



"We encourage one to live a life of Godliness through Jesus Christ."



## Be Joyful

When you think of Christmas for most believers an image of a Nativity scene comes to mind and hopefully is a reminder for the real reason for the season which is Jesus.

The Nativity story is a story of hope presented in two of the gospels in the New Testament.

Nativity means a place of a person's birth in this case it represents the place of Jesus' birth.

Both Matthew and Luke are able to convey the story in different ways but provide a vivid account of the Nativity story.

Matthew begins by speaking of the genealogy of Jesus then the birth of Jesus, his emphasis is on Jesus as the Messiah. He speaks about the birth of Jesus and the visit of the wise men.

- **Matthew 1:23** "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (God with us)."
- **Matthew 2:6** "And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd my people of Israel."

Luke expresses a theme of salvation in his Gospel beginning with the promise of the birth of John the Baptist to Zechariah and the angel Gabriel's visit to the virgin Mary. He speaks about the birth of Jesus, the shepherds and the angels.

- **Luke 1:26-27, 30-31** "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary...The angel said to her. 'Don't be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus.'"
- **Luke 2:10-13** "And the angel said to them, 'Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and

saying, 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!' "

As we focus on the real reason for the season which is Jesus, take time to reread the Nativity story and see how it brought hope to many during Jesus' time and still brings that hope to us today!

As you read these scriptures envision yourself as one the participants in the story taking in the atmosphere with your senses (sight, sound, touch, smell, and taste). As we approach this Christmas time more than ever many are searching for hope in the midst of the chaos of COVID-19. May we find this hope in Jesus and lean on Him during this time!

## Sing Hymns to Be Joyful

Hymns are a way to bring glory, honor, praise to the King of



Kings and at the same time can help us be joyful. There are so many wonderful hymns to choose from, so we chose three from **Then Sings my Soul - Robert J Morgan 2011**. In doing so, we are going to share the scripture that inspired these hymns. May the remembrance of these hymns bring you much joy and the scripture penetrate your hearts.

- **O Come, All ye Faithful**  
-Written: 1743 by John Francis Wade  
-Scripture Reference: **Matthew 2:11** "And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him. Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh."  
-First Stanza: O come all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant, O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem. Come and behold Him, Born the King of angels. O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, O come let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

May you Adore Him this Christmas.

- **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**  
-Written: 1739 by Charles Wesley  
-Scripture Reference : **Luke 2: 10**, "And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people."  
-First Stanza: Hark! the herald angels sing, "Glory to the new-born King; Peace on earth and mercy mild, God and sinner reconciled." Joyful , all ye nations, rise, Join the triumph of the skies; With angelic hosts proclaim, "Christ is born in Bethlehem."

May you Hark! unto the Lord this Christmas.



# THE ENCOURAGING WORD

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- **Silent Night**

-Written: 1818 by Joseph Mohr

-Scripture Reference: *Isaiah 7:14* "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

-First Stanza: Silent Night, holy night, All is calm, all is bright. Round yon virgin mother and child; Holy infant, so tender and mild, Sleep in heavenly peace, Sleep in heavenly peace."

May your night be calm this Christmas.

## Hope, Be Joyful

Hope is a feeling of expectation and desire for a certain thing to happen. It is a feeling of trust. Many times we put hope in others or things of the world. God asks us to find hope in Him.

Paul wrote in Romans, "For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope. For who hopes for what is seen? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience" (Romans 8:24-25). Also, "our hope comes from God. May He fill you with joy and peace because of your trust in Him. May your hope grow stronger by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13).

Hope in God calls us to wait patiently and expectantly that he is going to take care of us no matter what the situation or circumstance. This hope can bring peace if we trust in him. Much easier said than done. But through prayer, reading the Bible, and asking God into every moment of each day can remind you that you are not alone and that you can hope and trust God will take care of you.

In the 1980 Christmas edition of Guidepost there was a true Christmas story that happened in 1933, in rural Kansas, during the depression. This version has been shortened and is a great example of hope.

"The Johnsons with 5 daughters had just moved to a rented farm after losing their farm due to crop failure. As Christmas was approaching their mother had prepared a fruitcake, their only gift for Christmas. The girls remarked it would be a sad Christmas because none of their relatives would be with them for Christmas, especially Uncle Joe and his guitar, due to the distance. Their mother tried to encourage them saying God might send them company for Christmas. As their dad returned home he remarked that a storm was coming and as he was building up the fire in the potbellied stove there was a knock at the door. It was a traveler, named Gibson, wrapped in his bedroll, who had missed the main road and stopped to ask for shelter from the storm that night. The family let him stay the night. Christmas morning was the next morning and he explained he never had a family that he could remember. Outside of his bedroll the only thing he owned was a large harmonica. He asked



them if they would like him to play it. He remained there Christmas day, telling stories and playing all the beloved Christmas songs and church hymns. The family pleaded with him to stay another night and the next morning Gibson was gone. However, on the table lay his harmonica. The girls said, 'Gibson forgot his harmonica.' Their mother said softly, 'No. I think he left it on purpose.' One of the girls remarked, 'it must be his Christmas present to us, but we didn't give him anything.' 'Yes we did, we gave him a family for Christmas,' their mother said. They never saw Gibson again but their dad who had an ear for music quickly learned and play the harmonica. Throughout the years the Christmases were celebrated with harmonica music and joyful memories of that unforgettable Christmas when a lonely man with music came together with a family without music."

May we be aware of how God answers our prayers in ways that are so much more meaningful than we could ever imagine.

## Joyful in our Prayers

Our prayer for you this Christmas time and well into the next year is the priestly prayer found in *Numbers 6: 24-26*

*"The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you and give you peace."*



 Ministries of Encouragement  
19100 Sierra Estates Dr.  
Newhall, CA 91321

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