



Home for the Holidays

She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger

Luke 2:7b

Lesson Four: Symbols

I did it again today. I walked into a room and paused, standing with a puzzled look on my face. I could not remember why I had walked into the room.

It's not that I forget everything. Some things I remember in meticulous detail. I wish I could figure out a way to make money off of all of the inconsequential music or sports trivia that wanders around inside my head. I keep waiting for the day that someone walks up to me and says, "I will pay you \$5000 if you know all the words to the "Bonanza" theme song or how many strikeouts Mickey Mantle had in his career."

Why do we remember the things that we remember? Psychologists and educators tell us that we remember things that we are actively involved in learning, rather than just reading. We remember things for which we carry passion and emotion. We will hold on to things that we understand are bigger than ourselves.

Symbols help do that. They stir passions. They prompt us to move to something bigger than ourselves, something bigger than what just happened or we just experienced. Christianity is filled with symbols. These symbols were providentially placed there by God to remind us of His work throughout time.

The cross attached to a chain around our neck. A little piece of cracker and a thimble sized cup of juice. An over-sized pool of water and the plunging of a person within. A black, leather Bible.

A baby in a manger.

I wonder if this small group of common shepherds kept the images of a baby wrapped in cloths in a manger in their minds for the rest of their lives. I wonder if images of angels sprinkled every memory. I wonder if remembering made them think of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. I wonder if they realized God was visiting his people.

I wonder if they understood. I wonder if we do.

This Christmas, find special symbols that go beyond dreams of white Christmases and Santas sliding down chimneys. Look for ways to remind you

daily

That your real home for the holidays is not in this world.