

Christmas Carol Candlelight Service

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Date: 20 December 2022

- [0 : 0 0] Would you look with me in Isaiah chapter 9 verse 2? It is amazing how he came. I love that song. Before the church here, Vision started in 2006.
- We met in a warehouse for Christmas in 2005. And I believe Kristen and Catherine would have sung that song. Natalie wouldn't have been around. And then in 2011, Christmas landed on a Sunday.
- And then once again now in 2022. You know, the next time Christmas is on a Sunday is 11 years from now. And I'm grateful that we have this time set aside to singing.
- How many of you, we sung your favorite Christmas song tonight? We sung several of them. We can meet every Sunday night in December and have another group of Christmas carols to sing and more verses.
- Travis, what's your favorite Christmas song? Did we sing it? Did we sing that one? I believe we did. All right, good. Anybody else? Who has a favorite one in here? Holy Night. A Holy Night?
- [0 : 5 9] Okay. Anybody else? Mark the Herald Angels. All right. I didn't know that I had a favorite one, but I'm thinking it must be Silent Night. Because last year I spoke about Silent Night. And tonight I will as well.
- And I told Micah in the office before the service tonight. I said, I was studying. And I thought I spoke about Joy to the World. And I went to save it on my computer. And it says, you already have something saved on Silent Night.
- I said, well, it's going to be the same person talking about the same song. And he said, you're not the same person. It's been a year. That was some deep philosophy by Micah before the service.
- And none of us are. It's been another year. And we're not the same people. But the same wonderful truth is available to us tonight. Isaiah 9, 2. I want to read that verse to you.
- I won't get to all that I had planned to read tonight. I appreciate all the Bible reading that's been done. But Isaiah chapter number 9, verse number 2 says, The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light, that they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.
- [2 : 0 5] And so it says, the people that walk in darkness have seen a great light, and they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined. So, young people, I hope you remember our Christmas candlelight services.
- We often, when we meet in here, it isn't like this. We are people that live in the light. We live in the truth. Our room is lit. It's lit up. It's bright when we have church services. But tonight, it's darker where you're sitting because we want to show the contrast between where we're sitting and the light.
- That would be the candlelight. And shortly, we'll have a chance to pass the light out and that candle that you are holding. To really do it justice, what we should do, Caleb, is we should turn out all the lights, open up all the doors, and sit here for a couple hours.

All right? And at that point, we would have the anticipation that we really would need about the light coming to us. Because that light that you hold in your hand, if you look at it, the candle, Hudson, and those of you that were real excited to get the candles are the ones we're most worried about, William Avery and different people in here, all right?

And when you look at that, you can look at that thing all day long, and that thing is not going to be lit unless somebody brings that to you.

[3 : 22] And that's what I want us to do shortly. Here in a moment, I'm going to ask the dads to come forward and take the light and take it back to their family and spread it throughout this building. And we will end the night singing Silent Night, but not just kids, adults as well.

I think that picture is just so wonderful of knowing that the light has come to us. You can remember when the gospel story came to your family, and then you can also think about the responsibility that you have to those.

If you would imagine millions and millions of people that would be sitting behind you holding a candle that do not have the light of the gospel available to them.

So Silent Night is the song that we will sing to end our night. It was written by a man named Joseph Moore who wrote a unique song every Christmas, for every Christmas Eve service, and he hadn't written a song, and the organ wasn't working.

So he went and found a poem, and he took it to one of his friends, and real quickly, in one night, they came to this song, Silent Night, which has become one of the most popular Christmas songs of all time.

[4 : 30] And we said, Silent Night, Holy Night, All is calm, all is bright. You know, no baby is born on a silent night, especially not in a stable.

I remember with Thatcher, my first being born, all that excitement that was around it, and just the commotion that was going around it. But that was in a hospital down in Atlanta under perfect conditions, and it still wasn't a silent night.

Anyone who's experienced the miracle of childbirth knows that there can be a lot of noise involved in welcoming a newborn into the world. It's beautiful, it's sacred, but it's not quiet.

But what we were reminded of, and it was said so well in that last song, that when Jesus came, there was no parade, there was no throne, there was no crown, there was none of that was waiting.

The few Argentine fans in here, after Sunday, there's a lot more Argentine fans, Jeff. I decided to become one Sunday afternoon with you. But I learned from, I was talking to the Beckers the day, and in Argentina, they're supposed to have a big parade for the team, but so many people gathered together that the team couldn't get to the middle of it.

[5 : 40] So they're not going to have a parade and a fanfare, but they're not going to have the main attraction to it. And what a contrast, right? December the 25th was just another day. It was just another silent night, just another normal day.

But when Jesus entered into our story, entered into the world, it changed everything. And then now 2,000 years later, the danger is that there's all this parade and fanfare, but Jesus doesn't have his rightful place.

So we look back on that silent night. In Luke 1, 11, there appeared unto him an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar of incense. And so an angel came and spoke to Zechariah, which means God remembers, and also to Elizabeth, which means God promises.

And the couple together, their name means God remembers and God promises. What a great combination there, that he remembers his promise. And we look through the lens of history, that even though God's people might have felt like God was silent, he was in fact working the entire time.

He was moving through rulers and through empires to set the stage for the arrival of the promised Messiah. At the appointed time, Jesus had come. That God had never forgotten about mankind, but at the appointed time, Jesus came.

[6 : 57] And they came, the angels saw him, and it was a babe laying in a manger. And when they had seen it, it says, they made known abroad, saying that which was told them concerning the child.

So we say, all is calm, all is bright. This is wonderful. Isaiah 9, 2, which I started reading at the beginning, it says, that those that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.

This idea of darkness and death. Same one that we refer to in Psalm 23, as we walk through this valley of the shadow of death. And what comes into that valley of the shadow of death?

Round yon virgin, mother and child, holy infant, so tender and mild. As promised, a child was born of a virgin. His name was Jesus.

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.

[8 : 01] And we reflect upon that. And it says, Sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace. It's a picture of a sleeping baby, but brings us to the point of recognizing the peace that he has brought to us.

Jesus 2, 17, and came and preached peace to you which were far off, and to them that were nigh. Jesus brought a peace to our relationship with God and with one another, where there had only been conflict and hostility and wrath, and we've been unreconciled.

And this baby, Jesus, that we presume slept that night, he comes, in Matthew 11, he says that he comes to us, all that are labor and are heavy laden, and he will give us rest.

You may know the story. If you haven't, I'd encourage you to look it up and read more about it, but during World War I, where they set down their weapons on Christmas Eve, and the men that were on both sides of the war were in these foxholes, they were in these trenches that were dug out, and on Christmas Eve, they gathered in what was no man's land there, where there had only been death and killing, and they played soccer together, and they gathered around the fire, and they sung Silent Night.

And the soldiers that took place in that talked about it being something that was surreal, that they could never imagine seeing, that if they were to watch it in a movie, they wouldn't have believed that it was an honest telling of history.

[9 : 21] But that was short-lived, and the next day they went back to fighting. Several of you probably read the story in here by Don Richardson called Peace Child, and it's a story of a group of people in the Netherlands, New Guinea, and they were fighting.

They're called the Sawi people, and this one man, he went, he was trying to have a peace between the two different tribes. But what he didn't know about the tribe that he was working with is that they took great pride in deceiving people.

And the farther that you could deceive somebody and end up killing him, then the greater honor that you would have among the group. And so this man died. And so when the missionary Don Richardson come, and he met this group of people, and he was talking to them, he told the gospel story.

And as he told the gospel story, they all thought Judas was the hero of the story because he was the one that was most clever. He was the one that was most deceptive. But as he was there and he was willing, he told them that he was going to leave this tribe.

And the two groups decided they didn't want this man to leave. And so they said, we have to come together. We have to reconcile. There has to be peace between the two tribes. And so they had a ceremony that the missionary Don Richardson had never seen before.

[10 : 35] And what happened was they lined up and a baby was passed from one tribe over to another tribe. And there was an exchange. And as long as the baby from the one tribe was raised and growing up on that side, and this one was raised on this side, there would be peace between the tribes.

Well, that was a peace child that would eventually die. But we have a high priest that will never die. In Jesus Christ, the peace child that brings true peace to those that were once afar off.

And so in this song, we celebrate this fact that the peace that has been brought to us. Silent night, holy night, shepherds quake at the sight. How did the shepherds get involved in this?

This is one of the people that you would expect to find in the story. They would be people that would recognize a perfect lamb. They were not the common reporters of the day, but with this knowledge, they could not stay quiet about it.

Glory streamed from heaven afar. Heavenly hosts sing, Alleluia. Christ the Savior is born. Christ the Savior is born. Luke 2.13, And certainly there was an angel of a multitude, the heavenly host, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth, good will toward men.

[11 : 51] And we do not know if they were singing this, but it seems very probable that they were rejoicing in this fact. Silent night, holy night, Son of God's love's pure light, radiant beams from thy holy face.

Just a couple things, lastly, before we sing. God's Son of God's love, pure light, radiant beams from thy holy face. Galatians 4.4-7, it says, When the fullness of time was come, at the right time, God sent his Son, forth his Son, made of a woman, but made under the law to redeem them that were under the law.

Luke 19.10, it says, Jesus came to seek and to save that which was lost. That is where he found us. He found us under the law and he came to us there. That we might receive the adoption of the sons.

And he is the pure light. James 1.17, Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above and cometh down from the Father of lights with whom is no variableness, neither shadow or turning.

Now we're told that if the sun was the go out, the S-U-N, the sun was the go out, that it would be zero degrees in a few days. I think it's actually going to be zero degrees in a few days anyway, isn't it, around here.

[13 : 02] And it's going to be zero degrees in just a matter of days. And then, by the end of the year, it would be a negative 100 degrees. And if we didn't lose all of our oxygen and we were able to survive and it would continue, it would hold steady at that.

But the Bible tells us in the new heaven and the new earth, there is no need for a sun. And all that lives inside of that light will never die. He is the light of this world.

And so, then with the dawn of the redeeming grace, Jesus Lord at thy birth, Jesus Lord at thy birth, those last two words, redeeming grace. One of the reasons that we may lack an excitement or passion for Christmas is that we often fail to truly see that God as a holy and as our sin, God is holy and our sin is very serious.

Therefore, we do not have much joy in Christ coming for us. And so, we should rejoice tonight that the people which sat in darkness saw great light and to them which sat in the region and shadowed death, light is sprung up.

That's from Matthew 4, 16. Those that once sat in darkness, the light has come to us. And so, that's what we're rejoicing as as a people that we were sitting in darkness on a dark, silent night and Jesus comes to be the light of the world.

[14 : 26] Joy Wall's in here somewhere. I guess the boys sit over there so she's probably over there somewhere. I always think it would be neat to have a Bible name like Joy. You'd see it a lot. And a night like this, we probably said her name 75 times already.

And I'm so glad that she is home. But she's been down in Mexico helping teach the Anderson kids and being around there. But knowing that many times she's surrounded by people who do not have the light of the gospel.

We don't know that but you and I do and we should be so thankful for that fact. And it's not just a great truth or not just a great song but it's a wonderful truth that we should make abroad just like those that first came.

So I'm going to ask Ben to come up here and begin to play Silent Night. And as he does I'm going to ask that I could ask some of the dads if you will to come up here and help us out here.

And I will light your candle and as you do you'll take it back to your kids. And as we do that I would really like to encourage Come on go ahead David thank you. As we do that what I would really like for you to do is I'd really like for you to consider the person and the people that brought you the gospel.

[15 : 38] The time in your life where you did not know the gospel and it was brought to you. There you go. Please share that with Yeah. No you've been my as you do not lose your salvation if the candle goes out.

I don't know who said that. That's not what we're doing here tonight. It's a good thing too because Matt Minster's light is just not lighting alright? Alright. Here we go Travis.

Here we go.

Here we go.

It's so wonderful to get the light real candles the plastic ones just don't do the same do they? And we want the real thing. You want to be able to feel the warmth from the candle and to see it and it just looks different in here.

[17 : 25] It's really what we want for Christmas isn't it? We don't want a cheap imitation. We want the real thing right? And that's what we have here tonight is we have the real thing. I want us to just take a moment I want you to consider maybe just like the gospel was brought to you by your dad.

Maybe kids when your dad lit your candle maybe it was your mom and dad that shared the gospel with you and if you know that then you should thank God for them as we pray. Some of you may remember somebody in your life a Sunday school teacher or a co-worker and you sat in darkness and you were just waiting and you would have never known if somebody wouldn't have brought the message to you.

So I'd like to take a moment and I just want to pray and I'd like to thank God for the people that brought us the gospel that brought the light and shared it with us. Before I do would anybody just say the name of the person that brought it to them so we could just hear it.

Yes ma'am. That guy right there that's good. That's wonderful. Anybody else? Dwight Winkley. Dwight Winkley. Brother Winkley's son passed away last week 21 years old.

If you'll be praying for the Winkley family and he led Greg to the Lord when you were how old Greg? Eight or nine years old. Anybody else in here? Leola. That's a great name.

[18 : 41] I'm sure you have the coolest friends Ms. Gita. All right. Leola. All right. Yes ma'am. Dear mommy. All right. One point for David one point for Jennifer.

No I'm just kidding. All right. Yes sir. Dear mom. That's wonderful mom. All right. Who else in here? Just a couple. You know. Yes sir.

My mom. Dear mom. That's wonderful. Very. Keith Trimble. Keith Trimble. Wonderful. Up in Maryland. Gospel made it all the way up to Maryland. That's good. That's right.

Anybody else? Olivia Young. Olivia Young. That's special. It took me a moment. Olivia had to translate that. Olivia Penrod Young.

Gordon. Gordon Pittert. Gordon Pittert. Yes ma'am. My dad. Your dad. That's great. All right.

[19 : 37] Yes sir. Your mom. Your mom. There's plenty of times that we should be in a hurry. This just isn't one of them. Anybody else like to share?

Quirky Spittler. Quirky Spittler. There's some really good names being said here. Quirky Spittler. I thank God for Quirky Spittler.

Never met him. Anybody else? Greg says you may not be saved if you don't participate. I don't think that's the problem.

The light looks so great on you guys right here. Shining. I'm going to take a moment first and I'm going to pray for that. And then I'm going to ask you one more question before we sing. Heavenly Father you have heard the names that have been shared.

Lord you also know the names that are upon the hearts of us. Lord that like myself who didn't say but my sister. Lord I'm grateful. I don't remember what it was like to sit in darkness.

[20 : 36] I don't remember what it was like before you came into my life. Lord I have very little memories as a nine year old boy but I'm thankful that I didn't live there very long. I'm thankful that I got to know you at a young age.

Father I thank you tonight for these boys and girls that get to talk about their mom and dad bringing them the gospel and then to hear about other people being led to the Lord by friends. And so Lord I just want to praise you for this group of people Lord that you have saved and that you have redeemed and that Lord we don't sit in the darkness tonight but we get to enjoy coming together and singing together and rejoicing and what has been done.

So Father I thank you for all the people that share the gospel with this family that makes up Vision Baptist Church though I will not get to meet many of them until heaven Lord I just thank you Lord for them and for their faithfulness.

And then before we sing I just ask you to consider who that might be for somebody else in 2023. How many more people still wait just like you and how those conversations that somebody had the courage and they had valor they had courage on behalf of another person to come and share the gospel with you let's every one of us pray that God will allow us to be part of somebody's testimony that maybe somebody right now that's sitting in darkness that's waiting that this time next year they'll be sitting with us or they'll be sitting in another church of like faith and rejoicing and being able to share the same type of testimony that you've been given.

Then moms and dads in here with young children we pray for your children we pray that as they come to an understanding of what the gospel is that they'll be seeing it lived out inside of this church that is something that they will want with everything that is in them and so we will pray and then we will end singing and after a silent night if you will extinguish your candles alright and we'll put them in the basket on the way out but let's pray one more time before we sing Heavenly Father as I just said come to you in prayer Lord I come to you with the names of some people Lord that we could say and that we could know Father now I'm coming to you with the names of people Lord that I don't know Lord I don't know who it is that you are going to allow us to share the gospel with in the coming year Father I have no doubt that there's some names upon the hearts of people in this room some of them may be family members but some of them may be very close family members so I pray for those that are in here who have unbelieving moms and dads that have unbelieving brothers and sisters and those that they just love so dearly who Lord they don't want to see separated for all eternity

[23 : 24] Lord and I pray for them I pray that this would be the year Lord that they would come to know you Father I'm praying right now as even though I won't know and I don't know who it is that you when you made us a new creature you set us out on a path and on that path Lord you put people in front of us Lord may we never walk by people that are sitting in darkness just enjoying the warmth of your light may we share with everybody around us what you have done and just like Lord that we're going with the saying where it was a silent night and all was calm and then Jesus came into the story Lord may we be that for some people in this coming year may we be the messengers Lord may we be the shepherds may we be the ones that tell them that Jesus has come and it changed everything in Jesus name I pray