

December 24, 2015 - Christmas Eve 7pm

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Date: 24 December 2015

Preacher: Pastor Tom Kraft

[0 : 0 0] Shall we join together and this is the day that the Lord has made that we will rejoice and be glad. If any children would like to come up and join us singing, welcome to Command Razzle. This is the day that the Lord has saved.

Let us rejoice and be glad He did. This is the day that the Lord has saved.

Let us rejoice and be glad He did. This is the day that the Lord has saved.

Hi, welcome to our church. I'm Mike Maciejewski. And I'm Julie. Please fill out your friendship card to get on the mailing list, to sign up for any activities, any prayers or concerns, and any notes you want to send to the staff.

And if you're new to our church, please be sure and pick up a gift that we have for you in the back of the church at the Connection site after worship. Thank you for coming today and welcome to Pendleton Center Church.

[1 : 1 6] Let us pray. Let us pray. Lord, we thank you for your blessed Son and we pray that you will fill this space with your presence.

We pray for your blessing upon this people and may everything that we say and all the songs that we sing be a blessing to you. In Jesus' name, amen.

It is Christmas Eve and so we're going to light our Advent candles this evening and as we do so, hear these words from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 2. In those days, Caesar Augustus issued a decree that a census should be taken of the entire Roman world.

This was the first census that took place while Quirinius was governor of Syria and everyone went to their own town to register. So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea to Bethlehem, the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.

He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son.

[2 : 3 0] She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

If you're able, I'm going to invite you to stand as we sing together. Angels, we have heard our mouth. Angels, we have heard our mouth.

We've heard our mouth. Sweat him now. Ahon! Christian, we have heard our mouth. Sing! estaba mulher Maybe ■■ Heathers Doe, Come on!

So In excelsis Deo. In excelsis Deo.

Shemmed by this jubilee. By your joyous praise from God. What the glad song tidings be Which inspire your heavenly song Oh, oh, oh, oh In excelsis feo Oh, oh, oh, oh Oh, oh, oh, oh In excelsis feo Come to Bethlehem and sing Christ who spurn the angels sing Come adore and bend with me

[5 : 01] Christ the Lord, the new born King Oh, oh, oh, oh Oh, oh, oh, oh In excelsis feo Come, oh, oh, oh Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh In excelsis feo Sing him in an angel's name Where the choirs of angels praise Mary, Joseph, and pure While our hearts in glory raise Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis feo

Gloria, Gloria, in excelsis feo Gloria, in excelsis feo The Lord be with you Take a moment, if you will, and greet your neighbor with the peace of the spirit Any other kids want to come up?

They can come on up and join us Saul It's Christmas Eve, isn't it? So that means that tomorrow is Thanksgiving, right? No It's what?

And what's Christmas? What is that? That's whose birthday? Jesus, happy birthday to you Happy birthday to you Happy birthday, dear Jesus So you got a birthday gift for Jesus?

For tomorrow? Or are you thinking you're going to get a gift? Oh, you're going to get a gift, huh? You know, I got a gift for Christmas Our dog passed away last year So I got a dog for Christmas See?

[7 : 14] Isn't he cute? He even sings and dances Maybe not He's dead My little dog is dead already My kids caught him and he's already dead He's losing parts He's sort of a dysfunctional little dog Yeah, this is a messed up puppy I guess that's why he's my dog, right?

See if he makes it He's a pretty weird little dog, isn't he? He is a stuffed animal, yeah He even sheds, though Which is kind of annoying, actually He's not supposed to, but he does He does, he sheds He really does Makes a mess of it You know, I think that's why my wife got him for me Anyways, this is my gift for Christmas tomorrow But tomorrow is not about just gifts to us It's about Jesus' birthday So we need to remember tomorrow To say happy birthday to Jesus, okay?

Because that's important Because if Jesus is born in our hearts That's the best gift we can always have That's right Mother's birthday is tomorrow Wow, she shares a birthday with Jesus Pretty cool Yes After Christmas?

Yeah, mine is too Yeah, most of ours are But right after Christmas? Yeah Wow That's tough Because, you know, like That means you only get, like Not as many gifts Kind of like Like people get this awkward thing They don't know how to celebrate your birthday Yeah It's kind of tough sharing the birthday with Jesus, isn't it?

Yeah But you know what? You can still say happy birthday to mom tomorrow, can't you? I think you should give gifts to her first Don't you? Yeah Because it's her birthday, right?

[9 : 33] This dog is shedding on me This is problematic Okay, we're going to put the dog aside Alright What are you guys thankful for today? What are you thankful for? God, raise your hand Friends and family My mom and dad and Tim Merry Christmas My mom and dad My mom and dad Anybody else want to share?

Just raise your hand Yeah Jesus and the angels Alright Jesus and the angels Alright We're doubly thankful for Jesus and the angels on his birthday Lord, we just pray that you'll bless us Bless Jesus and the angels And our parents, our moms, our dads And all the special people in this world Especially those who have a birthday tomorrow Amen Alright, you guys can go out to a children's program There's a children's program for all the kids They're going to go out right now And they'll be coming back into the church After the sermon So watch for them just before communion Because they'll be coming back in During one of the songs Merry Christmas Merry Christmas Isn't it a wonderful thing to be able to gather together And worship God on this night When we celebrate all that God has done for us Let's continue our worship

As we bring our gifts, tithes, and offerings before the Lord There's a wonderful story that I love to tell About a tiny little baby in a manger So gather around me now and listen well But a tiny little baby in a manger It happened oh so long ago Amid the cold of the winter snow He came from heaven to the earth below This tiny little baby in a manger This tiny little baby in a manger And the angels say Glory to God And the angels say Glory to God And the angels say Glory to God in the highest And on earth peace and goodwill And the angels say Glory to God

And the angels say Glory to God And the angels say Glory to God And the angels say Glory to God in the highest And on earth peace and goodwill He said goodwill He said goodwill He said goodwill There were shepherds who came From the hills of fun To see the tiny little baby in a manger Led by the light of the shining star To see the tiny little baby in a manger They entered in that lonely place And saw the smile on the mother's face And they all were filled with the holy grace By the tiny little baby in a manger Tiny little baby in a manger And the angels say Glory to God And the angels say Glory to God

And the angels say Glory to God In the highest And on earth peace and goodwill And the angels say Glory to God Glory to God Glory to God In the highest And on earth Glory to God In the highest On earth And on earth Peace and goodwill Peace and goodwill O going on Thank you A■■■■ so Today's event will always bother to begin,

[14 : 06] Dear Heavenly Father, we do give you thanks and praise for this evening, for the special night that it is.

We give you thanks for the opportunity to give of our gifts, our tithes, and our offerings. Lord, bless them and give us wisdom to know how to best use them for the furtherance of your kingdom.

We pray that many will be drawn to salvation in Jesus Christ and hear the good news of what you have done, that you began as we remember this night.

In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Please be seated. As we enter into our time of prayer, just take a moment and think.

Bring it up in your mind. All of the joys that you have from God. All that you have been blessed with. That you can rejoice in this night.

[15 : 20] Have you got one? You got maybe two or three? Or more? Isn't God good? Hold that thought and think of those people you know who are sick.

People who are infirm, who maybe couldn't be here tonight or be out of their homes or out of the hospital because they're too sick. Think of those folks and hold them in our hearts for a moment.

Think of those folks and hold them in our hearts for a moment. Let's think of all of those things that are going on in our community and in the world that need prayer.

Bring them up. Get them to the front of your mind. And now let's turn to the Lord with all of these joys and all of these concerns that we have.

Let's turn to the Lord and pray. Heavenly Father, we are so grateful.

[16 : 30] Thankful for all of the joys that you have put into our lives, the blessings. Lord, we thank you so much for Jesus, for your Holy Spirit who leads us and teaches us.

Lord, we thank you so much for your life. We lift up every joy to you and give you thanks.

Lord, we lift up before you to all of those who are sick, who are infirm, who are in need of a healing touch from you. We pray that you will touch them.

Give them peace. Give them comfort. Let them know that you're there and that you love them very much. Pray for those who are caring for them as well, Lord.

We pray that you give them hearts of compassion and hearts of wisdom as they take care of them.

[17 : 38] We pray, Father, for those who are grieving losses at this wonderful and joyful time. We're so happy about all those things that are happening around us, but in our hearts, there are those places of missing, those places of grieving.

Fill us, Lord, each and every one with memories of love, memories of happy times and of blessings with those that we're missing.

Send your spirit to bring comfort. Send your spirit to bring peace.

Lord, you are the God of love and of joy and of hope and of peace. And there are so many places in this world tonight, even as we are celebrating, where there is unrest, where there is turmoil, where there is trouble.

Lord, we pray for peace in those situations. We pray for peace where there is war. We pray for love where there is hate. We pray for joy where there is despair.

[19 : 07] We pray for hope. We pray for the hope of Jesus coming again. We pray for all of those who don't know him.

We pray for joy. We pray for love. We pray for the light of Christmas day that comes tomorrow. We pray that the light of your love shines in us and through us.

We pray that when people see us, all of your Christians throughout the world, Lord, not just us here, but throughout the world, everyone who is celebrating Christmas in their own way, that that light is ignited within them and that wherever they go, people see you.

People see all that God has brought into the world through Jesus. Lord God, we pray that many will be saved.

We pray, Father, and as we come to this place, we come to worship and to be renewed. We pray that as we hear your word, that it would wash over us and fill us and change us.

[20 : 23] We pray for Pastor Tom's message, that you would anoint him. You've given him this message, Lord. Let it be a blessing to us and to him.

Lord God, make all of our worship, every moment, to be a blessing to you. And go with us as we leave this place to shine forth your love wherever we go.

In Jesus' name, amen. Shall we hear from the word of the Lord? Merry Christmas.

Merry Christmas. First reading tonight is from Luke chapter 2, verses 8 through 20. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night.

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them. And they were terrified. But the angel said to them, Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

[21 : 28] Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord. This will be a sign to you.

You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger. Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.

When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.

So they hurry up and found Mary and Joseph and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child.

And all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

[22 : 36] This is the word of the Lord. Amen. Amen. O holy night, the stars are brightly shining.

It is the night of our dear Savior's birth. The weary world rejoices, the world in sin and error, pining till he appeared and the soul felt his birth.

A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, the weary world rejoices, the yonder breaks, a new and glorious morn.

O glatt on your knees, O hear the angel voices, Night divine, O night when Christ was born.

O night divine, O night, O night divine.

[24 : 33] Truly he taught us to love one another.

His joy is love, and his gospel is peace. Chains he shall break, for the slave is our brother.

And in his name all oppression shall cease. Sweet hymns of joy in grateful chorus praise.

We let all within us praise his holy name. Christ is the Lord.

The name forever praise we. Noel, Noel, O night, O night divine.

[26 : 05] Noel, Noel, O night, O night divine.

Noel, Noel, Noel, O night, O holy night.

Noel, Noel, O night, O night divine. Good evening and Merry Christmas.

Our second reading tonight comes from the book of Isaiah, chapter 9, verses 2 through 6. The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the land of deep darkness, a light has dawned.

You have enlarged the nation and increased their joy. They rejoice before you as people rejoice at the harvest, as warriors rejoice when dividing the plunder. For as in the day of Midian's defeat, you have shattered the yoke that burdens them, the bar across their shoulders, the rod of their oppressor.

[27 : 34] Every warrior's boot used in battle and every garment rolled in blood will be destined for burning, will be fuel for the fire. For to us, for to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. This is the word of the Lord. Amen. I'll be home for Christmas.

You can count on me. Please have snow and mistletoe and presents on the tree. Christmas Eve will find me where the love light be.

I'll be home for Christmas, if only in my dreams. You've been listening to music like that all week long?

You know, all the old songs from Perry Como and Bing Crosby and Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra. Watching old movies from a time gone by.

[28 : 52] Sometimes, I don't know about you, but I feel like I would have liked to have been born back in that age. The golden age of America.

When things seem simpler. When things seem simpler. When life seemed to be less complicated and families seemed to be together and friendships lasted a lifetime.

And the nation seemed secure and sure about itself. And we were one people who knew what we were doing and where we were going. And the church was at its greatest strength in the history of this country.

Sometimes it feels as if things have changed so much over the course of my short life. That I start to wonder where we're headed.

This passage from Isaiah from a long time ago is written by the prophet who's talking to Israel just before their country collapsed and was taken into captivity by Babylon.

[29 : 57] In the chapter just before this one, it says, Consult God's instruction and the testimony of warning. If anyone does not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn.

Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land. When they are famished, they'll become enraged and looking upward will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom.

And they'll be thrust into utter darkness. Feels sometimes like a darkness has come over our land.

I know this is a time of marvels. Amazing things. We have comforts that are beyond our imagination and gadgets and things that can do incredible things.

I was traveling down the road in a car I just bought the other day. And it says, the speed limit is 45 miles an hour. It tells me. Freaked out my wife the first time she drove the car.

[31 : 00] We have houses that are twice the size of the houses we grew up in. We have ways of communicating and of finding out information and dealing with this world that we didn't even dream were possible.

Worldwide internet. Amazing. Never even thought of such things. Yet we also live in a time where it feels like we have an overwhelming stress and anxiety.

A fear that's pervasive in our world. Like Israel as they were facing Babylon and feeling squeezed by one country called Babylon on one side and another called Egypt on the other side.

Both of them. The powerful nations of their age. Filled on technology. Knowledge and prosperity. Power. Verse 3 it says, You will enlarge the nation and increase their joy.

They rejoice before you. Have we increased our joy? I don't mean a passing sense of fancy or entertainment, but a soul-filling, sustaining joy.

[32 : 17] How many of you have seen Star Wars yet? Anybody? Don't be shy. Do you have to get it? Yeah. I hear you had to actually get tickets. Do you have to buy them in advance? I'm not doing that, man.

I'll wait until the cheap seats come out. It'll be the same movie. I'm sure. They told me that the difference with this Star Wars movie is that they decided to go back to something that they used to do in the movies.

And instead of just counting on special effects and things like that to wow the people, they were actually going to write a story. Amazing. A story. A real movie.

Not just a fake kind of pseudo movie that just wows us but leaves us empty. And God gives us that in the joy. It's not just a little happiness.

It's not an imposter, fake feeling. It's a real, sustaining joy that fills our heart and our lives. There's a darkness that's come over the land.

[33 : 19] Which is like it was for the children of Israel when they had really forgotten their God. They went down into Egypt, if you remember the story. And they were filled with blessings.

They lived in the land of Goshen and everything was blessed that they touched. Everything went well for them. So well that they forgot God. And little by little the blessings turned to curses.

And they found themselves in slavery. In slavery. Like the oppression it talks about in here when it talks about the yokes of burdens and the oppressors that lay their burden upon them.

Because they forgot their God. The people living in darkness. Have you noticed how dark it is lately? We start our 5 o'clock service, it's already dark.

I mean, really. 4.30 in the evening, it's dark. You get up in the morning, it's dark. It's like dark all the time. I am tired of dark. I think I dislike the dark about winter the most.

[34 : 22] Well, no, it's the snow. It is the snow. And I know, some of you love snow. Oh, I want a white Christmas. I'm dreaming of a green Christmas. Just like down in Florida.

Where the palm trees wave. I'm sorry. I'm off on another subject. The darkness. A darkness that leaves us in a place where we're not seeing straight.

And it breeds an ignorance. Slowly. Slowly. We're seeing what we used to know disappear. Disappear.

The culture that we have. It's become something confusing. And what we were raised with as being right is now said to be wrong.

And what was wrong is now right. And the churches are closing. They're becoming condominiums. And office buildings.

[35 : 23] And theaters. And some of them are just filled with weeds. And boarded up old buildings that are decaying. Where once great, wonderful congregations worshipping God live.

Little by little. People are forgetting God. And so a deep darkness. A deep darkness. Where we have people who've never even heard of God.

They don't know about Jesus. They don't know the church. They don't know God. They don't understand hope. And they live only for what this world has to offer.

1 Corinthians 15 says to us, If only for this life we have hope in Christ. We are of all people most to be paid. If this is it. It's truly dark.

We're forgetting God. We're forgetting hope. We're forgetting who we're supposed to be. It was a time of great technological advancement.

[36 : 26] Communication, transportation systems. We're more advanced than anybody had seen before. People of different cultures were mixing with each other. Great wealth. It was the most powerful nation on the earth.

They called it Rome. And little child. Just a baby born in one of the backwater provinces of Palestine.

And it changed the world. The angel said, don't be afraid. I bring you good news of a great joy. This is what God offers us.

It's good news. What the darkness offers us is the oppression. The brokenness. The slavery, if you will, of what Egypt offered. Only God can set us free.

From the pain and the hurt. And believe me. There are people that are out to get you. It's not just paranoia. Although some of you are a little wacky paranoid.

[37 : 30] There are people that are trying to hurt you. And there are systems in this nation. And in this world. That are designed to hurt you. And advantage somebody else.

And into this world. God. Speaks. In verse 3 it says.

God enlarges the nation and increase their joy. Do you realize that God determines the destiny of nations? If we're to believe anything this book says. There's times when God caused Babylon to become strong or weak.

Or caused Egypt to rise up or fall. Or Israel to become great or not. Or even Rome. Or even Greece. At the hand of God. God controls the destiny not only of people but of nations.

Do you think there's any relationship between how people see their God. And how God sees the nation? The greatest Christian continent in the world used to be Europe.

[38 : 35] And the greatest empires in the world used to be in Europe. Now it's a tired old. We drag old continent. It has no place for God much anymore.

Is it wonder that it's fading off of the world scene? We are the largest Christian nation in the world. And as we became the largest Christian nation in the world.

We became the strongest. The greatest. The most prosperous nation in the world. As we did the things to defend and promote the things of God. And build God. As part of who we were. Is it any wonder that as the people of this country start to forget God.

We start to feel something slipping. Fading. And where are things growing? Where is God honored? In Russia they honor God.

Have you noticed what's happening with Russia lately? You know what the fastest growing nation in the world for Christianity is? The nation that will probably overtake the United States as the most Christian country in the world?

[39 : 40] China. China. Africa is coming up. Latin America is coming up. Wherever God is coming up. The nations are coming up with it.

But we've forgotten God. We're busy with so many other things. We say God bless America but do we really mean it?

It was a callous time. And the government had no moral compass really. They were concerned about power. About peace.

And about safety. They had soldiers that were fighting in faraway lands for forgotten reasons. Their prisons were full. There was the appearance of religion everywhere but faith nowhere.

Money and power seemed to be their God. And a little child was born in a stable. And it changed the entire world. One little baby transformed the brokenness, the darkness into the light.

[40 : 43] And the angel said, for to you a Savior is born in the city of David. He shall be called Emmanuel, which means God with us. Unto us a child is given.

Unto you a child is born. A light is done in the darkness. If we live for the light.

The Gospel of John. He wrote this. This is the verdict. Light has come into the world. People love the darkness instead of light. Because their deeds were evil.

Everyone who does evil hates the light. Will not come into the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light. So that it might be seen plainly that what they have done has been done in the sight of God.

Is God born? Not in a stable that we remember from decades and centuries ago. But in your life.

[41 : 45] Is the kingdom of God more important in your world? Than the country of America. God. Or the job you work for.

Or the family you live with. Or the entertainment. That you can experience. And what happens when they all come clashing in together.

There's a movie out now. And I saw this little piece of it that I wanted to share with you. And it's about a fellow who's suing the NFL about concussions.

Take a look. What do they want? The NFL wants you to say you made it all up. I made it up.

They're accusing you of fraud. If you retract, you'll be fined. This all goes away. Why are they doing this? They're terrified of you. Benetamalu is going to war with a corporation that has 20 million people on a weekly basis craving their product.

[42 : 57] The same way they crave food. The NFL owns a day of the week. The same day the church used to own. Now it's theirs.

They're very big. The same day the church used to own. Did you hear that? Now it's theirs.

Now it's theirs. Not really, by the way. They still play at 1 o'clock because they don't dare take us on. They tried about a month and a half ago with this little game over in London.

We beat them. We had a better attendance than they did. But they're working on it. They're building it up at the lowest levels.

Have you noticed? Rather than putting the NFL games on right head to head with the church on Sunday morning, they're taking the little ones out, right? And they're saying if you want your kids to play sports, you've got to play during church time.

[44 : 01] You've got to play on Sunday morning. They're building up the farm league little by little so people get used to the idea that Sunday is about anything but church.

That's a day that used to be God's day. Not any longer. It's faded away.

It's become almost anything else dead. The people living in darkness have seen a great light.

For those living in the land of darkness, a light has dawned. God gives us the light. God gives us a life worth living. Filled with joy, with peace, with purpose, with hope.

With possibilities. And I'm not here to talk about what we can complain about or what's happening. I want to talk about changing it.

[45 : 10] I want to talk about what can we do to take back the light of God in our lives. I don't know how it got messed up.

I really don't. I'd like to blame the generation before me. You know that Bing and Cosby bunch. They somehow must have messed it up, right? But somehow our generation didn't fix it.

Seriously, we didn't fix it. In fact, if anything, we probably contributed to the mess. Sorry, guys, but we probably did. And I've been with this church for 26 years.

In some ways, I feel like Moses. We're roaming around out in the wilderness. We're doing okay. We're doing better than the people down the road.

We're not quite getting in the promised land. And by the way, I have a feeling God has told me I'm never going to make it. And that may be true.

[46 : 11] But I believe that there are Joshua's out here. People that God is calling to lead us into that promised land. To say that they're going to live to the principles and values of God and take back this nation, this world, this community, our families, our lives.

For what God intended us to be. I believe it. We have to be so committed that we'd be willing to do whatever it takes.

Like a soldier on a battlefield. Think about it. If you're in a war and there's like a million soldiers out on the battlefield, I can picture a soldier. I've never really been one, honestly.

And I admire those who we have. I can picture one of them saying, what would be the difference if I just took off? I mean, I'm only one guy. Would it make any difference if just one guy disappeared? There's 999,999 more.

They won't miss me. Until every soldier does that, right? And you might say, what part would I have? It would be just really not...

[47 : 27] It's not what we do alone. It's what we do together. And those little pieces matter so much more than we understand. In this passage, it talks about Midian and the defeat the Israelites had over Midian.

Which I really never thought about when I read this passage. That's the time when Gideon went to war against the Midianites. And he showed up with something like 30,000 soldiers.

And God said, oh, way too many guys. Overkill. You've got to get rid of some. So he sent like 20,000 home. And he's still got 10,000 guys. And God says, no, no, no, no. If you go down there with 10,000 guys and face 50,000, they're going to say it's because you were brave and great soldiers.

He says, you've got to cut it down. So he cut it down to 300. He said, 300 is pretty good. So he sent 300 guys to attack 50,000. And of course they won because they had God with them.

Numbers don't mean anything to God. Faithfulness, commitment, things that will change and make an overwhelming difference. We've got this weird, odd child of a Savior born in a manger.

[48 : 34] And everyone got them out for the kids. I still got Jesus in my pocket. That's kind of symbolic, you know. I'm going to keep Jesus for myself, right? Not very good.

You've got to tell them, Pastor Tom forgot to put Jesus in there, you know. It's that confusing little dog that got me all. You see what happens?

We get confused and distracted by these things, and we forget what really matters. Why are we even here? The shepherds, they went to sea.

They went and they spread the word, and they glorified God. Tomorrow. Tomorrow you're going to wake up. It's going to be a great day.

You're going to sit back and enjoy a beverage or something. Eat some nice food. You're going to open up these gifts. You're going to find things you really like, and you're going to pretend they like the other things.

[49 : 34] You are going to pretend to like the other things. You're going to have a wonderful meal with people you love. You might even tell the story about Jesus, and remind them that that's what this is about.

But then I have to tell you, most people will forget all about God, and put God away in a box somewhere, and pay no attention to him for quite some time.

We settle down into darkness, and we strive after things that don't satisfy us, and we end up with a sense of depression, and anxiety, and stress, and insecurity.

But it doesn't have to be that way. God calls us and says, tonight you can change. You can repent is a religious word, right? You can turn it all around.

You don't have to live for the darkness. You don't have to live with the despair. You don't have to forget God. You can let that child be born to you, and have an inner light.

[50 : 47] Guide warm and give you hope. What's the true meaning of Christmas? If you watched any of these Christmas specials, they probably told you.

For some of them, it's giving presents. Right? Others say, it's all about the children. Usually with tears. It's part of what you have to do.

It's about Frosty coming to life. Maybe it's about parties. Or food. Or family. Or peace. Or love.

And you know what? All those things are good, but it's not Christmas. Christmas. Christmas is about what? Jesus. About Jesus being born.

To you, a child is born. And he'll change your life. Your world. Our destiny.

[51 : 48] Our future. Even our eternity. In verse 6, it says, if I can find it. For to us, a child is born. To us, a son is given.

And the government will be upon his shoulders. And he will be called. Wonderful counselor. Mighty God. Everlasting Father. And the Prince of Peace.

When I got to that part about everlasting father, I thought about my dad. I've told you before, I miss my dad. I miss being able to sit down and just talk to him about things.

And say, why do you think? I miss the feeling that he had my back. Even when I was old enough that I should have his back, I still felt like he was there and had my back.

I felt like I had someone to be with me. But fathers in this world, as wonderful as they are, they can't promise you they'll be there forever. This is an everlasting father.

[52 : 47] A God that will love us forever and care for us and have our back. A wonderful counselor. Now, I don't know if you know what that really means. It's not a great counselor.

It's a counselor filled with wonder. Or in other words, a counselor that can teach you how to live into the miracles of God.

I believe in the miracles of God. I've seen the miracles of God. In fact, an article I read today said to me that the reason why God and faith is growing in some countries and not in others is because in some countries the miracles are happening.

And why are the miracles happening? Because the people believe they're happening. A wonder-filled counselor, someone who can give us advice through the power of the Holy Spirit can go right deep into our heart to guide us in the right ways and the ways to live with hope and possibility living, filled with miracle power.

A God so mighty, so mighty, that He can overcome the fear and the darkness and the brokenness and the pain and the loneliness and even death itself.

[54 : 04] A God who is the prince of peace. And peace comes from God dwelling with us, not from winning wars. It says in Philippians chapter 4, the peace of God which transcends all understanding will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

When we take God into our heart, it's like we take a spirit that says to us on a day-to-day basis, it's okay, I'm still holding the world, I'm still looking at your life, I'm still here, I've got you.

It's okay. And by the way, that prince thing, I want you to think about this. We say that God's our father in heaven, right? Okay? And God is the almighty king, right?

So that makes me prince, huh? Right? You're all princes and princesses. Isn't that cool? You don't even have to dress up in a fancy dress at Disney.

You can just be a princess right now and a prince. Wouldn't that be cool? We are royalty. In the family of God almighty, we don't have to be depressed, we don't have to be discouraged, we don't have to look down or let anybody else look down on us because God himself has claimed us as his own.

[55 : 21] We're born for this time. Nostalgia is great.

I love on an evening to just sit back and let that music float over me and pretend I'm six years old again and the world is all taken care of by my daddy and mommy.

But we're not born for nostalgia. We're born for today. Today, a child is born to you and you can make this time amazing.

We can reclaim our heritage. We can bring the blessing of God back to this country, back to this community, back to this church, back to our families, back to our lives, back to our future by living in the light, not in the darkness.

By understanding that right is right even if other people don't like it. We don't have to be rude. We can be loving. We can be respectful. But right is right. And that even if people say that something is wise and we know it's not, God's wisdom, God's wisdom is what was going to guide us.

[56 : 43] Not to live for delusions and short little things to make us feel good, but for a joy so deep it fills our souls and makes the angels sing and a peace.

Oh, don't we need peace to take away that anxiety and fear and worry when God himself said, don't be anxious about anything.

God's got it. He's got you covered if you live in the light. What does it mean to be home for Christmas?

It doesn't mean snow on the ground, I can tell you that. It doesn't mean foggers in your pot. It doesn't mean you have the perfect gift under the tree because really we generally don't get those.

It means we return to the one who put us in this world to do something amazing to remember whose we are, what we're born into.

[57 : 58] Come home to God. Come home to his blessing. Not just for your sake but for the sake of the whole world. are you far away from home this dark and lonely night?

tell me what best would live to ease your mind. Come one take you direction for this unfamiliar road.

One who says follow me and I will lead you Lord. how beautiful how precious the Savior of all who loves though completely the Lord the earth soul how gently how tenderly who says to one and all child be then follow me and I will lead you home trust me and follow me and I will lead you home Lord Hurry up be with me glory

Lord Jesus I ask me to stay go and find me forever and love me I pray Bless all the dear children in thy tender care.

Take us to heaven to live with thee there. Take us to heaven to live with thee there.

[60 : 32] You know, the God who commanded the angels is the one calling out to you tonight. I'm not sure why you're here. Some of you might have been dragged here. Some of you might have come because you wanted to. Some might just figure this is what you do Christmas Eve.

But God, God was waiting for you. Today, God wants to transform who you are. He wants to open up your heart, come dwell with you, and change your life into what it was meant to be.

Let the angels sing the glory for you. Today, I'm forever. I'm claiming this day, child. Let the angels sing glory to the newborn King.

Peace of love and mercy wild. God and sinners reconcile. Joyful only nations rise.

Join the triumph of the skies. In angelic hosts proclaim. Christ is born in Bethlehem.

[61 : 56] God, the herald angels sing. Glory to the newborn King.

Christ by high, his heaven adore. Christ the everlasting Lord. Great in time, behold him come.

God's throne of the virgin's womb. Filled in flesh for God and sing. Hail thee, God, and deity.

Filled with us in flesh to dwell. Jesus, God, Emmanuel. Hail thee, God, and deity.

Lord, to Gesicht. Hail thee, God, and Console. Hail thee, the crown of heaven.

[62 : 57] Hail thee, Lord, religions of peace. Hail three inltres, the ■in alto. Hail thee, God, and deity. Hail thee, God, and deity. Hail thee, big in Geez.

In His wings, Mild He plays His glory High, Born that we Are warm and high, Born to raise Us from the end, Born to them Ascend and birth, Come, Fire, all angels Sing, For eternal You are free.

And as people of God professing the Christian faith, join me, please, in saying the Nicene Creed. We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, light from light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.

Through Him all things are made. For us, and for our salvation, He came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit, and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human.

[64 : 31] For our sake, He was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day, He rose again in accordance with the Scriptures.

He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and His kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, who is spoken through the prophets.

We believe in the only holy, Catholic, and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come.

Amen. Amen. The Christian friends rejoice. It's good news. Good Christian friends rejoice.

[65 : 42] We are in song and all of us. Now in the air of endless bliss. News, news. Jesus Christ was born for this.

He had come and heaven's born. And we are blessed forevermore. Christ was born for this. Christ was born for this.

Great Christian friends rejoice. In heart and soul and voice. Now in the air, we hear the grave. News, news.

Jesus Christ was born to say. Calls in one and calls in all. To get his out of the last they come. Christ was born to say.

Christ was born to say. Let's see. I'm not sure why you came tonight. Maybe you came because you just do this on Christmas.

[66 : 47] Maybe you came because somebody wanted you to. Or maybe you came because you wanted to. Maybe you came to celebrate your faith. But tonight, I want to invite you to let God truly be born in your heart.

Transform and change your world. And I want to invite you on a journey. In the next couple of months, we're going to actually explore what it is that God wants us to remember about him.

I think we're like the people in Egypt. We've gotten lost. We've forgotten God. So we've got to go out in the desert. We call it the winter. We've got to go out in the desert and re-find our God.

Remember who we are. We capture the fire so that we can go into the world and transform it into what God will and wants to bless.

It begins with us. With us. Each and every one of us. Changing our hearts and returning them back to God. So let's offer them up in prayer, shall we? Dear God in heaven, Dear God in heaven, I have sinned.

[67 : 52] I have sinned. I sometimes forget you. I sometimes forget you. I sometimes turn to the darkness. I sometimes turn to the darkness. I sometimes do wrong things.

I sometimes do wrong things. Or just forget to do the right thing. I sometimes forget you. Forgive me, Lord. Transform my heart.

Set my life on fire. That I might live for you. That I might live for you. That I might be what you want me to be.

Forgive me, Lord. Forgive me, Lord. Bless me to be a blessing. Bless me to be a blessing. In Jesus' name we pray. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Before you came here tonight, God already decided to transform your life.

He knew already what he wanted to do in this moment, this time of view. He knew already what was broken, what needed to be changed, where you need to go and what you need to be.

[69 : 00] I don't, but he did. And he already decided to do it before you even step in this place. He decided to do that. To forgive you, to transform you, and make your life into a life worth living.

In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. In the name of Jesus Christ, your sins are forgiven. Glory to God. Amen. The Lord be with you.

And also with you. Lift up your hearts. We lift them up to the Lord. Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. It is right to give our thanks and praise. It is right, and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth.

You created light out of darkness and brought forth life on the earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we turned away and our love failed, your love remained steadfast.

You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets. In the fullness of time, you gave your only son, Jesus Christ, to be our Savior.

[70 : 15] And at his birth, the angels sang glory to you in the highest, and peace to your people on earth. And so with your people on earth and all the company of heaven, we praise your name and join their unending hymn.

Holy, holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might, heaven and earth are full of your glory. Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna in the highest. Holy are you, and blessed is your Son, Jesus Christ. Hosanna in the highest.

Hosanna in the highest. And God could have sent the angels to destroy everything because of it, but instead, he chose to forgive us and die to his righteousness that we might become alive to him.

And so Jesus decided that rather than overcome all his obstacles with hate, he would overcome hate with love.

[71 : 45] Even on the night before he died, he gathered with his disciples, knowing full well that they would betray him, deny him, and abandon him.

He could have cast them all out, knowing what they would do. Instead, he took this meal and offered this opportunity of grace. He took the bread, gave thanks to God, and then he broke the bread, and he gave it to his disciples, and he said, take and eat.

This is my body, which is broken for you for the forgiveness of sin. Eat of this, remembering me. When the supper was over, he took the cup. He gave thanks to God, and then he gave it to his disciples.

He said, drink from this, Oliver. This is my blood of the new covenant. It's poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Drink of this, remembering me. And so, in remembrance of these mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we offer ourselves in praise and thanksgiving as a holy and living sacrifice, in union with Christ's offering for us, as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

Christ has died. Christ has risen. Christ will come again. Pour out your Holy Spirit on us gathered here. And on these gifts of bread and wine, make them be for us the body and blood of Christ, that we may be for the world the body of Christ, redeemed by his blood.

[73 : 12] By your Spirit, make us one with Christ, one with each other and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory, and we feast at his heavenly banquet.

Through your Son, Jesus Christ, with the Holy Spirit in your holy church, all honor and glory is yours, Almighty Father, now and forever. Amen.

And now, as confident children of God, let us pray as he taught us in saying, Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Amen.

[74 : 18] Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen. Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you.

[77 : 04] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[79 : 34] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[82 : 04] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[84 : 34] May they be delicious and wonderful.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

[87 : 04] Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.

Thank you.