**Son of David, Son of Mary**

The great prophet Samuel came to the little village of Bethlehem in Judah to see Jesse, who had eight sons. He came with a horn full of oil to anoint a new king for Israel. (2 Samuel 7:1-11; 1 Sam 17:12)

David had been sen

t out to watch the sheep for it had not been thought necessary to invite wee David to the gathering.

When none of the seven pleased the prophet, Samuel bade Jesse summon the excluded lad from the field. When he arrived, the Lord said to Samuel, standing there with his horn of anointing oil at the ready: Rise and anoint him; for this is the one! (1 Sam 16:12).

Then Samuel took the horn of oil, and anointed him in the presence of his brothers; and the spirit of the Lord came mightily upon David from that day forward. (1 Sam 16:13)

In our reading from 2 Sam 7:8 we find that, in a scene many years later, the prophet Nathan came to David in the evening of his life. David wanted to build God a house.

But Nathan gave this message to David: Thus says the Lord of hosts: I took you from the pasture, from following the sheep to be prince over my people Israel…

But you will not build me a house. I will make you a house (v 11)… and your throne will be established forever.

From pasture to everlasting throne.

Then Isaiah (this time the First Isaiah, 250 years after David) tells us that For a child has been born for us, a son given to us… for the throne of David… he will establish…from this time onward and forever more. (Isa 9:6-7)

The connection of this amazing covenant God made to David is found in our Christmas story, in the first sentence of our New Testament (Matt 1:1). It is the marrow of the New Testament story.

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

And have we not seen this year how this narrative is all one big piece of cloth, all woven together. One pot, all out of the same clay, all shaped by the hands of one potter.

And then, in the annunciation to Mary in Luke 1, the sonship of Jesus is established in a way that defines our entire understanding of the gospel:

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. (Luke 1:32)

One piece of cloth, one pot of clay, one story of both promise and fulfilment.

You see, Jesus is the Son of David and the Son of Mary all at once.

I have a couple of brief observations for this Advent message.

Have you noticed how we often refer to the location of events when we have been working with our texts this year? Where and when and to whom are almost always elucidating to explore.

For example, in the New Testament the well of Samaria where Jesus met the woman, you may recall we dealt with the story earlier this year, was the well dug by Jacob, which was also the place where Abraham first stopped in his sojourn to the land God had promised to provide.

What a beautifully resonant location and how it infuses our reading of the Jesus story with context and understanding.

The same thing is true of Bethlehem. For example, do you recall that this was village of the story of Ruth? Rachel, the wife of Jacob was said to be buried outside the village. And of course, everyone’s favourite judge of Israel, Ibzan, judged the nation from Bethlehem (Judges 12:8, he gets three lines). He was a remarkably active fellow, producing 30 sons!

It was Micah that wrote of Bethlehem:

But you, O Bethlehem of Ephrathah,  
    who are one of the little clans of Judah,  
from you shall come forth for me  
    one who is to rule in Israel,  
whose origin is from of old,  
    from ancient days. (Micah 5:2; cf Matt 2:6)

And we know, of course, how Joseph and Mary went up for the census to the city of David called Bethlehem (Luke 2:3-4).

The angels came to the shepherds keeping their flocks in the fields near by the story tells us (Luke 2:8).

And we have seen how the shepherd boy David was tending his flocks in the fields outside the village of Bethlehem on the day of Samuel’s visit to Jesse and his sons.

Do you see? It’s the same place. To the very field where David tended his sheep outside the village on the day of Samuel’s visit, to that field, the angels descended and appeared to the shepherds on that holy night.

Wouldn’t that be just like the Lord? A thousand years later, after a promise… a fulfilment on that hallowed field of sheep.

Oh, I know you grow weary waiting for deliverance on some issue in your life. The hoped for resolution seems so distant and impossible. But we must remember the God whom we serve – He is the God who never forgets a promise. Even if you don’t see it in your own lifetime. Receive hope!

And this…. There is just something about lowliness that attracts God’s grace and anointing.

From the pasture to everlasting throne rose David.

And as God, as Mary expresses it, looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant (Luke 1:48). This poor girl in an awkward situation from a dismal town across the tracks (can anything good come out of Nazareth?),

He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give to him the throne of his ancestor David. (Luke 1:32)

From poor virgin girl to Son of the Most High. The Son of David becomes the Son of Mary.

God exalts the lowly. He raises us up to him. Ours is a life of exaltation. This is what it means to be a Christian. Why wouldn’t you want that? Perhaps you have a better way to live life? You say, “But I can’t…I’m ashamed.” So was Mary. So are we all. But God raises us up!

As you watch this lovely dance by Jen, Michelle and Elise, think of these words of Mary:

My soul magnifies the Lord,  
     and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
  for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant.  
    Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;  
  for the Mighty One has done great things for me,  
    and holy is his name.