

**December 23, 2012**

**Micah 5: 2-5a**

<sup>2</sup>But you, Bethlehem, David's country, the runt of the litter—  
From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule Israel.  
He'll be no upstart, no pretender.

His family tree is ancient and distinguished.

<sup>3</sup>Meanwhile, Israel will be in foster homes until the birth pangs are over and the child is born,

And the scattered brothers come back home to the family of Israel.

<sup>4</sup>He will stand tall in his shepherd-rule by GOD's strength, centered in the majesty of GOD-Revealed.

And the people will have a good and safe home, for the whole world will hold him in respect—

Peacemaker of the world!

<sup>5</sup>And if some bullying Assyrian shows up, invades and violates our land, don't worry.

**Luke 1: 39-45**

<sup>39</sup>Mary didn't waste a minute. She got up and traveled to a town in Judah in the hill country, <sup>40</sup>straight to Zachariah's house, and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup>When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby in her womb leaped. She was filled with the Holy Spirit, <sup>42</sup>and sang out exuberantly,

You're so blessed among women,  
and the babe in your womb, also blessed!

<sup>43</sup>And why am I so blessed that  
the mother of my Lord visits me?

<sup>44</sup>The moment the sound of your  
greeting entered my ears,

The babe in my womb  
skipped like a lamb for sheer joy.

<sup>45</sup>Blessed woman, who believed what God said,  
believed every word would come true!

**Sermon**

Go to foreign countries and you will know the good things one possesses at home.  
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe – 18<sup>th</sup> century German writer, politician.

Or think of Frank Baum's script of the Wizard of Oz.

The good witch Glinda tells Dorothy.

"Close your eyes and tap your heels together three times and think to yourself: there's no place like home. There's no place like home."

To the people of God trapped in a humiliating exile filled with oppression and despair the prophet Micah offers a promise from God.

The promise is "home".

- A secure place in this world always.
- A place where God will always dwell.
- Home is Bethlehem.
  - Not the great metropolis of Jerusalem but a small town.
  - The one to lead God's people home is "a regular guy" not a star.

Re: Micah 5

Because land is vital to survival, identity, and a future, retrieving a place on which fashion a life means salvation. Melinda Quivik, working preacher.org

The journey we are on through advent, marked each week by our milestones, moves us closer and closer to our spiritual home -> to Bethlehem -> to Jesus.

All of this represents the story of salvation => the assurance that God exists, that has been and will always be among us – that we are loved, imperfect or not – that our lives meaning and a calling.

That we belong here – in this place – in the family of Christ => HOME.

Home and family is the key to Luke's telling of Mary's visit with her cousin Elizabeth – home, in a Judean village, in the womb of an ordinary, humble woman God's powerful story of salvation comes to life.

I've heard people slyly say things like "Look at the CEO's – Christmas and Easter only"  
Look on the urban dictionary website and you'll find dozens of other expressions  
BUT you may miss what's really happening.

Coming home – going back to our roots, re-visiting old family traditions, rekindling a long-silenced feeling.

Maya Angelou quotes "The ache for home lives in all of us, the safe place where we can go as we are and not be questioned."

In our busy, often frantic, transient world, home may be more distant -> the yearning stronger.

The more one does and sees and feels, the more one is able to do, and the more genuine may be one's appreciation of fundamental things like home, and love, and understanding companionship. Amelia Earhart

Christmas is:

- The promise of home.
- The promise of a place where we are always welcome and where we will always "belong".

- Church as a community/family where we can be known and loved anyway!
- Church is where we can go to make sense of our lives and its challenges. Wherever you travel – this is where you come back to.  
Thanks God!!

Hear what the Spirit is saying to the church.

**THANKS BE TO GOD!**