

Silent Night

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[0 : 00] After 400 years of no open revelation from God, God reminds His people that He had not forgotten His promises.

The last song that we'll sing tonight is Silent Night. We're going to take a moment and we're going to look at some different expressions in that song about the silent night.

This song helps us celebrate the truth that God remembers and that He kept His promises and that He came and that after 400 years of silent nights, Jesus Christ comes on the scene.

He first brings the message to a group of shepherds and the word will begin to spread and all throughout. The life of Jesus, you see that the story wants to run and He'll remind them and He'll say, It's not time. The time has not yet come.

Don't tell them yet the Messiah. But the message just wants to run. And run that it does. And it finds itself in my life when I'm a nine-year-old boy and my teenage sister tells me that Jesus Christ has come to earth and that He had died and He had started a revolution and that He is the King and that I could put my faith and trust in Him and I could be part of His kingdom.

[1 : 13] And it looks that God has brought that message to you as well. It was probably brought to you by shepherds, but it was brought to you by somebody that had heard this story. And so tonight we rejoice and we celebrate so many wonderful truth-filled songs, a great selection of Scripture.

Graham got emotional as he reads in Revelation. Today we celebrate and we open gifts, but we know that some days that gifts will not be opened, but a book will be opened.

And in that book we will find that we will get to spend eternity with Him and that the four and twenty elders will lay their crowns at the feet of Jesus and we will cast our gifts upon Him.

It must be emotional for Graham to think about how there's yet so many people that are yet to hear in Nigeria where him and Olivia will be going this year. And just like the shepherds who were given the job to run and tell the people that the silent nights are over, the Savior has come.

Graham has that opportunity and it's wonderful. So tonight we will celebrate this wonderful truth and we will end the night singing Silent Night. But I looked up many of our Christmas carols that we have sung, but I'd like to tell you just briefly about the story of Silent Night.

[2 : 29] When I didn't read the Scripture for 40 seconds, some of you were worried for me, weren't you? You thought he went and lost his mind. I knew my wife was worried about it. It wasn't even a full 40 seconds. Stephen Marie, remember at the Fox Theater, we saw David Platt do that thing for a full two minutes and it felt like eternity before it came.

But I want our kids to remember that silence and the excitement that was come when people realized that the promise was going to be delivered. And it was upon the heart of a man who wrote a song that undoubtedly stood the test of time.

It was written in Austria. In 1818, a man named Joseph Moore insisted on having a unique musical element for their Christmas Eve service each year. Would you mind if I asked for a new song to be written every year for a Christmas Eve service?

Still, on one particular year, as he made final preparations for the Christmas Eve service, he realized that the organ wasn't working. Deflated and in panic, Moore remembered the words he had penned in a poem several years prior, which translated in English is Silent Night.

The words were without music, so he quickly contacted some musician friends, one named Franz Guber, the night before Christmas Eve. And in one night, Guber brought instrumentation to the song that had become one of, if not the most popular Christmas song of all time, being translated in many different languages.

[3 : 57] And we sing it, and you know the words, and we have already sung it once tonight, and we'll sing it again. But the words are, 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, silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight, glory stream from heaven afar, heavenly hosts sing, Alleluia, Christ the Savior is born, Christ the Savior is born, silent night, holy light, Son of God's love's pure light, radiant beams from thy holy face, with the dawn of redeeming grace, Jesus Lord at thy birth, Jesus Lord at thy birth.

So after 400 years of silent, and Luke 1, the angel appeared standing on the right side of the altar, and he will come to Zechariah and Elizabeth, and tell them that they're expecting a child.

Remember, we went through that not too many months ago, and Zechariah writes down and says, his name will be John, not a family name, but John, one that was sent before him.

So Zechariah's name means God remembers, Elizabeth's name means God promises, so this couple together would mean, God remembers God's promises, and that is what he is doing.

So no baby is ever born on a silent night, especially not in a stable, but it was 400 years of silent nights that brought us to the night that Jesus Christ would be born.

[5 : 34] And we now know, looking back through the lens of history, that even though God's people must have felt like God was silent, he was in fact working the entire time, he was moving through rulers and empires to set the stage for the arrival of the promised Messiah, who came at an appointed time.

And we celebrate the fact that he has come, but we also find joy in the fact that he is coming again at an appointed time, and he is not silent in that either, and it's at the right time, when the stage is set, he will come and will be with him.

Luke 2, 15 through 20, And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them in heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem and see this thing which has come to pass, which the Lord has made known unto us.

And they came with haste, and found Mary and Joseph, and the babe laying in a manger. And when they had seen it, they made known abroad the things which were told them concerning this child. And all that heard it wondered at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had seen, heard, and seen as it was told unto them.

[6 : 47] One of the expressions in the song is holy, infant, tender, and mild. Isaiah 7, 14, Therefore the Lord himself shall give you a sign. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and he shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us.

Isaiah 9, 6, For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given, and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.

Even though holy, infant, tender, and mild, he came into this world as an infant, but he came as king. We sing, or we three kings of Ori and Ar, when the kings came, they recognized that he was royalty, that he was the king.

His life from his very first breath were marked with an unprecedented wisdom, power, majesty, and glory, all held for a time in an infant's body, all waiting to be exercised in love on our behalf.

And it's good that we'd reflect on the splendor of it all, like Mary did, that we would ponder, how did this happen? Our kids might ask us this, and the best answer that we could give them is, we do not know, but it's awesome, and it's wonderful.

[8 : 04] It is amazing that he would come and take on flesh and would be born to live a perfect life and die in our place. Another expression in here is, sleep in heavenly peace.

Pictures of sleeping baby that brings us to the point of recognizing the peace that he has brought us. Ephesians 2, 17, And that is who we were.

We were not of the household of David. We were not the children of Israel. We were not of the tribe of Levi. We had no access to the Holy of Holies. We were strangers, and we were away from him, but he came and he reconciled, and he brought peace to us.

A peace that had been broken all the way back in the garden that required the death of our God and our place. Jesus brought a peace to our relationship with God and with one another where there had only been conflict, hostility, and wrath.

And the same Jesus, who presumably slept like a baby on that ordinary night, also preached rest to the weary and rebellious among us. Matthew 11, 28 through 30, Come to me, all you that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

[9 : 15] Take my yoke upon you and learn to me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and you shall find rest unto your souls, for my yoke is easy and my burden is light.

And then we sang, Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia. That goes to Luke chapter 10, verse 13 and 14, which was saying that suddenly there was an angel, a multitude of heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.

If they were singing that night, we know what the theme of their message was, was that he was, that it was goodwill towards all men and there's peace. We do not know if they were singing, but it's very probable that they were singing because we find that all throughout eternity that there's people, angels round about God that are constantly worshipping him.

But that was brought to a group of shepherds reminding us that peace had been brought to earth. And it's so wonderful that it came, the shepherds, a group of people that you would not expect, a group of people that would be able to recognize when a perfect lamb had come, and they were not the most common people for reporting the news in that day, but his knowledge could not be kept.

They didn't have a system, they weren't the ones that were the spread information throughout the land, that no matter what group of people were brought this news, they were going to find ways to share it. It's interesting in the passage, we don't see the dialogue between the shepherds and Mary, we just find that they came, they heard what they needed to, and then they went and published it abroad.

[10 : 44] Then a son of God's love's pure light, the son of God. In three ways, he fulfills this. He was born a Mary, truly human, a descendant of Adam and Eve, one of image bearers, offspring of God like we are, truly Hebrew, circumcised on the day, marked as part of Israel.

When people saw him, they recognized who he was and what family he was from. When he walks upon the woman at the well, she believes that he is just another teacher, Pharisee, that she had seen many other times, but she sees him and knows that he is fully human.

Jesus was a descendant of David, held as the true heir of the David's throne. And Jesus is Christ, the Son of God, the everlasting King of His people. Galatians 4 tells us that He was made under the law and He would find us there.

But when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that are under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

And because ye are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father, wherefore thou art no more servant but a son, and of a son than an heir of God through Christ.

[11 : 55] It said that He was made a woman made under the law to redeem them that were under the law. That's why it's necessary that He came and became a man to be born under the law, and that is where we were.

But Jesus is the pure light of love. James 1.17, Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variableness nor shadow returning, completely without sin.

And then my favorite expression in the song that we'll sing just here in a moment, with the dawn of redeeming grace. One of the reasons that we often lack passion for Christmas is that we fail to truly see God's how holy and how serious sin is.

Therefore, we do not have much joy in Christ's coming for us. Matthew 4.16 says, The people which sat in darkness saw great light, and to them which sat in the region of the shadow of death, light is sprung up.

Without Christ, our heart would always be as dark and as starless as a night sky could ever be. Because the Bible tells us in Mark 7.21, For from within or out of the heart of men proceed evil thoughts, adulterers, fornication, murders, theft, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness, and all these things come from within and defile the man.

[13 : 17] So sin is alarming because it is against the holy God that we were living in the darkest of days with no open revelation, 400 years of silence, and then His redeeming grace it came to us.

So this awesome joy is anchored in the awful seriousness of our sin. That God commended His love towards us in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.

That He came to us. And so it's great to sing and it's a better truth to tell other people. You can sing it to other people if you would like, but you must tell it to them.

Luke 2.16-17, And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph and the babe lying in a manger. And when they seen it, they made known abroad the saying which was told them concerning this child.

This story should lead us to wondering, to pondering, and proclaiming that Jesus Christ has come. And so we take time and we continue to sing and we reflect upon that.

[14 : 19] And so tonight we have a candlelight service and I'd like the kids to make sure they have their candle out. I've asked them to dim the lights a little bit more as we sing this last song. Maybe families get close together.

And as we look at all this time, may our hearts rejoice. And we think about 400 years of silence and that silent night. And then He came in that redeeming grace. And I'll ask after I pray that they would play maybe one time through just on the guitars before we begin to sing together.

And we'll just take the time to ponder and reflect and realize that we are in the same position as those shepherds that know that Jesus has come and we know the significance of it.

So this is something that we want to share with all of those that are around us and all those that will listen. Heavenly Father, I thank You so much that You came, Lord, that You came under the law and You came all the way down.

Lord, You left the glory and majesty of heaven and You came to earth. You came to a manger. Lord, You came to where my people would be, not of nobility, not of royalty, but just there among common people You were born.

[15 : 29] And that You share Your message with common people, with the shepherds, and they had the great joy of sharing that with other people. In the night, Lord, Your redeeming grace came, and Lord, we rejoice in that.

Without You, Lord, we would continue to live in darkness, but Your light has shown. Your perfect light has shown. Lord, we are so grateful. Lord, I take a moment to thank You for the teenager that shared the gospel message with me.

Lord, I thank You for a small country church in Kentucky that continued to unpack for me from Your Word the significance of Your life, death, and resurrection.

Lord, now I thank You for being among the people that sing this truth and that continue to rejoice in it, where this is something that we never plan to get over, the most meaningful thing that we could ever know or we could ever share, and we thank You that You allow us to be the ones to share this message with other people.

In Jesus' name I pray. in Jesus' name I pray.