

**Sermon Notes of
Pastor Craig Kuhlman's Message on Christmas Eve December 24, 2020:
"Birth of Jesus" (Luke 2:8-14)**

Christmas Eve Celebration

[In this evening's short message, Pastor Craig Kuhlman on Zoom helps us celebrate the birth of Jesus with overflowing joy.]

Introduction (Fred Stevens):

- Tonight we're going to have several readings by our members that reflect the thoughts that various personalities in the Bible might have about this night of Jesus' birth.
 - Waiting, watching and hoping against hope, the faithful have looked and longed for a Savior, wrapped up in our own lives and in our own struggles, consumed with our own desires and sins, but still our hope was in God. At long last, all generations cry out, "For unto us a child is born."
 - My name is Abraham. I followed God's call. I went from my own country to a land God showed us. God promised to make a nation from my descendants and bless all families on the earth through me. Now we see the fulfillment of that promise with the gift of this child. Today, we are blessed, indeed, "For unto us a child is born."
 - I am Hagar. I was Sarah's Egyptian slave girl who bore Abraham a son, whom I called Ishmael. When I was at the end of all hope, because of my suffering, I fled into the wilderness. It was there I met the God who sees, God who sees even those in slavery, crying in despair. This baby is a gift to people like me, "For unto us a child is born."
 - I'm Jacob, grandson of Abraham. Even though I was a liar and cheater, there was still room for me in God's plan. I had a dream one night that a ladder filled with angels went straight from earth to God. In the morning, I called that place Bethel, the House of God. Today, a child is born with the same message. God has come to dwell with us. We give thanks for Immanuel, God with us. "For unto us a child is born."
 - I am Moses. I had excuses when God spoke to me from a burning bush. I didn't want to help God free our people from slavery. But, God didn't give up on me or Israel. God's power delivered us from the hands of a mighty pharaoh. We worship a God who delivers. God gave us the Law at Sinai to guide us. We worship a God who guides us. And today, God gives us a Savior, who delivers us from evil. A Savior who is our guide. "For unto us a child is born."
 - I am Ruth, a foreigner from Moab, who married one of the sons of Israel. When my husband died, I followed my mother-in-law back to Israel. I was her faithful friend and her God, the God of Israel was faithful in destroying our happiness. I met a man name Boaz who married me even though I was an outsider. I gave birth to a baby

who brought great joy to my family. This baby Jesus is one of my descendants, who comes to bring great joy to the world. "For unto us a child is born."

- My name is Samuel. When I was just a small boy, I heard God calling me. I said, "Yes Lord, your servant hears you. And so, I served God all my days calling Israel to faithfulness. It was a hard job because the people didn't always want to hear what I had to say. But God never deserted me. Now, I see that God sends His own Son to call us to faithfulness. "For unto us a child is born."
- My name is David. I was the Lord's anointed, a man after God's own heart. I ruled Israel as a king for many years. I was a sinner like everyone else and I disappointed God in many ways. But God was faithful to me. This night in Bethlehem, in my own city, a new king is born, one of my own descendants. This ruler will bring peace to the world. And he will be called the Prince of Peace. "For unto us a child is born."
- My name is Isaiah. I was the prophet of the Most High. And when Israel had turned from God, God allowed them to be conquered by the Babylonians. The whole city of Jerusalem was in ruins. Our temple was destroyed. Our people were taken into captivity. Often we sing the Lord's song in a foreign land. "For unto us a child is born, unto us a Son is given. And the government shall be upon his shoulders whose name is Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end. Upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."
- Joseph is my name and my betrothed Mary, who has given birth to son. We have named him Jesus, as the angel instructed. The angel told me that this child will save our people from their sins. The hopes of many rest on our child. "For unto us a child is born."
- My name is Mary and I'm a servant of the Lord. God's mercy is on those who fear God from generation to generation. God has fulfilled the promise He has made to our ancestors, to Abraham and Sarah and to their descendants, forever. Jesus is a blessing to the world who comes through my life. "For unto us a child is born."
- So, today, we each add our voice to the chorus of thanksgiving. We sing our part in the song that rises through time all around the world. In every language, glory to God, in the highest. We give thanks for God's Son, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. "For unto us a child is born."
- Pastor Craig's Christmas gift to us is this short message of his rhyming verses reflecting Luke 2:8-14 – the birth of Jesus.

*Shepherds there were, watching flocks by Night,
An angel appeared causing their Fright.
No need to fear, this is Good News,
Great joy for all, no need for Blues.*

*In the town of David, our Savior is Born,
Messiah the Lord, we must Adorn.*

*A sign is given, at that Time,
The baby Jesus, so Sublime.*

*Wrapped in cloths lying in a Manger,
For anyone else it would seem like Danger.
It's all they had, all they could Afford,
What a humble beginning for our great Lord.*

*Then appeared a heavenly Host,
Praising God with their Utmost.
Glory to God in the highest Above,
Great peace to All, from the Son of Love.*

- Pastor Craig now leaves us with this Christmas wish.

*To all my friends and family,
Out here on the coast,
And those back in Ohio,
I love you the most.*

*Wishing you tonight,
Merry Christmas cheer,
And hoping 2021,
Will be one hell of better new year.*

Communion (Jim Roberts):

- What a thrill it is to take communion on a night that is just all for Him and all about Him.
- Now, here are three verses from an old Christmas hymn, "Thou Didst Leave Thy Throne."
- And please listen carefully for the words "home" and "room."

*Thou didst leave Thy throne and Thy kingly crown,
When Thou camest to earth for me;
But in Bethlehem's home was there found no room
For Thy holy nativity.*

*Heaven's arches rang when the angels sang,
Proclaiming Thy royal degree;
But of lowly birth didst Thou come to earth,
And in great humility.*

*When the heav'ns shall ring, and her choirs shall sing,
At Thy coming to victory,
Let Thy voice call me home, saying "Yet there is room,
There is room at My side for thee."*

- This takes Jim's thoughts to John 14:2 (NIV), "In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you."

- So, one of the major occupations of our Savior is going back to Father's house to prepare a place, a room, for each and every one of us.
- But this brings up a question for us: Are we offering Him a place? Is there room in our hearts for Jesus?

- Now, when we read the Gospel story, it tells us that there was no room for Jesus, in the inn.
- And there was no room for Jesus by the religious or civil authorities.
- There was no room for Jesus and his message by the majority of people in their hearts.
- Even those who followed Jesus eventually turned on him, at least for a while.

- Even Peter denied knowing Jesus three times.
- And the Eleven disciples deserted Jesus and fled.
- Only weeks later, did 120 people finally make room for Jesus in their hearts.

- Remember the hymn, "Joy to the World?"
- The words to the song tell us, "Joy to the World, the Lord has come. Let earth receive her King. Let every heart prepare Him room."
- So, we need to ask ourselves, are WE making and maintaining room in our hearts for Jesus?

- Jesus is not just preparing a place for us in heaven, He's preparing us for a place.
- We are in a transformation, sanctification period of life, where Jesus is preparing us for a place that He is preparing in His Father's house.
- So, Jesus asks us to make Him space so he can transform us more and more into His image and likeness.

- Now, each time we take Communion, we should be renewing our blood covenant of surrender to Jesus' continuing work in us, as He prepares us for that place.
- Jesus offered Himself to reconcile us to the Father so we can eventually live forever in the Father's house.
- So, in celebrating Jesus' birth, why are we observing His death in the communion symbols?

- Now we know that Jesus' death reconciled us to the Father and that Jesus told us to take these symbols to remind us of what he has done for us.
- So, let's remove the clutter from our hearts so there is room for Jesus and His preparation work in our lives.
- These elements are symbols; they are tokens of His doing this renewal whenever we take them in remembrance of Him.

- Prayer over the elements.