

A Christmas Meditation

December 25, 2022

Luke 2:1-20

Picture the scene: You're outside on a cool, clear night. The stars are glistening like tiny lights overhead, and the moon shines forth light on an otherwise dark world. You feel a gentle breeze blowing over your skin, but the world around you is otherwise calm. The world is quiet, seemingly asleep. Suddenly, there is this blinding light overhead, brighter even than the Sun, and the quiet world is instantly filled with an immaculate chorus of angels singing, proclaiming to you that the long-awaited Savior has been born. If you're like me, you'd probably think you were dreaming. However, this is the very reality experienced by the shepherds in the reading for today.

While we like to focus on the Christ child in all his glory on Christmas morning (if we're not too busy focusing on exchanging presents and preparing for parties), the reading for today actually says very little about the child himself. Rather, we hear more about Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds, because that's who we are meant to focus on today. This good news of the Christ child, look at with whom it's shared. It's first shared with Mary, the teenage girl that is to not only carry the child to term but to give birth to, nurse, and raise the Savior of humanity. The next to hear the good news is Joseph, the unofficially adoptive father for the Christ child, who will be charged with having him circumcised, raising him, caring for him, and protecting him. Finally, the good news is shared with the shepherds in the field, these rough and rugged outcasts on whom society has turned their backs. On top of that, those receiving this long-awaited, good news don't receive it just by the likes of an anonymous note or even second-hand from a prophet or priest. Rather, they are directly spoken to by an angel, by one of the heavenly hosts themselves. Though this is good news for all, this news is shared with those who will be the most greatly affected, those who will receive the greatest benefit from this child being born.

This whole Advent season, we have been referring to a "new normal" that is both far-off yet fast-approaching, and it has finally come. It is here, brought to us by the Christ child. Where once the sick had to quarantine themselves, far away from any and all physical contact, and go through extensive cleansing rituals after the fact, now they shall have hands laid upon them, be healed, and be made clean instantly. Where once our inherent sinfulness was a death sentence for us all, now that punishment is no more. The children, the widows, the orphans, and the aliens all used to be cast aside as powerless, but now they are invited in with loving arms wrapped tightly around them. Very truly, injustices and those who perpetuated them went unchecked. Now, through this single child and what he is destined to do, those injustices have been called out, and those that perpetuated injustices, whether by word and deed or by complacency and inaction, they have been called before the Judgment Throne for their crimes. In that truth, the lowly and the powerless have hope, peace, and joy, because they feel God's love for them once again. At one point, that same God in His holy temple on His holy mountain, He seemed so far off and inaccessible to all persons, but now, through this child, there is a way, and the doors have been flung wide-open for all who believe to enter in.

Today, on Christmas morning, our Savior, the Christ Child, has finally arrived. This babe will show us the way to God's house. He will bestow healing and forgiveness to all who need it, and will teach all who follow him to do the same. He will speak and act with compassion, and

will teach all who follow him to follow in his footsteps. He will establish the laws of the “new normal,” leaving us as his followers to continue to follow and teach these laws that this “new normal” might continue on without end. Through him, we have been given a foretaste of what awaits us in God’s house should we choose to follow Jesus up the mountain. However, just like Mary, Joseph, and the shepherds in the field, it is our choice to follow, to go where our Lord and Savior is. Will you choose to follow this still-small child?