

It's Christmas Night

December 23, 2018

Thank you so much for choosing to worship with us today! We are thrilled you are here!

It's Christmas night – an excerpt from Max Lucado

The world was different this week. It was temporarily transformed. The magical dust of Christmas glittered on the cheeks of humanity ever so briefly, reminding us of what is worth having and what we were intended to be. We forgot our compulsion with winning, wooing, and warring. We put away our ladders and ledgers, we hung up our stop watches and weapons. We stepped off our racetracks and roller coasters and looked outward toward the star of Bethlehem.

It's the season to be jolly because, more than at any other time, we think of him. More than in any other season, his name is on our lips. And the result? For a few precious hours our heavenly yearnings intermesh and we become a chorus. A ragtag chorus of longshoremens, Boston lawyers, illegal immigrants, housewives, and a thousand other peculiar persons who are banking that Bethlehem's mystery is in reality, a reality. "Come and behold him" we sing, stirring even the sleepest of shepherds and pointing them toward the Christ-child.

For a few precious hours, he is beheld. Christ the Lord. Those who pass the year without seeing him, suddenly see him.

People who have been accustomed to using his name in vain, pause to use it in praise. Eyes, now free of the blinders of self, marvel at his majesty. All of a sudden he's everywhere. In the grin of the policeman as he drives his paddy wagon full of presents to the orphanage.

In the twinkle in the eyes of the Taiwanese waiter as he tells of his upcoming Christmas trip to see his children. In the emotion of the father who is too thankful to finish the dinner table prayer. He's in the tears of the mother as she welcomes home her son from overseas. He's in the heart of the man who spent Christmas morning on skid row giving away cold baloney sandwiches and warm wishes. And he's in the solemn silence of the crowd of shopping mall shoppers as the elementary school chorus sings "Away in a Manger." Emmanuel. He is with us. God came near.

It's Christmas night. In a few hours the cleanup will begin-lights will come down, trees will be thrown out. Size 36 will be exchanged for size 40, eggnog will be on sale for half-price. Soon life will be normal again. December's generosity will become January's payments and the magic will begin to fade. But for the moment, the magic is still in the air. Maybe that's why I'm still awake. I want to savor the spirit just a bit more. I want to pray that those who beheld him today will look for him next August. And I can't help but linger on one fanciful thought: if he can do so much with such timid prayers lamely offered in December, how much more could he do if we thought of him every day?

All Things for Christ,
Michael