

Suprises

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[0 : 00] people like surprises. You all do? Do you ever surprise people? You do. She doesn't know you're coming. So when you get there, it's a surprise, huh? Oh, that's more like a shock than a surprise, isn't it? Huh? No? Oh, boy. Do you ever get surprises happen to you? What sort of surprises? Wow. So it's a surprise how many presents you got. Yeah. Oh, wow.

Well, Christmas is a time of surprises, isn't it? So in a way, it's nice to be surprised at Christmas. Yeah. Right. Now, do you know that surprises don't just happen? You do know that, don't you? Yeah, because for a surprise to happen, somebody has to love you enough and has to know you well enough to know what you would like. And then they have to plan it all out so that when they give you what you would like or they do for you what you would like, that it really is a surprise and you don't know it's coming. Surprises are a lot of work, aren't they?

Well, so it's a shock that you're here tonight then. I don't know whose family that is, but...

Well, did you hear the Bible story that Mrs. Johnson read, the story about the first Christmas? Yeah. Now, do you remember the shepherds in the story? Okay. Now, the shepherds got a big surprise, didn't they? Because, you know, shepherds are people that are hard to surprise because they had really probably a boring job. I mean, you sit on a rock and watch a bunch of sheep. And that's pretty boring, wouldn't you think? And occasionally you have to do something to look after them.

Yeah. Oh, yeah. Yeah. The crook works on the neck all right. Yeah. But you see, if you did that every day, you'd say, oh, hey, this isn't anything special. This is just what I do every day. That's probably the way the shepherds were that first night.

[3 : 18] But they were doing what they always did. They got a surprise. There's a bunch of angels, messengers from God, came to them. Yeah. Then they didn't know it was coming. Yeah, something like a pop-up book. That's right. Well, they were surprised. Now, before I can go any further, I need someone who can carefully open this for me. All right. You got your hand up first.

Open up very carefully, please. And then give me what's inside. Okay. Well, let's wait. Let's wait. Oh, hey. You're very careful. That's good. Because it won't be, what's inside won't be disturbed. That's good. That's good. Are you this careful on Christmas morning when you open the presents? No. No, I didn't think so. No. Okay. Will you please hand me the thing that's inside? Who here can read?

Okay. Gentleman in the Jacob. What does it say? God comes at unexpected times.

[4 : 50] And that's what happened to those shepherds. God, through his messengers, came at an unexpected time. They didn't know. And they were surprised.

But they heard about baby Jesus. Thank you. They heard about the baby Jesus being born. Because God sent his messenger.

God came to them at an unexpected time. Now, I think we should move on to this. But, before we open it, so you can put down your hands.

Right? Okay. Okay. Now, the shepherds were people called Jews. People from Judah, the way Jesus was.

And they and all of the people of their nation were expecting someone called the Messiah. God's special person who would come.

[5 : 48] And God had promised that the Messiah would come. And the shepherds, like everybody else, probably thought, well, I know what that means. The Messiah's going to come.

He's going to be a big, powerful king. Maybe a big general. And he's going to have big armies. And he's going to beat all the countries that are enemies. So that we can rule them.

And we'll be in charge of everything. That's what they expected. Okay. You had your hand up first.

Please open that. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Okay. Now, this gentleman is not quite so careful, right?

Obviously, your mother doesn't make you save the paper, right? Right. They're going to pass it to me. Now, who's going to be the reader for this? You can read this?

[6 : 55] Okay. What's it say? Right. God does unexpected things.

And in this case, what he did was when he sent the Messiah, he didn't send a big, powerful, warlike king the way everybody expected. When the shepherds went to see this Messiah would come, they found there was someone they didn't expect.

God had done something they didn't expect because the Messiah was a little baby whose family was poor. He wasn't even in a house.

He was in a stable. So, God does unexpected things. Now, there's one other package here. Now, hold it.

I think I better stand back here, hadn't I? Just so we can keep it on open. All right. Now. Okay. You had your hand up first.

[7 : 59] Thank you. Right. Now. Those shepherds. Do you remember the story again? What happened after they heard the angels? Do you remember?

Yeah. They rushed off to Bethlehem. Yeah. Yeah.

Yeah. Yeah. Well, yeah. I guess probably most of the sheep couldn't move that fast. Well, yeah. That came later in the story. Right. But, see, they did. They rushed off.

They didn't send somebody to check out the story and see if maybe it was true or maybe it wasn't. And they didn't wait for the morning where there be sunlight so they could see the road. And they didn't take time to buy presents for the new baby.

They just rushed off. And I bet when they got to the stable where Mary and Joseph and the baby Jesus were, I bet it was a surprise to Mary and Joseph. Don't you think it would be?

[8 : 59] Suddenly have this crowd of shepherds come running into the stable? Yeah. It must have been a big surprise. But those unexpected people reminded Mary, just a second, reminded Mary and Joseph that their baby they were to bring up was a very special baby.

Now, before I go on, the last one. Yeah. You're going to be gentle. Well, I'm a very bad parcel wrapper, so gentleness may not work.

Okay. Good. Oh, she's getting it now. Oh, she's good at it, too.

I bet her mother makes her save the wrapping paper, you see. No, she doesn't. Oh. Well, I don't think we should tell other people about that, though, do you?

Huh. Got it? I think that one's just going to have to rip. Yeah. That's it. No, no, no.

[10 : 18] Here, I think. Why are you just snapping out of here? Take the paper, huh? Here.

Pardon? Can you get out? Somebody else can read it. Oh, okay. Okay, yeah, somebody else can read it.

All right, young lady, you can read it. God uses unexpected people. And for Mary and Joseph, that was true. Because to them, the shepherds were unexpected people.

And yet those unexpected people came to remind them. Remind them of how special that baby Jesus was. Now, the first Christmas, you see, was just like Christmas today.

This young lady's been already surprised at how many presents she's seen waiting for her. Far more than she expected. And all those presents are there because her family has taken a lot of trouble to go out and buy the presents and wrap them and sneak them under the tree before she saw what was going to be in the paper.

[11 : 31] Well, just like that, the first Christmas, God did a lot of planning so that the baby Jesus could come.

So that we could have our Christ, our Messiah. And God went to all that trouble, not just because he wanted to surprise people, but because he wanted something for us.

He wanted to show us how much he loves us, how much he cares about us. So he worked hard to send us, Jesus.

Yes. You carried some and put them under the tree, huh? Oh, dear. Now, what are the three things I want you to remember, surprises about the Christmas story?

Oh, you've already spotted them. All right, what's the first thing I want you to remember? God uses unexpected people.

[12 : 38] What's the second one? God does unexpected things. And what's the last thing? God comes at unexpected times.

Time. Right. I think you can remember that. I think you can remember that long enough that tomorrow morning when you get up, before you open your presents, you can say those three things to your family.

Yeah? Okay. Good. Now, if we're done, why, the people who have the paper, by the way, can take it with them. Just leave my signs. Okay?

And you can all go and sit down because we've got something to sing now. Okay? Oh, somebody left their money here.

Now, we're going to sing hymn 242. And we want you to, during the, where the second verse would be, to sing, to hum the tune with the organ between the first and second verse.

[13 : 48] And then Mr. Norman is going to improvise between the second and the third. So, hymn number 242, Away in a Manger.

And would you all stand, please? Thank you.

Thank you. Away in a manger, no crib for a man.

The little Lord Jesus, he is here. Stars in the bright sky, Lord, down where he lay.

The little Lord Jesus, he is here. And then you hum this verse.

[15 : 35] . . . The cattle are lowing, the baby awaits.

But yet the Lord Jesus, no crying he makes. I love you, Lord Jesus.

Look down from the skull. And stay by my side. Until morning is night.

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[17 : 11]

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[18 : 57]

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..... we may be faithful stewards of thy bounty. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. Now the Watson-Donald family are going to lead us in our prayers.

So will you kneel, please? Heavenly Father, you are worthy of a greater love than we can either give or understand.

The gift of your Son, whose birth we celebrate, demonstrates the depth of your love for us, a perfect love, given freely and in spite of our sinfulness.

[20 : 08] We thank you and praise you, Lord, for this gift of love which offers us all the hope of eternal salvation. We pray that you will cause us to turn from our selfishness and worldliness and towards your Son, Jesus Christ, the source of all our joy and peace.

We pray that during this Christmas season, your perfect love will inspire us to be outward-looking to those in need around us and to include them in our families. Dear Father in Heaven, we thank you for Jesus Christ who came to bring us your love and to teach us to love one another.

Help us to love everyone and to do your will. Dear God, we thank you also for all good things, for our family and friends, for our home, for our food and clothing, and for the beauty of nature.

Help us to share all these gifts with others. Thank you, Lord, for the gift of our elderly people. Thank you for their friendliness and their warm and loving ways.

Thank you for them always having time for me. I pray that we will never go too busy to offer our friendship to elderly people. I also pray that you will give them comfort and hope in times of sickness and loneliness and that we will be there when they need us.

[21 : 26] Amen. O Eternal God, let the bright rays of your light shine upon the families gathered here so that each of us may experience the full knowledge of your love and be confident in your guidance in every aspect of our family lives.

Be close to us, dear Heavenly Father, in times of stress and strain, which inevitably come in this earthly life, so that our courage and hope may never fail.

Also in times of danger, may we feel your sheltering and protective arms around us, dispersing all fear and anxiety. By your heavenly grace, may we find within our sorrows joy, in darkness, light, and in death, life.

We also pray for those members of our church family who are experiencing pain because they are without a partner in life or because of the loosening of family ties, either separation, divorce, illness, death, or just distance.

O Lord, relate these members to those who need their strength and their love and make them one in the fellowship of the Spirit in the church of your dear Son, Jesus Christ.

[22 : 49] And as members of your church family, O Lord, give us discerning eyes and hearts so that we may be alive to the opportunities and responsibilities which surround each one of us.

Save us from complacency and from fear of new and different ways you may lead us. Inspire our minds with the vision of a world, one for you, and stir in our wills, pray and work until your will is done on earth as it is in heaven.

In your Savior's name we pray. Amen. May we all join together in the family prayer. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Use the strength of life under his And the earth, who art in heaven.

And to be continued, ■ar TVs, Now, we're going to sing, Unto us the boy is born, and that's all in your bulletin.

[24 : 16] And it may be new to some of you, but if it is, it's because you're new to here on Christmas Eve, because we have sung it before. But Mr. Norman, who's at the organ, and I are at some odds at the moment, because he's never heard it before.

So you'll have to sing loudly and clearly to help him learn it as he helps us learn it as he plays. The words are in your bulletin. So would you stand for that, please?

So would you stand for that, please? I'm going to sing. I'm going to sing. I'm going to sing.

I'm going to sing. I'm going to sing.

All together.

[25 : 43] I'm going to sing. I'm going to sing. I'm going to sing. I'm going to sing. I'm going to sing. I'm going to sing. Thank you.

Once again.

Once again.

Once again. Once again.

Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again.

[28 : 02] Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again.

Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again.

Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again. Once again.

Once again. Once again.