



PARKSIDE

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The weekly newsletter article of Parkside Chapel

LIFE NEWS

THE MESSIAH in a *MESSY* MANGER



**BY RON STORY
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I want to highly encourage you to consider picking up The Daily Bible Reading Calendar that Parkside makes available every December/January. I have been using this guide in my own personal devotional time for several years and have greatly appreciated the journey as each year I read through the Old Testament once, the New Testament twice, Psalms twice, and Proverbs 12 times. God's Word is so rich and powerful, and often we tend to be drawn to our favorite passages. I find it helpful to have a plan to read through the entire Bible each year, including Leviticus, the genealogies of I Chronicles, the Minor Prophets, and other portions of Scripture that we do not usually find exciting to read.

Over the years, I have especially appreciated reading a Psalm and a chapter from Proverbs each day. The Psalms so often reflect the writer's emotional response to the

circumstances he faces, while Proverbs has such wise, practical counsel for the daily decisions of life. I love how God provides the comfort and validation of our own emotions alongside His wise counsel and truth for the craziness of the world we live in. Most mornings, I find myself needing both His compassionate understanding of my feelings found in Psalms and His "pure, peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, impartial and sincere" wisdom (James 3:17) from above found in Proverbs. Definitely, a healthy spiritual breakfast to begin each day.

A Proverb found on the 14th day of each month is: "Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox." (Proverbs 14:4)

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In other words, if you want a clean manger and barn, keep the animals out of it. On the other hand, if you want a productive farm, you need to learn to deal with the mess that the necessary animals make.



Taken a step further, if you want a clean house or car, keep kids and people away from your house and car. If we want kids and people in our lives, we need to learn to deal with the mess that it involves. I have often said that the ministry would be really easy if it weren't for people! On the flip side, ministry and life would be incredibly empty if it weren't for people!



Aren't you glad that God wasn't concerned about a messy manger? He sent His Son into the messiest manger ever, surrounded by a world of dumb ox people who were incredibly selfish and uninterested in what He had to offer. His whole life was spent cleaning up the mess of sin around Him, healing the sick, casting out demons, raising the dead, and feeding the hungry physically and spiritually. It would have been much easier for Jesus to stay in His pure,

perfectly clean palace in heaven, but He chose to come to this sinful earth to provide a way out of the mess in each of our lives. He came to lead the perfect life that we could never live, was rejected, mocked, and killed so that He might be God's perfect sacrifice, the unblemished Lamb of God, for the sin and mess in this world.

Mangers and barns on productive farms are messy. Houses and cars with little kids are often messy. Churches and ministries and doing life with people will always be messy. We celebrate each Christmas that Jesus came to a messy manger in a messed-up world to clean up the mess of sin in our own personal lives and calls us to be ministers of reconciliation, bringing Christ's message of love to a messed-up world.

Aren't you thankful that Jesus came to a messy world to save a dumb ox like you? As you are reminded of the truth of Christmas by each Nativity scene you see, praise God for the Messiah in a Messy Manger! 🐷



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