT

"Look! The virgin will conceive a child!  
She will give birth to a son,  
and he will be called Immanuel  
(meaning, God is with us)." (Isa 7:14)

Immanuel means "God with us," as predicted by Isaiah the prophet (Isa 7:14). Jesus was God in the flesh; thus, God was literally "with us." The point was not that Jesus would ever bear the name "Immanuel," but rather this name described Jesus' role -- to bring God's presence to people.

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2. We find Jesus in others or more specially we find Jesus when we serve others  
Luke 4:18-21 NLT (Isa 61: 1-2)  
"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
for he has appointed me to preach Good News to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim  
that captives will be released,  
that the blind will see,  
that the downtrodden will be freed from their oppressors,  
and that the time of the Lord's favor has come."

He rolled up the scroll, handed it back to the attendant, and sat down. Everyone in the synagogue stared at him intently. Then he said, "This Scripture has come true today before your very eyes!"

Jesus, the newborn King, came not to be served but to serve others and He told His followers to follow His example.

Isa 58:10-11 NLT

Feed the hungry and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness, and the darkness around you will be as bright as day.

Jesus is the light that came to shine in the darkness and minister to the needy, then He told us that we are the light of the world, and we are to do good deeds that will bring glory to God.

### **Serving others (Ministry)**

Matt 25:31-46 NLT

31 "But when the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit upon his glorious throne. 32 All the nations will be gathered in his presence, and he will separate them as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. 33 He will place

the sheep at his right hand and the goats at his left. 34 Then the King will say to those on the right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. 35 For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. 36 I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'

37 "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? 38 Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? 39 When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' 40 And the King will tell them, 'I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'

41 "Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his demons! 42 For I was hungry, and you didn't feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn't give me anything to drink. 43 I was a stranger, and you didn't invite me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me no clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn't visit me.'

44 "Then they will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?' 45 And he will answer, 'I assure you, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.' 46 And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life."

These verses picture Jesus when He returns to earth. He will not come again as a humble baby. The next time He comes it will be in all His glory (v31). Just as the angels announced His birth so He will come again with all the angels with Him. He will sit on His glorious throne and judge all the nations of the world. (2 Cor 5:10 NIV) "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that each one may receive what is due him for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad."

He will separate people as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. Jesus used sheep and goats to picture the division between believers and unbelievers. Sheep and goats often grazed together but were separated at night because the goats needed a warm shelter at night (their coats are not nearly as thick) while sheep preferred open air. (from The Life Application Commentary Series copyright (C) 1997, 1998, 1999 and 2000 by the Livingstone Corporation. Produced with permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc. All rights reserved.)

The sheep (believers) were at His right hand, the place of honor. (v34-36) Then the King will say to those on the right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and you fed me. I was thirsty, and you gave me a drink. I was a stranger, and you invited me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me clothing. I was sick, and you cared for me. I was in prison, and you visited me.'

This isn't an exhausted list of all the good things we can do for those in need. But it represents all types of good deeds that can be done. And it describes good deeds that can be done by all people every day. These acts don't depend on wealth, ability, or intelligence; No special "talent" is needed. They are simple acts of kindness and mercy. These verses are not saying we will get into heaven by our good deeds. We saw last week that Jesus is in us and we receive His salvation as a gift of God's grace, received when we repent and believe. These verses are saying that the evidence that someone has Jesus in them is in the love and mercy they show to others by the good deeds they do.

The people at the Lord's right, the righteous, are surprised at His words. (v37-40) "Then these righteous ones will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry and feed you? Or thirsty and give you something to drink? Or a stranger and show you hospitality? Or naked and give you clothing? When did we ever see you sick or in prison, and visit you?' And the King will tell them, 'I assure you, when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!'"

Where do you find Jesus? When you do good to those in need you are doing it for Him. Mother Theresa said that Jesus is disguised in the distress of the poor. She founded the Missionaries of Charity which vows "wholehearted, free service to the poorest of the poor." About serving the poor she said, "We do it for Jesus, to Jesus and with Jesus." Notice she not only says we do it for Jesus and with Jesus, but *to Jesus*. We find Jesus in our service and ministry to others, especially to the poor. Not just the poor physically but to those hungry for love, those who need to be clothed with dignity and respect, and those who have been rejected and despised.

In our text we also see the opposite side of finding Jesus in serving the poor. (vs 41 -46) "Then the King will turn to those on the left and say, 'Away with you, you cursed ones, into the eternal fire prepared for the Devil and his demons! For I was hungry, and you didn't feed me. I was thirsty, and you didn't give me anything to drink. I was a stranger, and you didn't invite me into your home. I was naked, and you gave me no clothing. I was sick and in prison, and you didn't visit me.'

"Then they will reply, 'Lord, when did we ever see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and not help you?' And he will answer, 'I assure you, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.' And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous will go into eternal life."

One time a man had a heart attack and died in the hospital. When he opened his eyes there was a black man standing over his hospital bed. And the black man said, "Don't you know who I am?" The man stared at him for awhile, trying to place him, then finally said, "Oh, Yeah, you're that beggar that frequently comes to my place of business looking for a helping hand. I always have to shout at you to get away from my shop. I work hard and don't believe in giving handouts to those who are not working. And anyway I was afraid you would scare off my customers." Then he noticed that the

“beggar” was cleaned up and well dressed. He thought for a moment then said, “Hey, what are you doing here all dressed up in that fancy suit? You don’t look very poor now.” Again the black man asked him, “Don’t you know who I am?” Then he showed the man his hands and said, “see the scars where I was nailed to a cross!” The man said, “Lord?” And the black man said, “‘I assure you, when you refused to help the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were refusing to help me.’ “

After what Jesus did for me, I would do anything for Him. Don’t you feel that way? Then do for Him by ministering to others. We find Jesus in the poor. (Ways to be involved: Compassionate Ministries, Sponsor a Child, Hope for the Future, Work and witness, visit shut ins, the sick.) [DVD]

Make yourself available to serve

Pay attention to needs

Do the best with what you have

Serve with all your heart

Finish the tasks you take on (be faithful and don’t quit when you get discouraged)

Don’t promote or call attention to yourself and what you are doing.

Think more of others than yourself

Where do we find Jesus? We find Him when we give our life in service to others.

“I assure you,” Jesus said, “when you did it to one of the least of these my brothers and sisters, you were doing it to me!”