



'History of the Christmas Hymns!'

Sermon #2: 'Silent Night! Holy Night!'

Luke 2:11

Sunday, December 8th, 2024 at 11 AM

This Past Wednesday:

- This past Wednesday we had the opportunity to begin our 'History of the Christmas Hymns!' sermon series by singing and looking at the lyrics of the hymn 'While Shepherds Watched their Flocks by Night!'.
 - *We talked about how Nahum Tate was inspired by Luke 2:8-10, and we looked at that text. I asked the question: What does this hymn inspired from Luke 2:8-10 show us about the Shepherds and what occurred that night?*
 - **Truth #1: Great Resistance. (v. 8)**
 - **Truth #2: Glory Revealed. (v. 9)**
 - **Truth #3: Genuine Relief. (v. 10)**

- Based on Wednesdays message, are you reflecting and remembering the Glory that came to earth in the form of a baby?
 - Jesus, our Lord.

Sermon #2: 'Silent Night! Holy Night!'

Luke 2:11

Sermon in a Sentence:

The significant and seemingly small details of that Holy night when Christ was born are revealed when we look at the Town, the Truth and the Title.

Intro:

- Today, what is regarded as one of the most well known Christmas hymns that we sing, was not written until Christmas Eve of 1818 in Austria.
 - **'Silent Night! Holy Night!'**
- This hymn that we just sang was written by a 26-year old Roman Catholic Priest by the name of **Joseph Mohr**.
 - **In 1818, he was serving as the Assistant Pastor of the new Church of St. Nicholas in the region of Tyrol in the Alps.**
 - There in that mountain community, was a decent size of congregants that gathered in that Church. At the time, Joseph Mohr was the Assistant Pastor.

- *Franz Gruber was the schoolmaster of the small village and was also the Church organist.*
 - He and the young Joseph Mohr had conversations that the ‘perfect’ Christmas song had still yet to be written.
- *It was Christmas Eve of 1818, and Joseph Mohr got word that the Church organ would not function properly.*
 - With Christmas Eve Mass just hours away, and fearful of upset his congregants, Joseph Mohr wrote the words to ‘Silent Night! Holy Night!’ and Franz Gruber arranged the music and played it to his guitar.
- *That young catholic priest and Church organist never intended that their hymn would be used outside of their small mountain village home.*
 - But, within a few days, the organ repairman got ahold of the copy of the new hymn, and throughout the alps region, the song was able to spread.
 - *In 1838 it first appeared in a German hymnal.*
- When a choir from this same region in Austria went to the United States to do a concert tour

‘The Tyrolean Singers’ in 1839, it was the first time this song was sung in the United States.

- *Shortly thereafter, John F. Young translated it, and it first appeared in an english Hymnal in 1863.*

- *Now, it has become one of the most well known hymns that we will sing this Christmas season.*

- When reading the Lyrics to this song, I can’t help but think that the young priest was inspired by Luke 2:11 specifically, as well as Luke Chapter 2 as a whole.
- Before we dive into this text, let me share with you the lyrics.

- *Verse 1:* 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
- *Verse 2:* Silent night, holy night Shepherds quake at the sight
Glories stream from heaven afar Heavenly hosts sing Alleluia
Christ the Savior is born Christ the Savior is born
- *Verse 3:* 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

Read Luke 2:11

Question to Ask:

What does this hymn inspired from Luke 2:11 show us about the significance in the details of Christ's incarnation?

Truth #1: *The Town.* (v. 11a)

- ‘For unto you is born this day in the city of David’
 - *As we studied and looked at this past Wednesday, verses 11 & 12 in Luke 2 are a continuation of the announcement that the Angel was giving the Shepherds in the field that night.*
 - *Here in verse 11, the angel reveals three important things to these Shepherds.*
 - The Angel in verse 11 is going to reveal the Town, the Truth, and the Title. All pointing to the significance of this baby who they would find in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.
 - *There are 3 things that I believe are very important to point out regarding the Town that Jesus was to be born in...*
 - *The Audience.*
 - ‘For unto you’
 - *As I briefly touched on this past Wednesday, the shepherds were the lowest on society's social ladder in Israel at this time.*
 - And notice that the Angels say ‘unto you’.
 - *I believe that this shows you and I an incredible truth: That God does in fact believe that HIGH theology should be given to LOW people!*

- Now, I’m not saying that we should make the deep truths of God and His Word unnecessarily complex and hard to comprehend, but we certainly should not water it down!
- *Notice here that the Shepherds would have been the least educated group that the angels could have spoken to about this, yet they rely to the Shepherds a deep theological truth!*
 - That truth was that the prophecies of old were coming true through the fulfillment of God coming to earth in the form of a baby.
- *The Angels do speak plainly, but they use plain speech in order to convey deep truth.*
 - *This is exactly what preaching should do! When we preach, it should be to explain and proclaim the deep truths of God and His Word, and do it in a clear and concise way.*
 - Preaching today as often become watered down baby feeding instead of a time of gutting the meat of God’s Word.
- HIGH theology is for LOW people. HIGH theology is intended for all people.
 - *But the YOU here in the text cannot be overlooked...*

- Since God sent the Angels first to the shepherds, we must realize social rank and or status does not matter to God in the way it often does to human beings...
 - Once scholar said *'Nothing about class determines what people can afford to know about God.'*
 - The audience is important, but also that small phrase 'this day' in verse 11, that I am referring to as the Acceleration...
- **The Acceleration.**
 - 'is born this day'
 - **The phrase 'this day' is a frequent occurrence in Luke's Gospel.**
 - In Luke's Gospel, it refers to an immediate action or an acceleration. Faster than things were previously thought to be.
 - **This phrase throughout Luke's Gospel reflects salvation historical fulfillment.**
 - Meaning, the fulfillment of salvation that had been promised to come all throughout the OT.
 - **In Luke 4:21, Jesus proclaims that the greatest promises that are found in Isaiah were fulfilled 'today' in his ministry.**
 - **In Luke 13:32-33 Jesus' healing and exorcisms were performed 'today'.**
- **In Luke 19:5, 9 Jesus tells Zacchaeus that 'today' he must stay at his house because 'today' salvation had come to him.**
- **And don't forget that Jesus told the thief on the Cross in Luke 23:43 'today' you will be with me in paradise.**
 - The importance of this phrase here in Luke 2:11 is significant because the Savior is born this day.
 - **Meaning, that on this day, Jesus as the baby was already fulfilling covenant promises that were made to David and other OT patriarchs.**
- The phrase 'this day' is significant because God had come to earth. This is the acceleration that was far greater than anyone would have imagined.
 - One Scholar, Thomas Schreiner said **His Messianic status is confirmed because He is born in David's city, Bethlehem. But Jesus is born not only as the Messiah but also as the Lord. He is not installed at God's right hand as Lord and Christ until He is raised from the dead, but He is Lord and Christ from His birth; His Lordship signals his deity, His sharing the same status and identity as God.'**

- God had come to earth. There will be waiting for Him to fulfill His mission of dying on the Cross, but God has come to earth. Of that, there was no more waiting.

- ***The Abnormal.***

- ‘in the city of David’
- Now, the city of David at the time Jesus was born there was probably no larger than around 400 people.
 - ***But it was significant because King David was from this small town. And Jesus came from the line of David.***
- ***The reason that the city of David was abnormal, is because no one would have thought that little ole Bethlehem would be the place for a King to be born.***
 - Most people would’ve thought that Jesus would have been born in Jerusalem or another powerful city at that time.
 - Lets look a little bit more closely as to what the ‘City of David’ really was?
- ***Meaning of Bethlehem.***
 - The word ***‘Bethlehem’*** literally means ***‘House of Bread’***.
 - Now, this may not have stuck out as much when Bethlehem was first established (before the birth of Christ), but when you look back on the life of

Jesus, the fact that He was physically born in the city of ***‘House of Bread’*** has astonishing significance.

- ***Jesus Himself declared that He was the bread of life.***

- ‘Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.’ John 6:35

- ***Bethlehem is five miles southwest of Jerusalem and is just off the major road that takes you into Jerusalem.***

- ***Keep in mind Joshua 19:15, reveals to us that there was a different one in the north. That’s why you’ll see the phrase Ephrathah to sometimes distinguish between the one Jesus was born in and the one in Joshua 19:15...***

- ***Mention of Bethlehem.***

- ***The very first time that the city of Bethlehem is mentioned is found in Genesis 35:16-20.***

- ***Bethlehem is also mentioned later on in Genesis in chapter 48:7...***

- ***In just a minute, I’ll list out the men/people from the Bible that were***

actually from Bethlehem, but I want to quickly reference other times in the OT that Bethlehem is mentioned.

- A Philistine garrison was in Bethlehem in the early days of David's time as king. **2nd Samuel 23:14**
- Elhanan's home was in Bethlehem. **2nd Samuel 23:24**
 - **Elhanan was a fighter in David's army and was one of the elite officers.**
- The burial place of Asahel (King David's nephew) was in Bethlehem. **2nd Samuel 2:32**
- The fort of Rehoboam was also in Bethlehem according to **2nd Chronicles 11:6**.
- Bethlehem is also mentioned twice in scripture in reference to the Babylonian exile in **Jeremiah 41:17, and Ezra 2:21**.
- **Men from Bethlehem.**
 - We know that Rachel (Jacob's wife), was buried in Bethlehem.
 - **But, Bethlehem was also the home of the Levite who became the priest to Micah. We see that in Judges 17:7-13.**

■ **The entire book of Ruth takes place in the area of Bethlehem according to Ruth 1:1-2, Ruth 1:19, Ruth 1:22, Ruth 2:4 and Ruth 4:11.**

- *This is important because this story of Boaz and Ruth leads to the events that gave this little village its biblical importance when David was later born there and anointed there.*
- **King David was from Bethlehem and was also anointed as King by Samuel in Bethlehem.** (According to 1st Samuel 16:1-13, 1st Samuel 17:12, 1st Samuel 17:15).
- So, the City of David that is mentioned here in Luke 2:11, is a fulfillment of the prophecy of Micah 5:2...
 - 'But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old, from ancient days.'
- **What the angels cry out here, is a fulfillment of Micah 5:2...**
 - The role that the town of Bethlehem played that Silent but Holy Night in Bethlehem was all a part of God's plan.

Truth #2: *The Truth.* (v. 11b)

- ‘a Savior,’
- *In regards to Jesus, this phrase that the Angels said that day is by far one of the most significant phrases to every describe Him.*
 - *Savior.*
 - **Word Study**
 - This word ‘Savior’ comes from the Greek word ‘Soter’ which also means Deliverer.
 - *Jesus came to be the deliverer for all mankind, first to the Jew, and then to the Gentile.*
 - This is the only time in the Gospels where the phrase ‘Savior, who is Christ the Lord’ is used and appearing all together in the same sentence.
 - *This is the only time in all of the NT (and Bible), that all three titles are brought together. And they show us an incredible thing about our Lord and His deity.*
 - *Before we look at the other two titles mentioned, I want to focus on the first one as we look at one thing from this word in the text...*
- *Jesus is the ONLY Savior.*
 - Notice there that I did not say that Jesus was a good person, or that Jesus was a prophet, or that

Jesus was A Savior, I said that He is THE Savior.

- Jesus is going to give His people, the Jews, an opportunity to be saved from their sins, although they will not accept His gift and work on the Cross.
 - *Jesus was the promised one who came to Israel to be their King and Messiah.*
- *The Glorious thing this morning, is that Jesus also came to save us from our sins!*
 - He came so that we might live. And so that we might have a full life in the here and now.
- *The term ‘Savior’ in this time period was used to describe Augustus and other rulers, physicians and gods of the times.*
 - *So the important role that the term ‘Savior’ plays into this is that Jesus’ birth challenges and calls into question, any earthly ruler who was in authority at this time...*
 - Which can somewhat explain why Herod was on such a tear to try and have Jesus killed early on in his life.
- *The fact that Jesus is Savior, automatically puts earthly power and positions into question because He is the one who can truly save.*

- If you don't know Jesus as the real and ONLY Savior, than you can know Him today!
- *There is no greater Christmas gift than asking Jesus to save you from your sins, and then following Him as Lord.*
 - 'for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,' Romans 3:23
 - 'but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.' Romans 5:8
 - 'because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. **10** For with the heart one believes and is justified, and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.' Romans 10:9-10
- *If you do know Jesus as your Savior and you know the truth, are you living and walking in and by this Truth?*
 - This morning we have seen the Town, the Truth, and now lets look at the last part of the title...

Truth #3: *The Title.* (v. 11c)

- 'who is Christ the Lord.'
- *As I mentioned a moment ago, this is the only time in the scriptures where all three of these titles (Savior, Christ, Lord) all appear together.*

- I find it significant. Because if Christ is your Savior, He is also to be your Lord. Not just one or the other.
 - *So many want Him to be Savior but do not follow Him as Lord. Don't let that be you this morning.*
- One scholar said '*He is Lord. He is God. He is the Maker of all. He is the ruler of all. The angels not only give the Gospel to the Shepherds; they give the true identity of Christ.*'
 - I believe there are **2** things to point out regarding what we find here at the end of verse 11.
- *His Title.*
 - The word 'Christ' is the greek word for the Hebrew word 'Messiah'.
 - *Christ is not necessarily His name, it is His title...*
 - 'And every day, in the temple and from house to house, they did not cease teaching and preaching that the Christ is Jesus.' Acts 5:42
 - *The use of 'the Christ' in Acts 5:42 points to the fact that Christ was His title.*
 - Another example of this is in Acts 17:3...
 - *'explaining and proving that it was necessary for*

the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead, and saying, "This Jesus, whom I proclaim to you, is the Christ." Acts 17:3

- I'm sure this astonishing announcement that was given to the Shepherds was not fully understood by them.
 - *Just as many people do not comprehend nor trust in the title and truth of Jesus the Christ!*
- **His Task.**
 - The word 'Lord' here symbolizes to me the task that Jesus took on for us that He leads us and guides us in our daily walk.
 - *We know according to Hebrews 7:25 that Jesus is interceding on our behalf.*
 - *We know that the Father gave Him the task of coming to die on the cross for our sins so that we might have eternal life.*
 - *Let me remind you of something you already know, it was love for you and I, as dirty and wretched as we are, that kept Jesus on the Cross to fulfill His task and to die for us...*
 - I'm sure that night was a Silent Night, but oh what a Holy Night it truly came to be.

- The night where our Savior, Christ the Lord came to earth as a baby in a manger.

Conclusion:

- We began this morning by looking at and singing the well known Christmas hymn 'Silent Night! Holy Night!'.
 - *As we saw the theological truths that are clearly written in that hymn, we transitioned over to looking at the scripture text that inspired the hymn, Luke 2:11...*
- Maybe before this morning's service you did not realize that we could get that much out of **19** words in just **1** verse of scripture.
 - That is truly the beauty of God's Word. That we can squeeze that much theological truth out.
 - *Especially during this holiday season, it's even more significant because verses like the one we have studied tonight, are some of the theological foundations of our faith.*
 - Like the Birth of Christ that we are celebrating this Christmas.
 - Let's remember this morning as we leave this place of the significance of the...
 - **Truth #1: *The Town.* (v. 11a)**
 - **Truth #2: *The Truth.* (v. 11b)**
 - **Truth #3: *The Title.* (v. 11c)**