

December 18, 2018

Dear Grace Church Family and Friends,

The following story is an adaption of an Advent/Christmas parable written by Soren Kierkegaard, the Danish philosopher and theologian:

*There once was a king of uncommon royal lineage. He was a king above kings, with power and might to make all others humble before him. The wealth of his holdings was unfathomable.*

*Yet, this great king was melted by love for a humble maiden, who lived in the poorest village of the kingdom. He longed to go to this maiden and announce his love for her, but here arose the king's dilemma: how to declare his love?*

*Certainly, he could appear before her resplendent in his royal robes and surrounded with the Royal Guard, ready to carry her away in a carriage inlaid with gold and precious stones. He could bring her to the palace and crown her head with jewels and clothe her in the finest silks. She would surely not resist this type of proposal, for no one dared to resist the king.*

*But, would she love him?*

*She might say she loved him. She might be awed by his royal splendor and tremble at the thought of being blessed with such an amazing opportunity. She might tell herself that she would be foolish to reject such a marriage proposal.*

*But would she love him?*

*Or, would she simply go through the motions, all the while living a life of empty duty, nursing a private grief for the life she had left behind? Would she love the king, truly love the king, or regret the moment she first met him?*

*The king did not want a wife who behaved as a subject to his royal decrees, cringing at his word and unwilling to do anything but agree with all he said and did. Instead, he wanted a queen who would be happy at his side, loving him for himself and not for his title, or riches, or power. He wanted a queen whose love knew no restrictions or limitations. He wanted an equal whose voice would speak to him at all times without hesitation. In short, the king wanted a relationship, one that had no barriers, no walls, and would cross the chasm that threatened to keep them apart, bringing the king and peasant together and making the unequal equal.*

*The king realized that to win the maiden's love, he had only one choice. He had to become like her, without power, or riches, or even the title of king. Only then would she be able to see him simply for who he was and not for what his position made him.*

*So, one night, after all within the king's castle were asleep, the king laid aside his golden crown and removed his rings of state. He took off his royal robes of silk and dressed himself in the common clothes of a peasant. Making his way out the servant's entrance, the king left it all behind – his crown, his castle, his kingdom.*

*And, the next day, as the sun rose in the east, the maiden emerged from her humble cottage to find herself face to face with a stranger, a common man with kindly eyes who requested an opportunity to speak with her and, in time, to court her for her hand in marriage.*

With the season of Advent coming to an end, it will not be long before your King arrives, not dressed in royal robes of silk, but rather, wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.

Will you love him?

See you in church,  
*Andrew*