

Little Town of Big Beginnings

Scripture Reading — Micah 5:1-5

Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth ... to Bethlehem the town of David ...
Luke 2:4

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If you had lived in the first century, this text would have sounded all wrong. When Jewish people spoke of "going up" to Judea, the destination they had in mind was Jerusalem. And when they spoke of a city connected with the great King David, what came to mind was again Jerusalem. Jerusalem was where the palace and temple were. Jerusalem was the natural birthplace of anyone destined for a throne.

But Micah had prophesied a different birthplace for this king. Though Bethlehem was "small among the clans of Judah," it was big in the eyes of God.

Bethlehem illustrates God's method of operation. "God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong" (1 Corinthians 1:27). Why? "So that no one may boast before him" (1:29).

Boasting is fueled by pride. We climb the ladder of success by pulling others down from the rung ahead of us. We want to prove that we are big stuff. But at Christmas we are on our way to Bethlehem, not Jerusalem.

Many of us struggle because we don't have much to boast about. But may I remind you that God uses people whose names never appear in the papers to accomplish great things for his kingdom? We'll understand that better when we stand before God's throne and hear his "Well done!" for things that have truly mattered.

Prayer

Lord, crucify our pride. Help us to be more faithfully obedient. Keep us from a fascination with the world's definition of success. Help us to live for your "Well done!" Amen.

Devotion topics: [Seasons](#), [Christmas](#)

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Printed on July 16, 2019

