**Stooping Down to Save**

Based on [Luke 2:1-20](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Lk2.1-20)

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Christmas Eve

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With snow on the ground, and with what is our first, maybe second real cold stretch of the winter, I doubt many of you, if any of, you are thinking about gardening. Planting presents under a tree is the closest thing to sowing and reaping that's on your minds at Christmastime. Still I want you to imagine, for a moment that it is springtime, and you are preparing your garden soil. And as you know, gardening isn’t something you do standing up with good posture and poise. To get a garden ready involves a whole lot of stooping down.

In order to pick a weed, you have to stoop down. And it isn’t enough even to reach the ground. To get to the root you gotta dig deeper, even under the stem and base before you pull. If you're digging rocks from your garden, you have to reach your fingers into the dirt. It's not enough to grab the stone from the sides. You have to dig your digits under the rock--get a firm grip from below--before you can lift it out. All this to say that in order to remove a huge weight, you have to first get under it.

I bite my fingernails. I’m not proud of it, but there you are. Because of this dumb little habit, I have trouble with the simplest tasks, like trying to pop a top, or peeling off a label or sticker from something. It’s not that I’m not strong enough to open can of Coke; it’s that I just can’t get under it. In order to have any leverage at all I need a wedge.

This and every Christmas Eve, we come to celebrate the birth of our savior, our king, our Jesus our “Christ.” And ladies and gentlemen, just like every Christmas Eve, we hear the idyllic story of how the king of creation became flesh and blood, the Almighty creator was born into his creation as the king of kings. Makes for a great story you know. But it’s important to know what it’s all about. And here’s what it’s all about: Like a gardener who prepares his soil, God stoops down to save us.

You see friends, this wonderful precious and powerful Christmas story has a purpose. This precious story about a man and a woman who travel to Bethlehem and have a baby in a barn is given to tell you just what kind of a God your God is. He’s not a prude, with a rod up his back legs crossed…swirling his brandy, looking down his nose at us like a bunch of ants marching. He sees our problems, the evil and the sin in the world and in you. He sees the violence and devastation and the blood on our hands. And he’s so moved by His love for us, that he’s not worried about his posture; he stoops down to save us.

And Ladies and gentlemen, he doesn’t just stoop down half way to meet only the powerful and prestigious people. He doesn’t just stoop to reach the self-righteous people who have already climbed to the top of their ivory towers of Babel here. He stoops down all the way--wedges his nails under the weight of the whole world. He stooped down from heaven, and sent his son Jesus Christ to be conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the virgin Mary. He was born a vulnerable child who messes his diapers and suckles his mother. He was born in a small town, in a little manger, couldn’t even find a place at an inn. He was born from a woman whom the world no doubt considered adulterous, which would make him a bastard son.

And even after he wedged his way into the world as a lowly infant, he grew up to be Jesus of Nazareth. Nazareth which was the armpit of **Galilee**, which was the armpit of **Israel**, which was a nation conquered by the **Romans** and forced to pay taxes to Caesar who called himself god. In every way God makes it clear to you, that didn’t come here to rest on a bed of roses. He dug his fingers into the dirt and wedged himself under the weight of our sin, so that, as the prince of this world continued to rule over the great places and the powers and the principalities, The Prince of peace would be in the low places, and using the leverage of His cross to pry us free from his grip, and bring us peace.

They say that a mother whose child is stuck under a car can display amazing strength. Though she appears weak, by her love she has what they’ve called “**Hysterical Strength**,” enough power in the midst of her weakness actually lift the multi-ton monster off of her dear child. She doesn’t grab the roof, like pulling the lid off a Turkey. She hunches over, gets under it, lifts that heavy hurdle up and off to save.

The bible says that, “**When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we can become the children of God.”** God’s son, who was by divine right above the Law, was born under the law, so that he could pop a top, and peel the label of sin from our mortal bodies, and present us holy and righteous before His Father.

The world couldn’t be fixed from above. The problem was too complicated. Sin and evil had to be uprooted. So God stooped down low. He dug deep. He didn't just scratch the surface of our humanity, he jumped in all the way. He fulfilled all righteousness. He was born for our sake, there is no part of being a man that he didn't do, and he did it from the bottom up.

That's the thing about gifts at Christmas time. They’re placed under the tree, you gotta stoop down to get them. That’s because the good news and great joy of the Christmas story is that you will not find your God in princely halls and the gilded palaces of this world. You won’t find him at Wall Street, or Times Square, or the Eifel tower. God is high as the heavens, above all world and things, but you won’t find him above. A tree points to heaven, but you don’t climb to heaven find God. He stooped down and placed the gift of his Son “under the tree,” hidden in the low places and lowly things of the world, so that we know even the least of us will have God with us. And that is what Christmas is all about.

Merry Christmas.