

A Thrill of Hope

Dec 5, 2021

This month, we're of course, looking at the Story of Christmas - when Jesus, the son of God, was given to us. I'm going to use the words to that great Hymn O Holy Night as a sort of reference and framework for our sermons this month. Look at these amazing words written in 1855.

O holy night, the stars are brightly shining,
It is the night of the dear Saviour's birth;
Long lay the world in sin and error pining,
'Till he appeared and the soul felt its worth.
A thrill of hope the weary world rejoices,
For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn;

Chorus

Fall on your knees, Oh hear the angel voices!
O night divine! O night when Christ was born.
O night, O holy night, O night divine.

Led by the light of Faith serenely beaming;
With glowing hearts by his cradle we stand:
So, led by light of a star sweetly gleaming,
Here come the wise men from Orient land,
The King of Kings lay thus in lowly manger,
In all our trials born to be our friend;

Truly He taught us to love one another;
His law is Love and His gospel is Peace;
Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother,
And in his name all oppression shall cease,
Sweet hymns of joy in grateful Chorus raise we;
Let all within us praise his Holy name!

1. A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices!

Let's talk about when we - as in all humans - were first given hope. Think about that night that Heaven invaded earth - that the supernatural and eternal broke INTO the temporary and broken state of the earth - of humanity.

Shepherds were shocked but that great angelic light!
 Joseph had NO IDEA what was about to happen to him!
 And how about Mary. Mary, just a teenage Jewish girl - not famous - not a religious scholar - just a young teen in a small town - given the HOPE OF ALL MANKIND!

MT 1:18-23

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about : His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.19 Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. 20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said,

“Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

Our Key Verse is vs 21 “She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because He will save his people from their sins.”

Jesus came to offer hope - SERMON ON THE MOUNT CLIP

We needed saved from our sins. This is why Jesus came. We needed hope to get out of our mess. The world is weary.

A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices.

The world is weary.

It's not just Americans who are never satisfied with our political leaders.

Why? You can never find in a politician what you find in Jesus.

It's not just people who work at a great job who discovered that more money only led to more problems.

The world is weary!

Have you seen people lately?

I was at WalMart yday. I don't think I saw ONE smile! Not one. Not even the greeter - the 80 year who is PAID to smile! I walked in. I think she growled at me. LOL

It was c-A-R-A-AAAAZY in there. People were not "full of cheer"

Why is the world so weary?

What is it about sin that causes people who have so much to be so unhappy?

Maybe what they THINK will bring happiness isn't what they need at all. Maybe it's something else.

It's so important to understand WHY Christmas is on the calendar. This global event came to be because the God of Heaven and Earth came DOWN to earth as one of us.

Jesus, the son of God came to us as one of us to save all of us. (repeat) The son of God became a son of man to make the sons of man, sons of God. Our thrill of hope is that Jesus

The thrill of hope is is that we are not bound to our sin - that nature inside of us that causes us to be selfish - to demand what we want when we want it. The sinful nature causes us to push others down to get ahead - to abuse instead of bless - to take instead of give - that sinful nature Jesus came to break. "Chains shall He break for the slave is our brother."

When the Gospel comes into your life, you see that every person is a child of God - just like YOU!

Romans 6:23-25 For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

The Bible tells us that we are adopted into God's family by God Himself and that Jesus becomes our brother!

There's one characteristic about God that Jesus seems to talk most about - the idea of Him being Father. Jesus often even refers to his followers as brothers and sisters. This is to ensure that we understand that we are not just servants who are saved - YES - indeed we are - but we are transformed from servants into sons!

The same love the Father has given Jesus, He has now given us!

When we accept the truth that Jesus died in our place for OUR sins, we are receiving not only GOD as Father but JESUS as BROTHER! WOW!

Jesus knew how loved He was by His Father. This love from Father God, gave Him the peace and confidence He needed in life to do what He did. This same peace and hope and confidence Jesus now passes on to us!

"The Father loves the Son and has given all things into his hand" (Jn. 3:35; see also Jn. 5:20). Not only the Father but also Jesus himself desires and prays that believers may know of the love the Father has for the Son (Jn. 17:23, 26).

When we were broken and scared, GOD adopted us! WOW!

Brooklyn Shares Her Adoption Story

Let's thank Brooklyn for her bravery in sharing and also for how God is using her to place children in safe and loving homes.

On Thursday, we were up all night with our foster son and you know, he's just been a challenge lately. We love him so much but it is a challenge and that caused me to write this little poem.

Fostercare is

Fostercare is up all night, not feeling well, hold them tight. Fostercare is committing to love no matter what. To give a child a home. To say "yes" with many things unknown. Fostering is believing that #EveryChild matters.

Fostercare is God's supernatural strength; it's saying "I can do all things through Him" and care for this child today, when others say "I could never do that and give them away."

Fostercare teaches us to put our needs aside. It's a season of life to give, to give a child life.

It's love as it's meant to be, with no strings attached. It's arms held open even if they push back. It's unconditional and never-changing till they learn to trust again. It's what The Father gives to us till we learn to trust in Him.

They wonder "Did mom and dad say "no" to me? Did I do something bad? I just want to go home where I can see my mom and dad. This house is new and I don't understand it. I'll act out. I'll misbehave. But I'm just trying

to be brave and find my way. I don't know what else to do. I know you love me but give me time 'cause I'm learning to love you."

Fostercare is taking turns eating out or going to games. It's bringing in aunts, uncles and in-laws in to keep you sane. It extends your family and yet makes everyone closer, teaming up knowing we can do this together. This child needs God's love and we can give it together.

Fostercare is loud. It's big laughs and big smiles. It's a messy house and pile of towels. It's spaghetti on the floor and memories galore. It's only for a season, yes maybe you'll adopt, but even then that child grows up, moves out and needs to know that you love them a lot! So keep on hugging and keep on loving because every child matters.

When people stare as your giant and different family enters, just do what I do, stare back until they feel funny (sorry that didn't rhyme. I'll get it next time)

Fostercare is saying to a newborn, child, or teen...

"I love you. You matter to God and you matter to me! I'm here for you today and there for you tomorrow. If you go back with mom and dad, I'll miss you knowing the joy we had. You are loved by Father God, known in every way. Not a thing about you missed, not one detail, not one day. He has made you special, gifted and unique. He is with you if you leave me. He's everywhere you go. He's the One who made you so be proud and let everyone know! I can't wait to see who you become! You are special in so many ways! I'm so glad I get to be a part of your journey if only for today."

Life can be easy or life can be meaningful. The hard things are what make the in-between beautiful. I choose to love. I choose to be hurt. I choose to give what every child deserves. A safe and loving home. A seat at the table. Even if it's just for now, with God, I am able.

You see when we realize that we were like a child in foster care, when we realize that we were hurting, scared and unsure of our future, when we were in survival mode and didn't know up from down, right from wrong, God THE FATHER, came in, picked us up and He fostered us! He adopted us! He said "Push me back all you want, but I'm gonna keep loving you!"

Father God has looked past our pain and loved us and taken us in and called us His own! This is the picture of love! The thrill of hope is that Father God has adopted us and give us a future full of HOPE!

¹⁵ For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, “Abba! Father!” ¹⁶ The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs— heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him.

¹⁸ For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. ¹⁹ For the creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. ²⁰ For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of him who subjected it, in hope ²¹ that the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. ²² For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. ²³ And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies. ²⁴ For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? ²⁵ But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience.

You see, We were given HOPE by Father God when He took us in and called us His own! This hope and this love pushes out fear and worry & promises a brighter future!

2. His Law is Love

- **Romans 13:10**
 - **Love does no wrong to a neighbor. Love, therefore, is the fulfillment of the law.**

The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-37²⁵ Then_i an expert in the law_k stood up to test him, saying, “Teacher,^m what must I do to inherit eternal life?”ⁿ

²⁶ “What is written in the law?” he asked him. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered, “**Love the Lord your God_o with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,**”^p and “**your neighbor as yourself.**”^q

²⁸ “You’ve answered correctly,” he told him. “Do this and you will live.”^r

²⁹ But wanting to justify himself,^s he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”^t

³⁰ Jesus took up the question and said, “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell into the hands of robbers. They stripped him, beat him up, and fled, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down that road. When he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² In the same way, a Levite, when he arrived at the

place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³But a Samaritan^v on his journey came up to him, and when he saw the man, he had compassion.^v ³⁴He went over to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on olive oil^w and wine. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. ³⁵The next dayⁿ he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him. When I come back I'll reimburse you for whatever extra you spend.'

³⁶"Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"

³⁷"The one who showed mercy^x to him," he said.

Then Jesus told him, "Go and do the same."

Deuteronomy 6:5 - The Greatest Command - is about love.

- Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength.

We are now given the greatest job with the greatest joy. What Father God did for us, we can do for others. We can love. We can tell others about the hope we've found in Jesus and the home we have with Father God!

What The Father has done for us, we can do for others. Don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying everyone can foster or adopt. I'm not saying that. Everyone's assignment from the Father is different. We all go through different seasons and with each season comes a new assignment. But those seasons do NOT change our identity - who we are as sons and daughters.

Sonship InfoGraphic

It's possible that you are in a season where you can foster or do respite care once a month or mentor a teen once a month. Right now there are only 11 teens living at the facility in Warren. You can be a mentor to them and take them out to eat, take them to the lake, to the movies, build a project together - be a dad or mom type of person in there life who looks them in the eyes and says "I believe in you! God believes in you. You may not believe in God but God believes in you. I'm here for you no matter what. You need to talk, to vent, to yell, you give me a call."

Trust me your life will go from "American" to meaningful real quick.

Yes this type of life is costly

Life can be easy or life can be meaningful.

When you choose to live like Jesus, to give like Jesus, to give what HE gave to you - hope when you didn't have any - a friend when you needed one - that means there will be hurt because you're choosing to love. When we choose to love, we are risking being hurt.

There are times when

I'm so thankful! 36 Kids have come into care! We are making RAPID progress on our TransformTrumbull goals! God's LOVE is flowing through you! Praise God! HE has put HIS HEART in our chests! He is showing HIS love through us.

Warren Campus is opening in 3 weeks! In Warren, we are going to see even more adults become Christians who become Christ-like - loving and caring and selfless - then trained to care for the orphan, the widow and the poor.

There are so many ways to give the thrill of hope.

Life Group (Group)

Friendship (One on One) co-worker, mentoring a teen, new guest at ROG Team Ministry (ROG Ministry like Rock Solid Kids, Youth Group, Nursery, FAM, etc)

4 New Life Groups began this year! 2 of which are North of Kinsman.

There may be someone LOOKING for hope and YOU have it! You can bring them to a Life Group near you and discuss who Jesus is in the comfort of a home.

3. His Gospel is Peace

- **Ephesians 2:17**

He came and proclaimed the good news of peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near.

Isaiah 57:14-21¹⁴He said, "Build it up, build it up, prepare the way, remove every obstacle from my people's way."¹⁵ For the High and Exalted One, who lives forever, whose name is holy,¹⁶ says this: "I live in a high and holy place, and with the oppressed and lowly of spirit,¹⁷ to revive the spirit of the lowly and revive the heart of the oppressed.¹⁸ For I will not accuse you forever, and I will not always be angry;¹⁹ for then the spirit would grow weak before me, even the breath, which I have made. ²⁰Because of his sinful greed I was angry,²¹ so I struck him; I was angry and hid; but he went on turning back to the desires of his heart. ²²I have seen his ways, but I will heal him; I will lead him and restore comfort to him and his mourners,²³ creating words of praise."²⁴ The Lord says, "Peace, peace to the one who is far or near,²⁵ and I will heal him. ²⁶But the wicked are like the storm-tossed sea,²⁷ for it cannot

be still, and its water churns up mire and muck. ²¹There is no peace for the wicked,” says my God.”

There is only peace found in Jesus! His Gospel really is PEACE. I would say the human heart really needs three things above all & only God can provide them:

- **A Sense of Belonging (Loved)**
- **Hope for Tomorrow**
- **Peace (The Mind Free of Confusion & Worry)**

Remember what I preached a month or so ago - Jesus, after He died and rose to new life, as he appeared again to those who were traveling on the road to Emmaus... what did He say? What did He offer?

- Luke 24:36
 - As they were saying these things, he himself stood in their midst. He said to them, “Peace to you!”

YOU know Jesus, the Prince of Peace! You are able to bring peace to people who are hoping for peace. They’re wondering “Is this all there is to life?”

YOU have Jesus!

I love how that great hymn, O Holy Night ends. Listen to this:

Chorus

Christ is the Lord, then ever! ever praise we!
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!
His pow'r and glory, evermore proclaim!

The Westminster Catechism states that Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.

I couldn’t agree more.

ALTAR

Is that you?

Have you let Ephesians 1:5 come to light in your heart? Have you let the Father ADOPT you as His very own and give you the thrill of hope?

Today, right now, you can do that.

Salvation Call.