

The Wonder of Christmas

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[0 : 0 0] Please join me to take a copy of your Word of God and join me in Philippians chapter number two this morning as we will look at it. You know, as families, we have different traditions and we respect that one another enjoy this holiday time together.

But one of my favorite traditions is getting to hear Kristen and Catherine sing about the way that he came. I believe we've had that every Christmas in 18 years of our church. And I love that song, especially love hearing it from them.

And there's many songs at Christmas that mention wonder or wonderful or wonderland. The most popular one is about the most wonderful time of year, which calls us to think about kids jingle belling, which about tomorrow morning you'll probably be ready to get past kids jingle belling or everyone telling you to be of good cheer or marshmallows for toasting or caroling out in the snow.

It even brings something out of place where it tells of ghost stories and it ends with the glories of Christmases long, long ago. Those are some of the things that we're told that make up the most wonderful time of the year.

Some of those are part of our tradition. Ghost stories are not and certainly won't be. I don't even know about roasting marshmallows on Christmas. That's not anything that we do either. But the telling of glories of Christmases long, long ago, not just of any glories, but of a specific one, the first Christmas.

[1 : 2 5] And that's what we look at here today, the most wonder-filled time of year. If we were to summarize Christmas in the one verse, if you were going to read one verse with your children over the next day or tomorrow, Matthew 1, 21.

It's so wonderful. Nothing of the other things that I've mentioned in that song hold a candle to this truth. Matthew 1, 21, which says, And she shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins.

Christmas in one verse. Absolutely wonderful. It should fill your heart with wonder. If Christmas is just a nice legend, then you and I are on our own. But if Christmas is true, then it means we can be saved by grace.

And that is wonderful. Philippians chapter number 2. I welcome you into this incredible wonder. Verse 5. Let this mind be in you, which is also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and who was made in likeness of men.

And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted himself, and given him a name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and in things on earth, and things under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.

[2 : 5 9] As I've mentioned, the history of the incarnation or the birth of Christ, and that's what we mean when we say the incarnation. It's him coming, Emmanuel, God with us, being born here on this earth, can be found in the historical records, can be read, but the theology, how it should affect their lives, is seen here in Philippians chapter number 2.

In this passage, and in no passage in the Bible, is there any contradictions, but it's filled with wonder. It's filled with truth and tension. He is the king of the universe, but he takes on the form of a servant.

He is powerful, but he's obedient unto death. He's equal to the Father, but he is laid in a manger. He is born in obscurity, but his name is above every name.

Isn't it wonderful? When we say something's wonderful, we don't say it just like the say, just to dismiss it as some kind of mystery that we can't understand. And my wife's Aunt Nancy, she's, so those that know her are already beginning laughing, because any story about Aunt Nancy is usually funny.

She's just a very funny person. She's older in life, and I was asking her recently about driving somewhere. They've moved into the area, and so she doesn't know how to get around as well.

[4 : 13] And I was saying, Aunt Nancy, how did you get from this place to this way? And she looked at me, and she says, God works in mysterious ways. And I said, well, Nancy, that's true, but you getting from this place to this place isn't something that's supposed to fill our hearts with wonder.

All right? We need a game plan for what's going on. But she says, God works in mysterious ways. So when we talk about wonder, we're not talking about something that we want to dismiss here. It's fun to answer questions that you know.

Kids can come up to you and ask questions, and you love it when they happen to ask one that you know, like, what is the longest word in the Bible? Isaiah 8.1. All right? There's a name there. Maler, Haller, Shaller, Faz, or something like that.

All right? I'll say it different every time. Or maybe they get a little bit older, and they say, what does the Bible say about marriage? Or what does the Bible say about this? And it's wonderful to answer questions. But sometimes you get asked a question, and you get to say this.

Welcome to the wonder. Welcome to the wonder that is found in our God. How did God create the world with only his spoken word? And here's my answer.

[5 : 17] Isn't it wonderful? That's my answer. How is Jesus both God and man? And the answer is, isn't it wonderful? He is welcome unto the wonder that is our God.

We sing in joy to the world. We sing in joy to the world. We sing in wonder concerning the incarnation. Make room in your heart that is just filled with lesser things.

Push it out. And allow yourself today to just say, isn't it wonderful? No reputation. That's what we read in Philippians 2. He came and he made himself of no reputation.

Our God became a baby in a manger, a man on a street, then crucified on a cross. He was born here in a manger, made himself of no reputation.

In Luke chapter number 2, verse 12, when the angels are speaking unto the shepherds, they give some specific details. We have details here and it says, and this shall be a sign unto you. He shall find the baby wrapped in swaddling clothes.

[6 : 16] And they would say, well, that makes sense. All the babies that we would find would be wrapped in swaddling clothes. But then they said, lying in a manger. And you wouldn't expect that for any child, much less the Son of God.

That would be a sign for you that he is in a manger. Then someone could have passed him on the streets, the creator of the universe, on a sidewalk one day and said, that's the carpenter's son.

We know it could happen because it does. And we read about it in scriptures. They saw him as the carpenter's son. And Jesus lived his entire sinless life in the fashion of a man, humbled himself, became obedient unto the death, even the death of the cross.

No reputation. That's so wonderful. He made himself of no reputation. But fully God. The baby in the manger was fully deity. The man on the street was the sinless Messiah.

The man on the cross is our Savior. Verse 2, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God. He would humble himself to the point where he would learn to speak.

[7 : 20] And when he does, he'll say in John 10, 30, I and my Father are one. Or John 8, 58, Jesus said to them, Verily, verily, I said to you, before Abraham was, I am.

No one could ever claim that Jesus didn't say that he was God. Or I should say nobody should ever claim. But they often do. But you should tell that to the people in John chapter number 8, who wanted to stone him because they said he was blasphemous.

Because it's clear that he is God. He wanted, if Jesus wanted us to believe anything else, he had many opportunities. But when Thomas in John chapter number 20, asked him a question about who he was, Jesus said, he called him Thomas, calls Jesus my Lord and my God.

And Jesus says unto him, Thomas, because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed. Blessed are they that have not seen, yet have believed. He did not disagree with Thomas.

He did not set, he let it be true that he is God. The baby in the manger, fully man. The baby in the manger, fully God.

[8 : 23] Can you explain that for me today? And I would just say, isn't it wonderful? It's the most staggering of claims in all of Christianity. And once you accept this, then everything else will make sense to you.

If you believe that this is fully God and fully man, then it's just as amazing that he died, that he was born, that he will rise again. Him walking on water is so, is amazing, but knowing that he made the water is as well.

And all other aspects of this time of year seem less fascinating as we become to give this its rightful place in our lives. This Christmas message rests on the staggering fact that the child in the manger was God.

And the creator of the universe, when his creation is rebelling against him, when it's coming to a time where Herod will set out to kill everybody under the age of two, when it comes to a time where people are searching, God will come down, not with a sword and might, but he will come as a small baby, cared for by teenagers, and lying in a manger.

And that is just absolutely wonderful. His name shall be called Emmanuel because God is now with us. And so this wonder of Christmas isn't found in the circumstances that we have created.

[9 : 44] It's not even found in the circumstances of the story, but it's found primarily in the identity of this baby in a manger. In Isaiah chapter number 9 and verse 6, we're going to have a promise.

And the promise is, for unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. And then in John 3, 16, we're going to learn that God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten son, that God came in human flesh and was born in a manger.

Could you imagine if the shepherds showed up to the manger that day and they looked around and they said, hey, we really need to decorate this place. We really need to add to this. We really need to make this more exciting.

And they didn't take a moment and bow their knee to Jesus. How foolish would that be? I want to encourage us in here, let's not be foolish. It's not in competition with your family traditions.

Decorate your house, do the traditions, but recognize that none of them hold a candle to the fact that we celebrate the incarnation of Jesus Christ and that we are people that would bow our knee to this.

[10 : 51] So the purpose of the incarnation is more than just to create a wonder in our lives. Because we are human, we will die because that's what humans do. Plan accordingly.

All right? Humans die. That's what we do. So plan accordingly. And that's why Jesus would be born and he'll be placed in a manger in Bethlehem so that one day he could die on a wooden cross in Jerusalem, be obedient unto death.

That the manger is the first step on the road, the Calvary, to the death of the cross. Philippians 2, the teaching on the coming of Christ and those short verses, it's not going to leave without telling us about the Christ, about the cross.

Because you can't fully understand the nativity story if it's separated from the cross. And so we meditate on it. So the gift that you and I receive that's most important will not be wrapped for us, but it will be hung upon a cross.

Then it will be wrapped and it will be placed in a tomb. Galatians 3.13 says this, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is everyone that hangeth on a tree.

[12 : 01] It's at the nativity that the cross is still in full sight. It's overwhelming to me that I can summarize the Christmas story like this. Because Jesus Christ came and made himself of no reputation, and he came to an inn that was not prepared for him, I will one day walk into heaven and hear, Trent, a blood-bought son of God, is home and there is a room prepared for you.

He came to this world, it was not prepared for him, he came to a world and took his life, and I will one day go to a place where there is a place that's prepared for me, and I will be welcomed, and I will be accepted.

Now I bring you to the intermission this morning, alright? Let's just pause here for a moment. Or as a, or Selah, or Selah in the Bible, or daughter's name, which is a musical term, which some means that it believes the pause and the meditate, other people say means crank up the volume, in our case it's the second one, alright?

But let's just crank up those thoughts, or let's pause and meditate on the incarnation here for a moment, and think about that. And as I said at the beginning, we're going to look at a passage here in the incarnation, and there's theology being taught for us, and there's also examples we're going to look at.

And we're in the day looking at a metaphor that Paul gives about what his response is to knowing that. That's what we really want to do today. What is the proper response? Worship is always about a proper response to who God is.

[13 : 31] Christmas should be our response to the incarnation. What do we do this time of year? We respond to the truth of the incarnation. I have jokingly talked about how Christmas music doesn't belong throughout the year, but it belongs, you know, after Thanksgiving and now.

And that's true about Rudolph and Frosty and those things, but the incarnation belongs on every day of the year and the calendar. Think about the truth and how wonderful it is. It shapes our lives as it should.

So in Philippians chapter 2 verse 12, and if you're looking out the Bible, I want you to see that this is the verse that comes right after the teaching on the incarnation. Because I want to tell you that it's just not me reading about the incarnation and then taking you to a passage that would show a proper response.

I want to show you that here in the scriptures, after we see about the incarnation, we're given, it continues, the flow of thought. Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence.

What a wonderful thing that Paul says to this church here. When I was around, you guys were obedient to the scriptures, and when I was not around and not watching, the testimony is that you are obedient to the scriptures.

[14 : 42] And a synonym of being obedient here to the scriptures is this, and work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. Travis, I was helped by Brother Frick's nephew in the article he shared with us about this fear and trembling.

I'm also helped by looking at some shepherds and some wise men and some people in the New Testament about what is the response to their hearts being filled with wonder about what Jesus Christ has come and done for us.

In one respect, very much so, when we talk about what does work and fear have to do with our salvation, and when it comes to having our sins forgiven, and our position now seated among the heavenlies, it has nothing.

We've earned nothing. And I have beat that drum in the book of Titus, and I expect I will continue to beat that drum continually, that good works are not on the side of gaining our salvation, but they flow out of a grateful life.

So is Paul contradicting himself, Holy Spirit, through the writings of Paul? Most certainly not. So what is it that we're meaning here when we say, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling?

[15 : 46] So we've got to consider our audience. The audience that received the good teaching on the Incarnation, the audience that's hearing, work out your salvation with fear and trembling, this is the church, this is believing people.

These are the saints of God that are being told this. And so now we know about what tense of salvation is. This isn't the people, these people were saved from the penalty of sin, and that they're being saved from the power of sin.

We call that sanctification, and that one day we will be saved and delivered from this world, the glorification, where we will be with him in heaven. So this fear and trembling talks about being saved from the power of sin, the sanctifying work that takes place in our lives.

Some 22 times this is being used, and it means the demonstrate of showing it out, to be working out a showing or a demonstration of it. And so it looks like the wonder of it producing obedience in our lives.

At the start of verse number 12, it says, as you have always obeyed, and then it goes on to say, work out your salvation with fear and trembling. Those two expressions are synonymous, one to another.

[16 : 52] And so what's this method that's going to be accomplished? How is this going to be worked out? And the Bible tells us here in verse 13, that God is generating the will and the doing of his good pleasure.

Verse 13, For it is God which worketh in you both the will and the do of his good pleasure. So let's say it like this. Our sanctification, our working out with fear and trembling in our lives, our being saved from the power of sin, and our lives is spirit-directed, it is gospel-driven, and it is a faith-fueled effort that should come as a result of allowing our hearts to be filled with this truth.

And we're given many motives for it in the Christian life. It brings glory to God, which is the purpose in which we are created. That should be a motive in all of our decisions. It's pleasing unto the Lord.

It allows us to be a good example for others. But it is a demonstration of our love to God. In Matthew, Master, what is the great commandment? Matthew 22, 37, Jesus said to them, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul and with all thy mind.

It's a demonstration of love. I hope and expect that in the giving of gifts and receiving of gifts, it's not just an empty duty for you and a checklist, but there's really an expression of love.

[18 : 13] That's what you do with those that you love. You want to give them a gift. You want to demonstrate your love. And some of you are with the challenge of, you don't know what the other person wants. And you say, I don't know how to demonstrate my love because I don't know what it is that they want.

But when you find out what they want, and it's not just the December 25th, but throughout the year, you say, I want to demonstrate my love towards you. How do we do that as believers? Towards our God, the one who created everything.

It's a wonderful thing that we're able to, that we're able to demonstrate love towards him. So with that understanding, let's read the verse again. Philippians 2.12, Wherefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

That fear and trembling. What is that exactly? When we fear the Lord, that means to be in awe and wonder of his greatness and love. As you read through Philippians, and we saw that, speaking about the incarnation, about him making himself of no reputation, and being in a manger, then going to a cross, that should create wonder in your heart.

That ought to create a fear and a trembling. So it's no wonder that when the shepherds come, they will fear, they will tremble, and that they're going to kneel down. It says it like this in Luke 2, verse number 15.

[19 : 34] It says, Let us now go even to Bethlehem, and see these things which has come to pass. They've heard about it. Now they want to go, and they want to see it. And after they do, it says in verse number 17, And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

As I've said many times over the last couple weeks, as the angels come to these blue-collar workers in the middle of a night shift, and they tell them that the Messiah has come, they want to see it for themselves.

But when they do, there is a natural response to them. Their hearts are filled with wonder. And they will learn, and we learn about what they did. And so what is the result of the first Christmas of the shepherds?

It was life, it was their life sharing the message. Once they realized it, the identity of that child, and they saw it, and they saw the sign that he was in a manger, they give their lives the sharing that message.

In Matthew chapter 2 and verse 10, these wise men come to the story, and this highlights the identity and mission of the Lord. And so when they arrive at a young child, probably under the age of two, or around the age of two now, they find him, and they fall down, and they worship him, and they give him gifts.

[20 : 52] And these gifts speak about his identity. They give him gold, a symbol of his kingship, here upon this earth. He is fully man, and he will be king. Frankincense, he is the symbol of his deity, that he is God.

And then lastly, myrrh, an embalming oil, a symbol of his death. And those three gifts that were given, demonstrating his mission in this world, as man, as God, headed to a cross.

So I think about the example here of the wise men, when they recognize the significance of the incarnation, when they recognize that God has come, is in a manger, and is on his way to a cross, their response is, I'm going to provide whatever is needed, for his mission in this world.

And there's two demonstrations. How do we demonstrate a love to Christ? We share that message with other people. How do we demonstrate a love for Christ? If we provide for the mission in which, he is on in this world, and we give to it.

But the examples don't start there. We look at them around Christmas time, but it continues. Jesus will go, and lepers will see him, and they will come, and they will fall at his feet, and fear and trembling, and they will worship him. Not just lepers, but rulers, in Matthew 9, 18.

[22 : 03] Then we come to a woman, and a story that we're familiar with, as we looked at Luke, it's also in John. She will come to Jesus, and she will take this precious ointment, that she has been saving.

Maybe it was a dowry that was being saved, but it says that it took a lifetime for her to save this, and what she has. And when she sees Jesus, she goes to him, and she breaks the oil, and she washes his feet.

And the circumstances in that story were not ideal for it. He's in the middle of a room, and they weren't invited, she wasn't invited in, but it wasn't about the circumstances. It had to do with the identity of who Jesus is.

When people recognize the identity of Jesus, then they look for opportunities to demonstrate their love towards him. And so throughout the New Testament, and the history of the world, and our lives today, we should come to Jesus with fear and trembling.

There will be many people that dismiss him, like in that story where she is washing the feet of Jesus, and Judas there says, why are you spending your money like that? Don't you know that you could have taken this and fed the poor?

[23 : 11] They were dismissive. They thought it was unreasonable expression here, because he did not recognize what she recognized, that this was the Son of God. And at Christmas, we say we are those that recognize his identity.

We are the ones like the woman who says, he is worthy of us pouring out our lives for him, and we're the ones that will worship him with fear and trembling, with awe and respect.

Because one day, we will not have a choice in the matter. If you are going to kneel down like the shepherds, or kneel down like the wise men, or kneel down like this woman who washes the feet of Jesus, one day, every knee will bow, and every tongue will confess.

Philippians 2 verse 10, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow, and everything in heaven and in earth, and the things under the earth. And every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

And so not about what you want for Christmas today, but what would Christmas want to view? It's an invitation here to bow your knee. We started with an invitation into the wonder of the incarnation, and if you see Jesus for who he is, you'll want to bow your knee.

[24 : 19] As you come to a manger of the day, you're going to want to respond. The question you must ask is, who is this child? Who is this baby? And to bow your knee means that you recognize that he is Jesus, the only one who is worthy of your worship.

And that's for those in here today that have never bowed your knee. You've never bowed your heart to him and recognized him as Lord. And that's what the response should be the day of this truth that we are celebrating.

Anything else is unreasonable. There's not enough you could do that would make any sense until you have bowed your knee. Bow your knee, wise men, and give your thanks for his mission.

Bow your knee, shepherds, and then go out and share the message. Bow your knee, the woman who washes his feet. But we must first bow our knee. But to the believer in here, and we continue, and we ask ourselves, based on the incarnation, how do we live a life of fear and trembling about his worthiness?

And we're giving an example from the Apostle Paul when he expresses what his life looks like. This is a metaphor that I believe will help all of us as we consider. Philippians 2.17, Yea, and if I be offered upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I joy and rejoice with you all.

[25 : 28] For the same cause also do you joy and rejoice with me. The Apostle Paul, he liked to use this example. At another time, in 2 Timothy, he's going to say that my life is now ready.

And what he's speaking about is a sacrifice that is being poured out to him. That he is the center of it all. That our lives ought to be given in a sacrifice unto the Lord.

You have a real danger. You know that Christmas can become the most pagan of all holidays if you place yourself at the center of it. If this becomes another day about you.

That's why some people say that our birthdays can be the most pagan of holidays because it becomes all about us. At the center of this story is the God who deserves our worship.

And so the way the Apostle Paul says this, and he's speaking about the church here at Philippi, and he speaks about their faithfulness, and he talks about their service and all that they have done. They have seen people come to know Christ and he draws this picture to them as them offering a sacrifice to the Lord.

[26 : 31] Them living their lives out with fear and trembling. Them wanting to demonstrate their love to God. And so God, what is it? And God says, I want the faith of all nations. I want people to know me.

And so here is this church. They're going out and sharing the gospel. They're involved in the mission of the world. And this is now being offered to God as a gift to him, as worship unto him.

And so what is it that the Apostle Paul says? He says, Upon your sacrifice, and service of your faith, I join and rejoice with you all.

With all these things that are here upon the gift that is given to the Lord from this church. Of people putting their faith and trust to the Lord and other people coming. The Apostle Paul says, as a drink offering, you would see in the Old Testament where they would take it and it would be poured out on top of the sacrifice.

He says, I want my life to be poured out on top of this. Church family, I want us to consider coming into a new year. I thank the Lord for what God's been doing. I thank the Lord for testimonies that we heard about people coming to Christ and as I shared that story about a missionary to China.

[27 : 37] I thank the Lord for what you are doing. And I pray that as the Lord looks down upon here, our God looks down upon this place, this is a place of a sweet aroma. That this is a place of people living who want to demonstrate our gratitude and appreciation.

That we live our lives with fear and trembling. Want to demonstrate our great love to Him. And He looks down upon Him. But I don't want to just be standing off to the side watching it. I don't want to just prepare the wood for a sacrifice.

I don't want to just be facilitating it. I want to pour my life out on top of it as well. And say, my life is given. I consider the day giving out Christmas bows when you came in here.

B-O-W-S. I'm not sure what you're hearing when I say that word. But that's what I'm going for. Christmas bows. And I want to give a bow carpenter away this morning, okay? But when you come in here the day and to think about having this on you and to think about what is it in which you're going to live in demonstration to our Lord.

And you've got to want to do that. That's what Christians, believers, the Bible, have been to a place in their lives where they wanted to do something. David said, Lord, I want to build you a house, is what he said.

[28 : 45] The disciples, I want the world to know you if I die. Christians throughout history when they looked at what Jesus Christ did in the manger got to a place where they said, how do I demonstrate my love to you for all that you've been done?

And that answer is our worship and that is our history and that is what we ought to consider today. What is it we can do to demonstrate our love to the God who came and was born in a manger that died in our place?

Isn't it wonderful what he's done? And so what is it we can do? And I can't stop thinking about the fact that many hours ago the sun began to rise around the world and it was Christmas Day and other places before it was Christmas here.

And the sun came up and the sun went down upon people that have never heard the message of Jesus Christ that never knew that in the manger was a God who came here in a mission to die for them.

And that comes with a great responsibility but it's also a great privilege because I know what the God of Heaven wants and I know that I can pour my life out and sacrifice to Him.

[29 : 54] So here is my decision that I have to make today and I'm going to ask that you would join me as well is understanding as it's been sung about today isn't it amazing and it most certainly is and with our hearts is filled with wonder about it what is my response in worship?

How do I live my life with fear and trembling for what He has done? The first thing that I've done in here is I have bowed my knee. I recognize that I was a sinner in need of a Savior and He is Lord and I am not.

He is God and I am man. I am sinner and He is a Savior and I bowed my knee for the first time at the age of nine that's where I put my faith and trust in Jesus and that's where I was saved eternally but since that day I continue to come to a place where I recognize that I need to submit myself to Him.

It's the only reasonable response and if you're not willing to do that then you must make an argument that the baby in the manger was not God because if the baby in the manger is God there's no other response that is reasonable than to bow your knee to Him.

But on top of that there's other ways in which we can demonstrate our love towards Him. Fear and trembling synonymous with obeying the Scriptures there's ways in which I get to demonstrate. You may as I've said in here there may be people that you love and you say I don't know how to demonstrate my love to them the God of Heaven says I have made it so that you can.

[31 : 21] It's incredible that He made it so we can demonstrate our love to Him and so the question I'm going to ask here on this Christmas Eve today and I invite you church family to join me is what is it that I can do with my life so that this Christmas time next year when the sun rises and it goes down that more people will know about the wonder of Jesus Christ coming to earth and dying for them.

If my life does not influence that in the next year my God will not love me any less my position in Heaven will not be in jeopardy but man will I have missed an opportunity to demonstrate a love that I have in my heart for the God of Heaven.

And you may feel overwhelmed in here some of you men haven't even started your Christmas shopping so you feel very much overwhelmed and you say there's all these people and there's all these things that have to do all of those should be a far second where does our life make a demonstration of our love to our God as we celebrate this Christmas and if I was to give out those Christmas bows to you today where would you place it?

Maybe you'd place it upon your life and say I want to pour my life out in this coming year to Jesus I want to pour my life out completely some of us in here need to radically consider the way in which we are investing our lives we are living lives storing up things for us that are not going to be kept at the end of our lives and you need to consider how you're living your life is it a life of storing up or is it a life of pouring out?

Some of you may place that bow upon your commitment to missions like the wise men I know what your mission is in this world Father and I'm going to give to that mission so that it can happen some of you may go place that bow upon a person and say I'm going to share Jesus with you all year long and I'm not going to stop until you accept Jesus not only because I want you to escape a literal hell but because the God of heaven deserves your worship and I'm going to share my faith with you until the day that you bow your knee to him and he receives the glory that is due unto his name even in our evangelism it isn't about us it is about the glory of the Lord it's been sung in here today as David's heart was filled with gratitude he wanted to pour it out in a costly way the story where in which David and he wanted water from the gate outside of the gates of Bethlehem I'll just tell it quickly if you don't know about it but David asked for water from a certain place kind of like our kids think the water fountain at church is the best water in the world okay

[34 : 02] David thought the best water in the world were outside the gates there at Bethlehem and he just said to some men he just said I just really would like some water from there and these people jeopardize their lives and they get the water and that's just a picture I can't imagine right there's these people and they're swinging swords while carrying this vase this thing of water and they're running it like a running back through the line and they get it to David and David receives it and he says this is too much this is too precious for me to consume unto myself and he pours it out as an offering unto the Lord and he says only he is worthy of that sacrifice you and I may be consuming things that weren't meant for us we're consuming things that were not ever given to us for our own consumption but they were given to us to be poured out to the Lord who is the only one that is worthy and so as David says I want to build you a house Lord you are the only one that's worthy I pray that you would say that today with me it's been sung in here isn't it amazing the way that he came no crown no throne no big parade no fanfares played no jubilant display it's amazing he came and I can't believe that I would be the reason that he came

I can't believe he left his mighty throne he became a pauper so that I could be a king the knight himself then made my heart his home it's overwhelming it's wonderful and it deserves a response from every person in this room if you have never bowed your knee and when I say that I would say that there would be a need for literally bowing your knee knowing what I know today if I had never put my faith and trust in Jesus Christ in this moment instantly I would get on my knees and I would ask for forgiveness of sins I would repent and I would put my faith and trust in Jesus and as we pray here in a moment I pray that you do I pray for you because you'll spend eternity separated from God but I pray because the God of heaven deserves your worship I pray because he deserves you to bow your knee and to hear your tongue he created you to worship him and he deserves to hear you sing his praises but those of you in here that have put your faith and trust in the Lord as we gather here and we celebrate this cannot be of moderate importance as you and I stand and we look inside of the manger scene we have a decision to make is this the son of God and if it is then how can we do anything but live our lives kneeling and worshiping and fear and trembling and supporting his mission and sharing the gospel to the end of the world would you join me in prayer

I know it's Christmas Eve morning and I know that we're a church that doesn't often respond at coming to an altar and I know some of you are on your very best Christmas but I'm going to ask some of you in here especially some of you men as we end the year would you join me at the altar and would you pray for yourself and your family and say Father between this Christmas and next Christmas would you use our lives would you allow us to pour our lives out so that people will know about your birth and death and resurrection it is so wonderful that all the earth should know it but there's 3 billion people in this world who don't know that story since James' family has been here with us the country of India has grown by a million people every 15 days there are millions and millions of people that were born in that country in the time that they've been here and will anybody do anything about those people hearing the gospel and church family and I know I'm going over time but I want you to consider this before we pray it's wonderful as a church that we're making a sacrifice and that other people are making a sacrifice but the apostle Paul said church you have made a sacrifice and God's receiving your faith and all that you're doing and your sacrifice is service but Paul said that's not enough for me

I want to pour my life out on top of it it's not just enough to go to a church where many other people are making a sacrifice you individually need to make a decision that your life is going to be poured out unto Jesus and worship to him let's pray together with every head bowed and every eye closed and Kristen will come to the piano and here in a moment I'm going to go to my place in the altar and I'd ask that you join me as well and we pray unto the Lord let me speak to you here today as you're an unbeliever and as the piano begins to play and I ask that you would stand with me in here if you have everyone standing in here this morning if you're in here today and you've never put your faith and trust in Jesus when would it be the best day to do that?

Christmas Eve 2024 not a moment later today is the day of salvation I'm going to ask John Pearson or Jason Holt to make his way back to the next steps table in the very back of the auditorium if you're in here today and you've never knelt before Jesus you've never put your faith and trust in him let him receive the gift that he deserves of your life would you go back there and Jason will take you or Lori will take you to a room and show you from the scriptures and today could be the day of your salvation today he can receive from you what he deserves don't let this day pass if you're an unbeliever without putting your faith and trust in him but I ask that every believer in here before we stand and pray and we continue celebrating would you join me in this prayer that in this next year that our lives will be poured out in such a way that people would come to know of Jesus and he would receive from us what he deserves Heavenly Father I come to you today on behalf of Vision Baptist Church

[39 : 34] Father we love you we thank you for those that have shared the message with us of the incarnation and of the gospel and Lord we pray that you would use our lives that you would receive our lives as a sacrificial gift into you as a response to what you have done Lord as you said in Philippians let this mind be in you as your son came here and he made himself a sacrifice Lord we want to live our lives poured out to you and so Lord this is our prayer between this Christmas and next Christmas may there be people that join us in the worship of your name may there be people that bow their knee Lord in this building and in this local ministry and around the world because of the life that we live in response to what you have done for us in Jesus name I pray Amen