

THE BIG IDEA: Jesus came in unexpected ways to unexpected places for unexpected people.The Take-Off

Merry Christmas, y'all! Can you believe it's almost here?! I feel like Elf in the department store when he found out Santa was coming!!

Of course, as great as THAT is, we're here celebrating a greater coming - the coming of a king - King Jesus.

As we're working our way backwards through the Christmas story, remember that we've already talked about WHY Jesus came and WHAT Jesus came to.

He came for us and he came to the cross.

This morning, we want to look at HOW Jesus came, and there is one word that sums it up perfectly...

He came UNEXPECTEDLY.

Christmas is a time for the unexpected - in fact, not much is as rewarding as pulling off a Christmas surprise

An unexpected visit. An unexpected gift.

We're fascinated and moved by the unexpected.

Need some proof? Watch this.

[VIDEO / Ellen surprises waitress]

We're moved and inspired by the unexpected, and that's the genius of the Father, isn't it? It's the plot twist in HOW Jesus came that makes the story captivating.

Let's take a few minutes this morning to really dive into the following statement: **Jesus came in unexpected ways to unexpected places for unexpected people.**

Got it? That's the Big Idea this morning and we're going to take it one section at a time.

1. Jesus came in unexpected ways

- a. **Jesus came in unexpected ways**
- b. This shouldn't surprise any of us, but this is the biggest reason why people missed Jesus
- c. They expected him to come in a royal parade with all kinds of pomp, but he didn't
- d. Instead, Jesus came
 - **Phil. 2:5-8** / as a humble servant
 - **2 Cor. 8:9** / as a poor king
 - **Isaiah 53:5** / as a wounded healer
- e. Can I remind each of us that we can still miss Jesus if we are looking for the parade
- f. Jesus didn't come BY us; he came TO us
- g. If we're honest, that can be a little
- h. Everybody say, "Why not?"

2. Jesus came to unexpected places

- a. Think about this: if Jesus had come in the way people expected, there really would have been a parade with lots of fanfare and it would have stopped at a castle
- b. But he didn't just come in unexpected ways, but **he came to unexpected places**
- c. Here are some of them:
 - **Luke 2:4** / a small town (and FROM a small town - Nazareth!) / never mentioned in OT / overrun with Roman troops (the enemy) / the LAST place you'd expect the promise to be found (sounds A LOT like Albemarle!!!) / GREAT NEWS!!!
 - **Luke 2:7** / a dirty manger / The Messiah came to the Mess!!!
 - **Matt. 9:36** / a hurting world / Jesus came to be near us, not to walk past us / He embodied the Father's heart (**Psalm 34:18**)
- d. A lot of people miss Jesus here, because distance is more comfortable even though nearness is more comforting (walk off the stage to make the point)

3. Jesus came for unexpected people

- a. But when we DO accept that he came in unexpected ways to unexpected places, we'll realize it's for one very important reason: the people he was coming for are found there.

- b. In the shadows, on the periphery.
- c. **Jesus came for unexpected people**, and among them are:
 - Luke 1:26-38 / a teenage girl
 - Luke 2:8 / forgotten shepherds
 - Matt. 8:3 / overlooked lepers
- d. But perhaps the most unexpected people Jesus came for are you and me
- e. Rom. 5:6 (NIV) / he died for us when we were “powerless and ungodly”

The Landing

Jesus came in unexpected ways to unexpected places for unexpected people, but that's not all.

He still does ALL of that, but now he does it THROUGH unexpected people like us

This season as you're around friends and family - or around those who have little or none of those - be the one who brings the hope of a unexpected surprise - the grace of God poured out for ALL of us through a Savior who did the unexpected and changed our lives forever.

Let's pray