

CHRISTMAS COMMUNION

December 26, 2021

INTRO: OPENING PRAYER

Sing with me.

TELL ME THE STORY OF JESUS

Tell me the story of Jesus,
write on my heart every word;
tell me the story most precious,
sweetest that ever was heard.
Tell how the angels, in chorus,
sang as they welcomed His birth,
"Glory to God in the highest!
Peace and good tidings to earth."

Refrain:

Tell me the story of Jesus,
write on my heart every word;
tell me the story most precious,
sweetest that ever was heard.

Tell of the cross where they nailed Him,
writhing in anguish and pain;
tell of the grave where they laid Him,
tell how He liveth again.
Love in that story so tender,
clearer than ever I see:
stay, let me weep while you whisper,
love paid the ransom for me. [Refrain]

Tell the story of Jesus? That's no small task. In the last verse of his Gospel, after recounting story after story concerning the life of Christ, John wrote, "*There are many more things that Jesus did. If all of them were written down, I suppose that not even the world itself would have space for the books that would be written.*" (John 21:25)

Yet, the life of Christ can be summed up in a singular thought, "*Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*" (1 Timothy 1:15) And the Bible confirms this over and over again...

Matthew 1:21 "*She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*"

1 John 4:14 "*And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world.*"

Luke 19:10 "*For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.*"

Titus 2:11 "*For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people,*"

John 3:17 "*For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.*"

Several years ago I wrote a song that Rhyme & Reason released as a radio single. I thank God for the song because I believe it tells the story of Jesus as best I can.

LOVE STORY

Fashioned as a man, God walked upon the earth
But clothing could not veil His glory
Heaven's perfect gift delivered at His birth
This child would live to tell love's story.

CHO

Love was His message and love was the theme
Love was it's moral and love was the scheme
Love to the letter and Love to the tree
The greatest ever told love story

Spurned by evil men, they carried Him away
To hang Him on a cross before them
He opened not His mouth, for nothing could He say
Would add a line to His love story

CHO

BRIDGE

Line by line Heaven's perfect rhyme
The story from beginning to end
Authored by the Savior and penned for mankind
The story that saved me from sin

CHO

Luke 2:1-14 tells the story of the coming of Jesus to this world. It is a timeless and beautiful message that has brought comfort and peace to millions throughout the years. And it's message is just as needed today as it was when first delivered. *"And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Caesar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. 2 (And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.) 3 And all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. 4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judaea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem; (because he was of the house and lineage of David:) 5 To be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child. 6 And so it was, that, while they were there, the days were accomplished that she should be delivered. 7 And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. 8 And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. 9 And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. 10 And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. 12 And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. 13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, 14 Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men."*

O LITTLE TOWN OF BETHLEHEM

O little town of Bethlehem,
how still we see thee lie!
Above thy deep and dreamless sleep
the silent stars go by;
yet in thy dark streets shineth
the everlasting light.
The hopes and fears of all the years
are met in thee tonight.

O holy Child of Bethlehem,
descend to us, we pray,
cast out our sin and enter in,
be born in us today.
We hear the Christmas angels
the great glad tidings tell;
O come to us, abide with us,
our Lord Immanuel!

Do you ever stop and think about what must have been going through Joseph's and Mary's minds as they pondered the future of this little baby that God had placed into their care? They would have had some of the same fears that every young couple face. "What if we're not good parents?" "What if we can't keep Him safe?" It must have been a great comfort looking down at the manger into the face of the sleeping baby Jesus knowing they were not alone, that God was with them.

SILENT NIGHT

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.
Glories stream from heaven afar,
heav'nly hosts sing, Alleluia!
Christ, the Savior, is born!
Christ, the Savior, is born!

Silent night, holy night!
Son of God, 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.

It was 30 years before he left His family and started His itinerate ministry. Luke makes the point at the end of chapter 2, to tell us, *“And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.”* How quickly things would change.

In just 3 short years, people went from singing His praises to shouting out, “crucify Him”. None of this caught Jesus off guard. He had known since the beginning of time that it would be this way. The Word of God tells us in **1 Corinthians 11:23-25** that, *“The Lord Jesus, on the night he was betrayed, took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, “This is my body, which is for you; do this in remembrance of me.” 25 In the same way, after supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me.”*

Jesus knew before His betrayal what was coming. So He shared an intimate moment with His disciples, and in doing so, gave us instructions on what we should do, to remember His death on the cross, as He died for the sins of the world.

Read with me from Matthew 26:17-28 *“On the first day of the Festival of Unleavened Bread, the disciples came to Jesus and asked, “Where do you want us to make preparations for you to eat the Passover?” 18 He replied, “Go into the city to a certain man and tell him, ‘The Teacher says: My appointed time is near. I am going to celebrate the Passover with my disciples at your house.’” 19 So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. 20 When evening came, Jesus was reclining at the table with the Twelve. 21 And while they were eating, he said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me.” 22 They were very sad and began to say to him one after the other, “Surely you don’t mean me, Lord?” 23 Jesus replied, “The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man will go just as it is written about him. But woe to that man who betrays the Son of Man! It would be better for him if he had not been born.” 25 Then Judas, the one who would betray him, said, “Surely you don’t mean me, Rabbi?” Jesus answered, “You have said so.” 26 While they were eating, Jesus took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, “Take and eat; this is my body.” 27 Then he took a cup, and when he had given thanks, he gave it to them, saying, “Drink from it, all of you. 28 This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins.”*

Today, we want to offer this meal to you, **IN REMEMBRANCE OF HIM!**

Before we start, let me tell you what we’re going to do. We are not going to pass the elements down the rows today. Instead, we are going to ask you to come forward. Now, if standing in line and walking is difficult for you, for whatever reason, that’s okay. We will come to you in a moment. So you can just remain in your seat and we will recognize and serve you shortly. For those who can come forward, here’s what I want you to do. We want to start with the front rows, and two rows at a time, make your way forward. So, in a single file, You will take the bread and juice one at a time from the servers. When you take the bread, eat it. When you receive the juice, drink it. then place your cup in the empty server on the table, and return to your seat by going to the outside aisle.

Now that we understand, **LET US PRAY**

1 Corinthians 11:26-30 *“For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes. 27 Whoever, therefore, eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty concerning the body and blood of the Lord. 28 Let a person examine himself, then, and so eat of the bread and drink of the cup.*

29 For anyone who eats and drinks without discerning the body eats and drinks judgment on himself. 30 That is why many of you are weak and ill, and some have died.”

Please understand that what we are doing today is one of the most reverent forms of worship that we can participate in. It is also a great blessing to those who love the Lord their God. So, it is with great respect that we approach this table. You are welcome here, and invited to join in, if you have believed on the Lord Jesus Christ as your Savior. I do ask that you “*examine yourself*” and pray to God on your own, confessing any sin that may be in your life. Then come with joy and eat at His table. And all God’s people said, AMEN.

Now the first rows on each side can come forward...

WHO AM I

When I think of how He came so far from glory
Came to dwell among the lowly such as I
To suffer shame and such disgrace
On Mount Calvary take my place
Then I ask myself this question
Who am I?

CHO

Who am I that The King would bleed and die for
Who am I that He would pray not my will, thine Lord
The answer I may never know
Why He ever loved me so
But to that old rugged cross He'd go
For who am I?

When I'm reminded of His words
I'll leave you never
Just be true I'll give to you life forever
I wonder what I could have done
To deserve God's only Son
To fight my battles til they're won
For who am I?

CHO

Now, those of you sitting who would like to participate, please raise your hands. The men will come to you. Just leave your hands up for a moment.

INVITATION

CLOSING PRAYER