

SERMON FOR CHRISTMAS EVE 2009 - "God's Big Idea"

For many years the common wisdom has been: Bigger is better.

In fact, from the time Adam and Eve tried to expand their food choices to include ALL of the fruit God had created – including that fateful apple

From the time the tower of Babel was constructed to reach to the height of God's heavens,
As humanity tried to match the grandeur of what God spoke into being

To the time when investors thought they could repackage investments to produce greater returns

People have bought into the idea that bigger is better – that additional square footage was the best investment.

We are beginning to learn that Bigger is not necessarily better –
Consider the plight of what was once one of the richest countries in the world,
Dubai is broke! They were unable to meet their bills. Read ironic words from their website:

"The Burj Dubai will be the *world's tallest* tower and the centerpiece of the Gulf regions most prestigious urban development to date."

Bigger is not always better,

In fact, in science and medicine it has been said, "Nanotechnology is the next big thing"

What is nanotechnology?

The science and technology of devices and materials, such as electronic circuits or drug delivery systems, constructed on extremely small scales, as small as individual atoms and molecules.

What is a nano:

1 billionth of a meter – I don't even know how to show you how small.

This is a yard stick, so it is only 914million nanometers long.

For example

If I put my thumb and finger together, a nano is the space between, not my fingers,
but the molecules of my skin.

a water molecule is less than one nanometer.

A typical germ is about 1,000 nanometers.

We can measure even larger things in nanometers, so a hair is about 100,000 nanometers wide. That is a lot of nanometers!

Shaquille O'Neal, a very tall basketball player, is 2,160,000,000 nanometers tall.

A nano can also measure time, so I wondered how many nanoseconds does it take to say the word, nanosecond? I'm guessing, close to a billion.

And a lot of important things happen at the nanometer scale. We can think of the smell of freshly baked chocolate chip cookies and that is something that happens on the nanometer scale. The molecules that are released from the cookie when it bakes are less than a nanometer in size and so they are carried through the air to our noses because they are so small. Gravity does not have much of an effect on them and so they float along. They reach our noses and when they are very, very close, less than a nanometer away, we can smell them.

While we so often look for things that are happening on a grand scale, God often works on through the small.

So, while running the universe very efficiently, thank you very much,
God takes time to see what's going on in our individual, little lives.

And what does God see?

We all know that it has been a tough year.
Health creates new limits for the aging, but also so those stricken by disease.
War has taken it's toll with deployments, injuries and the ultimate sacrifice of too many.
Economic times have been tough, unemployment, reduced hours, declining retirement accounts.

We've been trying to find big solutions to very big problems.
In truth the best solutions have come from individuals and small groups reaching out to one another.

There were big problems in the year of Jesus' birth.
The big nation of Rome ruled harshly over little Judah
They demanded big taxes & big changes in the culture of Judah
In addition, the religious had big egos and also demanded big tribute to support the big temple and the
priesthood who served it.

In those times, God must ask:
What's preventing my people from living in my love?
For one thing, they refuse to welcome God into their places of power

Kings, palaces, wealth, power, influence have no room for God's love.

So that when God decided to enter into our world, to live among us in order to demonstrate His love
God decided to come as a baby, in a small town, in a little country
In the midst of common people

So that all will know that our hope is not in our own strength,
Just as it is not God's power, but it is in God's love -

Love Delivered through Mary, a young girl from a small family

Born in Bethlehem a little town.

In a stable - not a very big building

Laid in A manger which is not a very big piece of furniture

On that Christmas night, that little manger as filled with the biggest thing of all,
the most powerful thing in the universe – God's love

That love has been multiplied around the world, through the ages – in our hearts

By unknown Christians whispering the story of God's love.
By anonymous hands offering to help
Through small acts of kindness

This is God's plan – a little baby

It's the BEST big thing –
Small enough to touch our heart
Big enough to save the world.