

SWADDLING CLOTHES

Rev. Patrick A. Rose

Lesson: Luke 2:1-12

“And this will be the sign to you: you will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger” (Luke 2:12).

When the Lord was born in Bethlehem, the very first thing that Mary did was wrap Him up to keep Him warm. After all, it was nighttime, and they were outside in a stable. It was probably fairly cold. Mary didn't want her little Baby getting cold. And so, it is said, in the Word, she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes.

Now swaddling clothes or swaddling cloths were the cloths that people used in those days to wrap around a little baby. One cloth would be a fairly large square, like a blanket, and what you would do is lay the baby down on this cloth diagonally. Then you would take the corner at the bottom and pull it up over the baby's feet to keep them warm. Then you would take the corners at the sides and fold them across the baby to keep his body warm. Then you would take the corner at the top and wrap it around the baby's head, to keep his head warm. Finally, you would take two or three long strips of cloth, like bandages, and you would use them to tie around the baby so that he would stay wrapped up, stay nice and warm and cozy.

And so, when Mary then put the Lord in the manger—even though it was nighttime—He wouldn't have been cold at all. He was wrapped up nice and warmly with these swaddling cloths. Mary, you see, was a good mother. She was taking good care of her tiny little Baby. She was looking after Him and protecting Him. And Mary was doing this because she, like all mothers, loved her little Baby. She loved Him, and she wanted to take especially good care of Him. When she put the swaddling cloths around the Baby Lord, it was a way of showing that she loved him.

Now, if you had been there that night the Lord was born, you would have loved Him as well, wouldn't you? Suppose Mary had let you hold her little Baby, and you had picked Him up and held Him in your arms. You would have held Him ever so carefully, wouldn't you? You would have taken such special care of Him as you held Him in your arms. You would have known that not only were you holding a wonderful tiny little baby, but that this Baby was the most important baby who had ever been born. This Baby, that was born to Mary, was God Himself. You would have done everything you could to look after Him, to

protect Him, and to show Him how much you loved Him, how much you loved the Baby Lord.

Think how wonderful it would have been to be there that first Christmas and to have seen the Baby Lord! Now, did you know that even though you weren't there that night the Lord was born—even though you never saw the Lord as a little Baby—you can still show Him how much you love Him? And perhaps the most important way you can show the Lord that you love Him is by taking special care of those things that are from Him.

Suppose you have a copy of the Lord's Word. Suppose you have your very own copy of the Word. Now the Lord's Word is very precious, isn't it? It is very holy, because what is in the Word comes directly from the Lord Himself. And this is why most people who have a copy of the Word keep it in a special place. And they might even have a special cover to put around it, to protect it, and to show just how important it is. It is almost like wrapping the Word itself in special swaddling cloths!

And so, though you might not be able to wrap the Baby Lord Himself up in swaddling clothes, you can certainly take special care of His Word. And you can do this not only by keeping the Word in a special place and wrapping it in a special cover, but also by reading from the Word, and by treasuring and cherishing—loving—the stories that you read there. And, most important of all, you can show the Lord that you love Him by obeying—by doing—the things that He teaches you in His Word.

Mary showed her love for the Lord by taking care of Him after He had been born as a tiny baby. You, also, can show your love for the Lord, by taking care of His Word, by reading from His Word, and especially by doing the things that He commands you in His Word. *Amen.*

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