

Home

Even though the Pre-School had been in session for several weeks, this was Christopher's first day. To help him be comfortable, the teacher had arranged blankets in a circle on the classroom floor, one for each child, with a spot for Christopher right next to her stool and blankie.

As children arrived, they were invited to go to the big toy box and choose one to bring back to their blanket. Christopher complied, chose a cool truck, and took his place on the floor. To welcome him, the teacher asked each student to say her or his name and something about their toy. Christopher went last, just after the teacher had also shared, and he did just fine.

It was mid-week. The teacher reminded the students that Wednesdays were Chapel days, and it was time to go into the church. Christopher took his place, sitting on the long hard bench, quietly looking around at the stained glass, candles, cross, the steps, the water-thing, and the tall ceilings. Just as the music started, he couldn't stand it anymore, blurting out, "*Hey, what is this weird place?*"

When it was time to leave, after all the singing, standing and sitting, the line moved back to the pre-school classroom to the blankets and the toys. Upon arrival, Christopher shouted, "*Oh, thank God, we're **home!***" (The teacher later told me that Christopher had never before been inside a church. I thought that it was a pretty successful excursion, for it seemed to me, on this day, Christopher had also spoken his first prayer!)

As I recall this incident, I'm reminded of the incarnational part of the Christmas story. The perspective in these thoughts is not about the comfortable, human, long-awaited, "God-With-Us" part, but rather the heavenly, in the fullness of time, "God-Sending" part. Scripture tells us of Jesus,

"Who, being in very nature God,
did not consider equality with God
something to be grasped,
but made himself nothing,
taking the very nature of a servant,
being made in human likeness.
And being found in appearance as a man,
he humbled himself
and became obedient to death—
even death on a cross." (Philippians 2: 6-8 NIV)

Jesus left His heavenly **home**, on a mission to live in His earthly **home** in the very creation He created. Why? Because He loves you, me, and Christopher. He couldn't stand the gulf our sin wedged between God and people and His created order. He wept at the wrath of God, even death, that would fall upon our sorry sinful selves. So, He came. He lived life among us. Taught. Modeled. Challenged. Forgave. Healed. He became sin for all of us and took the punishment for each of us as He died on a cross in a death He freely accepted. Then, in the grandest excursion of all, He rose from the dead to take each of us **home**, to live with God and praise His name into eternal life, forever!

What a Christmas gift! What a reminder! **Oh, thank God we're home!**

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