

Good morning, Church. Daily Reading, Luke 1:26-38.

John 3:3 "Jesus answered him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again he cannot see the kingdom of God." (ESV)

What movies have you watched numerous times, and why? I can't say I have watched the movie "The Natural" with Robert Redford many times, but if I see the end of the movie is near, I will stop and watch the ending every time. When Hobbs (played by Redford) breaks his favorite bat, "Wonderboy" in the last inning of the game, and he turns to the quirky bat boy and says, "Go pick me out a winner Bobbie," that is all I need to see. I know the very next pitch, using

"The Savoy Special," which Bobbie and Hobbs had turned down, Roy crushes a monster homerun into the stadium lights, and his team wins the pennant. (Gets me every time)

How many times have you read "The Nativity Story" from Luke 2:1-20? For some reason, even after 5, 10, 20, and yes, 40 plus times of preaching through this passage, it still speaks to my heart.

Why is this so? Because just like in the movie, redemption happens, and we are all in need of forgiveness and a new beginning. After making mistakes in his past, Roy Hobbs gets one more chance at playing baseball, defeating those who conspired against him, and finding redemption.

The Christmas Story is not the end of the game but the very beginning of the coming of the Messiah. When Jesus came, He did not come to be worshipped as an infant, but to be King, bringing salvation/redemption to mankind.

The story of Christ's redemption isn't so much about birth but about a rebirth (John 3). It is being born again to a living hope. It is being faced with our past, but finding Jesus is greater than our failures. "The Natural" is also a love story of sorts, and yet, it is nothing like the love story of Jesus leaving glory and being born among sinful humanity, only to die years later for our sins. No greater love than the story of Jesus.

