

Our first Christmas living in Washington is one we will not soon forget. Traveling home for Christmas meant flying out on Christmas Day into Minneapolis and then catching a connecting “puddle jumper” flight (45 minutes) to Sioux Falls. And let me tell you, flying with two young children with baggage for two weeks and presents, is no picnic. On this particular Christmas, we arrived at the Seattle airport on time, got checked in and proceeded to our gate. And there we sat and sat and walked around and sat some more. You see, as our flight time got closer, they kept delaying our flight. And the more they delayed the flight the more stressed I got that we would miss our connecting flight to Sioux Falls. And then it happened, the flight was delayed again, and we would miss our connecting flight. The next flight out of Minneapolis would not be until the morning. In total, our flight out of Seattle was delayed 4 hours. We got to Minneapolis and had to stay with Connie’s brother; arriving around 11:30 PM and with no baggage as that had to stay at the airport. The next morning, we got to the airport on time, but our flight to Sioux Falls ended up being delayed about 3 hours. In total, we spent an extra 7+ hours at two airports with two children preschool age and younger. Not how we imagined spending Christmas.

But we did arrive safely in Sioux Falls. We did celebrate Christmas with family. And, we did have a great time. Though not how we would have scripted things, but God had us in His mighty hands the whole time; fulfilling His purposes (though I still do not understand those purposes). But God is sovereign, and I am not, and I praise God for that. For Mary and Joseph, they could not have imagined how their first “Christmas” – the birth of their son – would unfold. They did not plan to travel so close to Mary’s due date. They could not have imagined how housing arrangements would manifest themselves in Bethlehem. They had no clue how this birth would change those lowly shepherds and eventually the world. All in all, they had no idea, but God did, and God was glorified.

This Christmas, expect the unexpected and trust that God is up to something. Jesus was born for you, died for you and rose from the grave for you. Jesus blows apart expectations and fulfills the Father’s glorious plans for your salvation. Our Christmas plans are just that “our plans”, but God’s plan for that first Christmas and for everyone after that is all about Jesus and your everlasting life. May we not lose sight of Jesus and may we not become so

wrapped up in our expectations. Expect God to be faithful, expect God's love to be steadfast and expect God's plans to be perfect. Merry Christmas and Amen.