

# O Come, All Ye Faithful

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Preacher: Kevin Murphy

[ 0 : 00 ] The scripture for today comes from Matthew chapter 2. Starting in verse 1, we read, Now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, saying, Where is he who has been born king of the Jews?

For we saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him. When Herod the king heard this, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

And assembling all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Christ was to be born. They told him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophet, And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah.

For from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel. Then Herod summoned the wise men secretly, and ascertained from them what time the star had appeared.

And he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, Go and search diligently for the child, and when you have found him, bring me word, that I too may come and worship him.

[ 1 : 20 ] After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them, until it came to rest over the place where the child was.

When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshipped him.

Then opening the treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. And being warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they departed to their own country by another way.

This is the word of God. Great. Thank you, Annabelle. Well, let's pray together as we come to the passage. Heavenly Jesus Christ, this morning we want to see you.

We want to see something of your majesty and your glory, but also your tenderness, your humility and your lowliness. God, I pray that in this scripture, and as we reflect on this hymn that we sang earlier, that God, we will be drawn like these magi to once again, we will be wise men and wise women of the 21st century, to fall on our knees and to worship and adore you.

[ 2 : 42 ] God, we pray, won't you open the eyes of our hearts to come and see you for who you really are. God, come and help us to see who you are, who we are in light of you, and help us, God, to align our lives with you, we pray.

In your wonderful and gracious name, amen. Well, it's good to be back with you. I was away the last few weeks, and so it's great to be back.

And it's great to be doing this series that Niels has kicked off the last two weeks, Let Heaven and Nature Sing. I hope you've joined us the last few weeks as we've been looking at these wonderful Christmas carols.

Now, last week, Niels told you the story. I don't know if you heard of how he became a Christian, I think in his early 20s, and suddenly these Christmas carols that he had known and sang all his life took on a whole new meaning in light of becoming a follower of Jesus.

Well, my story is actually quite similar, except it's quite different in another way. I, too, in my early 20s, discovered these Christmas carols in a whole way that they became meaningful to me in a way that they hadn't been before, except the difference is I wasn't a Christian that became a Christian.

[ 3 : 52 ] I was a pastor that discovered the gospel. And I know that sounds strange, but I was a pastor in my young 20s. I was a very bad pastor. I was a very weak Christian, a very immature Christian.

I don't know why anybody let me be a pastor, but somebody did. And I thought that I loved and trusted Jesus, but actually I loved and trusted myself, which meant that I was very self-righteous, I was very self-opinionated.

And around this time, God very graciously started to show me the wonder of the gospel and the wonder of Jesus. I started to get a glimpse of the depth of my sinfulness and my self-righteousness, of how amazing Christ was and the gospel was.

And I started to fall in love with Jesus, which is a good thing for a pastor to do. But around this time, a friend of mine was planting a church in Cape Town, South Africa, where we were living.

And I thought I would be a good friend. Their church had an outreach at Christmas time. They had a carol service. And I thought I'd be a good friend. And so I went to this carol service to go and support him.

[ 4 : 57 ] His name is Stephen Murray. The church is called Hope City. And I sat through this carol service, having kind of freshly understood Jesus and the gospel, and I just cried my way through the service as we sang these amazing songs of Jesus and his incredible love for us.

And I remember I went home and I did two things. I took the bulletin from that service and I kept it on my desk for about two years. For about two years, I paged through the bulletin every now and then and just reflect on these words.

And the other thing I did is I went to iTunes Music Store. Do you remember that? Before the days of Spotify. And I downloaded a whole lot of Christmas carols and I burnt CDs for my mother-in-law and all family members and said, you've got to listen to these carols.

They're amazing. My point is that Niels found the gospel and these Christmas carols came alive. As a non-Christian, I as a pastor found the gospel and these Christmas carols came alive.

And for both of us, and our hope for you, is that these carols, they become anthems of grace as we discover Jesus in the story of Christmas once again.

[ 6 : 05 ] Now, as a side note, that's one of the reasons why as a church, we are always talking about Jesus and the gospel. Because whether you're a Christian or you're not a Christian, we all need to find the grace of God in the person of Jesus.

And so we're constantly going on about Jesus and the gospel. Well, two weeks ago, Niels kicked off with O Come, O Come, Emmanuel. And last week, we looked at Hark, the Herald Angels, saying, this morning, we're going to look at this carol, O Come, All Ye Faithful.

And if you've got your bulletin, you want to open it up, you've got the words of the carol there in front of us and the words of our scripture reading in the insert. I want to encourage you to have this open as we look at these words together this morning.

Now, this carol, Come, All Ye Faithful, it's a wonderful Christmas carol. It's got wonderful truths in it. It's a song that calls us to join with countless men and women from years gone by and to come and worship and adore Christ.

It's a song that calls us to ponder the gospel message, to reflect on who Jesus is, to contemplate Christmas. But really, at its heart, what it does is it calls us to worship Him.

[ 7 : 22 ] It's a song that calls us not just to sing, but to truly adore Him. And one of the things that's interesting about this hymn is that it's not directed to God.

You know, most of the songs that we sing, we sing directly to God or about Him. But actually, most of this hymn, we are singing to ourselves. Now, that might sound strange, but that's something that the Psalms sometimes encourage us to do.

Remember Psalm 42, Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why are you in such turmoil within me? Hope in God. And this song follows on from that and it's a song to speak to our own hearts.

Martin Lloyd-Jones very famously said, one of our problems in life is that we listen to our hearts more than we speak to our hearts. And so this song calls us, maybe you've had a difficult year, you've had a difficult season.

And in a way, the song says, Kevin, cold heart, come, come to God. Come and worship and adore Him. It's a song to speak to our own hearts. But it's also a song that we speak to one another.

[ 8 : 29 ] It's a song that when you come to church and maybe you really don't feel like coming to church, maybe you feel a bit distant from God, or like I said, maybe it's been a really tough season. And as you come and you hear the worship and the praises of those around you, it calls us to worship God and to adore Him together.

It's one of the great problems of online church, right? When you're sitting at home with just you and your coffee mug and you're struggling to worship. Oh, and you come and you gather with the saints. Then you hear the saints singing, come, come, let us adore Him. Let us worship Him, Christ the Lord. It's also a song that calls, it's also a song that calls us to slow down.

Look at the second, or the third line of the song. It says, come and behold Him. The word behold is a, it's a funny word, it's a very Christian word.

It's not quite as funny as hark, right? Hark is not the word, the sound that angels make, as Niels reminded us last week. But behold is a strange word. It's a word we don't use often in English these days.

[ 9 : 36 ] But behold really means to slow down, to contemplate, and to ponder something. It means to take the time to really think deeply about what is before you.

One of the problems with our age is we're such a fast-paced world. We've got so much data and information flying at us all the time that we don't know how to slow down. Someone says that culturally we have a cultural ADHD as a society.

We're just fast-paced all the time. I don't know if you've ever traveled somewhere. Maybe you do a weekend trip to Tokyo or Shanghai, or maybe you're on a business trip to Europe and you've got one extra day and so you want to go see Paris.

You've never been to Paris and you've got to go. And so you've got one day there and you fly through Paris. You do the Eiffel Tower and you do the Louvre and you take selfies at the Eiffel Tower and then you're in front of the Mona Lisa.

I don't know if you're allowed to take photos in front of the Mona Lisa. Are you allowed to, Florence? Yes? Okay. So you fly through all the sites and you tick off all your bucket list but you've never actually contemplated.

[ 10 : 45 ] You've never beheld it. I don't know if that's a word. Beheld, is that a word? You've never had a chance to really contemplate what is before you. Here this psalm, this hymn calls us to slow down, to behold Jesus.

To think about who it is that we sing and we worship. It's one of the great things about the Advent season, about Christmas being more than just a weekend.

If you've joined us in this Advent season, it's taking a month to really slow down and think about and behold Him. And when we do that, when we see who Christ is, we hear the angels, we hear the shepherds and the wise men of ages go by beckoning us to come and worship and adore Him.

But of course, really what this song is doing, O come all ye faithful, it's reenacting the spiritual journey of the very first worshipers of Jesus. I don't know if you picked it up in the scripture reading that Annabelle did for us this morning.

three times in our scripture reading it talks about come let us worship Him. In Matthew chapter 2, if you've got the bulletin, look at it, look at verse 2. The magi, the wise men, they come to Herod in Jerusalem and they say, where is He who has been born King of the Jews?

[ 12 : 15 ] We saw His star when it rose and we have come to worship Him. Come to worship Him. That's what the song is calling us to do, to follow the footsteps of the first worshipers of Jesus, the shepherds and the magi and to come and worship Christ the Lord.

And look at what happens in verse 11 when they find Him. It says, going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother and what did they do? They fell down on their knees and they worshipped Him.

They worshipped Him. The song beckons us, people of every nation and culture, ethnicity, language, tribe and tongue, come.

Come let us worship and adore Christ the Lord. Now, before we look into what that means, look at a couple of other responses. What are the other responses we could have?

Well, firstly, notice Herod's response to the words of these magi. what is Herod's response? It's hostility, right? This passage is famously referred to as the passage of the three kings, right?

[ 13 : 28 ] Because we've got these three magi that travel from the east. It's a very bad description because, firstly, we don't know how many kings there really were. We just assume there were three kings because of the three gifts that are mentioned, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

There could have been two kings, there could have been 17 magi, we don't really know. But the other problem is they probably weren't kings at all. They were astrologers, they were philosophers, they were wise men from the east, probably from Babylon.

But here are some magi and they come and, but really, what this passage is, is the tale of two kings. It's the tale of King Herod and the tale of King Jesus.

And here you have Christ the king born and the wise men, the magi, they come and they say, we have come from afar, where is he who is born king of the Jews? And what is Herod's response?

Anger, hostility, rage. Look at verse 3, it says, when Herod heard, Herod the king heard this, he was troubled. It's one of Matthew's great understatements.

[14:35] Herod wasn't just troubled, he was terrified. Because here is somebody who is going to threaten his rule, his claim to the throne. Herod has worked hard to eliminate all the enemies.

He's on the throne. He killed one of his brothers. Herod is clearly on the throne and here is somebody who claims to be on the throne. Herod is hostile to Jesus.

Because Herod grasped what is at stake if Jesus really is the king. If Jesus is who he said he is or who the magi proclaimed him to be, it means he needs to be dethroned.

And friends, for us, we can feel the same. Jesus comes and he says, I am heaven and earth's true king. Come and adore me. Come and worship me. Do you know what that means?

It means we are not on the throne of our lives anymore. It means Christ comes and asks us to step off the throne to worship and adore him. But notice the other response here is the religious leaders.

[15:43] How do they respond? Look at 2 verse 4 with me. It says, And assembling all the chief priests and the scribes of the people, Herod inquired from them, Where is the Christ to be born?

And they told him, In Bethlehem of Judea, for so it is written by the prophets. And you, O Bethlehem, the land of Judah, from you shall come a ruler, who will shepherd my people.

Here are the very brightest and the very best of the biblical scholars. They don't even need to go and search the scriptures. They know the scriptures. Herod comes to him and says, Listen, there's some guys telling us that the Christ has been born.

Where should we find him? And immediately they rattle off in Bethlehem. So said Micah the prophet. Here are the very best scholars. They know their Bible.

They're standing before them astrologers and philosophers who have told them where the Christ is. And what do they do? They give the answer and then they go back to their books.

[16:43] They go back to their life as if nothing has happened. The hostility of Herod and the indifference of the wise leaders, Christmas means nothing to them.

And friends, for how much of us is that, are we similar? we come, we worship, we sing the songs, we have the great Christmas feast, we cut open the turkey, we open some presents, we come to church on Christmas Day, but the day following, life goes back to normal as if nothing has changed. And Christmas calls us to handle life differently. Christmas calls us to get on our knees to proclaim Christ as the Lord. Friends, let's not be like the religious leaders of Herod's day, who sing the songs and do the advent calendars and put up the Christmas tree and yet do nothing about Jesus.

Oh friends, let's join the wise men of old and wise women of old who do what Herod should have done but was too insecure to do. Who do what the religious leaders should have done but were too indifferent to do.

Let's come and worship and adore Him this year. Friends, maybe you've known about Jesus all your life. You know the Christmas carols, you know the Christmas story.

[18:09] Friends, have you ever gotten on your knees and worshipped Him and adored Him? Have you ever proclaimed Him as Lord and King of your life and your heart? This Christmas treat Jesus differently.

Come and worship and adore Him. Well, how do we do that? What does that look like? Well, let's look at what the wise men do. Look at what they do in our passage here.

They come and they find Him. Verse 11, it says, they're going to their house. They saw the child with Mary, his mother, and they fell down and they worshipped Him.

The first thing they do is they get on their knees. They get on their knees. What does it mean to get on our knees before King Jesus in 21st century Hong Kong?

It means to acknowledge that Christ is the King, that Christ is the Lord. It's proclaiming Him not just as a wise man, not just as a sage, not just as a prophet of ages ago, but to declare Him our King, our Lord.

[19:09] Christmas reminds us that Jesus has the right to tell us what to do with our lives. Jesus has the right to tell us what to think, how to behave, what to do, because Christ is the King.

He is the Lord. He is the one true King that gets to direct our lives. Christmas reminds us not just of Jesus' lowliness and His gentleness, but of His majesty and His sovereignty of His Lordship.

Because here before this lowly King, these three Magi from the East bow down lower still. They proclaim Christ the King.

They get on their knees. But the second thing they do is they offer Him their treasures. Bowing down before Him, it says, they opened up their treasures and they offered Him gifts of gold and frankincense and myrrh.

And why do they offer these things? Well, gold is a gift for kings, proclaiming Christ the King. Frankincense was something that was often used in the temple for priests and their priestly service, proclaiming Christ as the mediator between God and man.

[ 20 : 18 ] Myrrh, we find out later on in the Gospels, when Jesus is being buried, was sometimes an ointment, a spice that was given at people's burial. And so here the Holy Spirit is telling us, they're proclaiming who Christ is, He's the King, what He's going to do, He's going to mediate between God and man, and His destiny, He's to die on the cross.

But of course, that wasn't what the wise men imagined. They just came and they opened up their treasures and said, Jesus, all that we have, all that we are, belongs to you, have your way in our life.

Friends, what would it look like for this Christmas, for us to get on our knees and say, Jesus, everything I have, everything that I am, come and have your way.

In my work, with my money, with my relationships, with my sexuality, and my dreams, and my ambitions, Jesus, here are the deepest desires in the lungs of my heart, my hopes and my fears, Jesus, here they are, I lay them at your feet.

Come, come let us worship and adore Him, Christ the Lord. Really, what this song is about, it's reminding us what Christmas is all about.

[ 21 : 42 ] It's so easy for Christmas to be taken over with the gathering, and the food, and the decorations, and the carols playing at home, and our holiday plans.

And yet, what Christmas is all about, it's about Jesus Christ, heaven and earth's true King. Come, come let us worship and adore Him. Come let us get on our knees, let's open up the treasures of our hearts, let's say Jesus, come and have your way.

And why should we do that? Why should we trust Him? Well, look again at our hymn that we have in front of us. Because of who Jesus is, look at the second verse Jeremy led us in singing it this morning, it's not often a verse that we sing, but historically it's there.

Look at what it says, God of God, light of light, lo he abhors not the virgin's womb, very God, begotten not created, oh come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Well, what does all that language mean? Where does it come from? It comes from the Nicene Creed. The creeds were the way that in the ancient days the church taught the church theology.

[ 22 : 56 ] A thousand years ago not many people could read, and even if they could read people didn't have their own Bibles, they were too expensive. And so the way the people, the church taught people theology were they came up with these creeds.

And so this language is taken from the creed, it's biblical theology. Who is Jesus? He is God of gods, very God. Not just a great prophet, not just a wise man, the wisest man that ever lived, that's true, but more than that, not just a great moral teacher.

Everything that we know about God is found in Jesus Christ. He is the eternal uncreated one. A hundred trillion years ago, here was Jesus on the throne of the universe, God of gods.

He is forgotten, not created. Forgotten means he is eternally submissive to God the Father, he honors God the Father, and yet never was there a point where he was brought into existence.

Eternally uncreated one. Jesus is the uncaused cause of everything that exists. God of gods. So think about that.

[ 24 : 10 ] Everything that exists has a beginning and has a cause that brings that thing into being. And that thing has a cause, and that thing has a cause, and that thing, and ultimately you go back a trillion years, Jesus Christ is the uncaused cause of everything that exists.

He is God of gods. He is light of light. He is the one who brought light into the world, light out of nothing. This is Jesus. And yet, lo, that means but, lo, he abhors not the virgin's womb.

It means as glorious and as majestic as he is, he is not too proud to come and take on the form of human nature, to be born a baby, to be weak and dependent upon his mother, born in the backwaters of Bethlehem, laying in an animal's feeding trough.

Here is Jesus, majestic and yet meek, awesome and yet humble, born to a virgin in the backwaters of Bethlehem.

And yet, friends, don't let his humility and his meekness crowd out his majesty and his awesomeness. Don't let the lambs and the sheep and the fluffy will and the fairy lights crowd out his majesty.

[ 25 : 38 ] Here is Jesus, God of God, the light of light, begotten, not created, the eternal sovereign God of all creation. Oh, come.

Come, let us adore him. Friends, this Christmas, whatever else you do, whether you travel, whether you have amazing meals, whether you put on the turkey, whether you have tons of friends over to your house, the one thing, let's do this Christmas.

Come. Come, let us adore him. Come, let us worship him. Come, let us join in the wise men and wise women of ages come past. Let's get on our knees.

Let's open the treasure chest of our hearts. Let's say, Jesus, come and have your way in my life.

Friends, if Christmas is to be anything significant, anything more than just a festival, more than eating too much food and spending too much money, here is the solution, to come to Jesus Christ and to worship and adore him.

Friends, if you want to find out what Christmas is all about, join the faithful saints of old. Come, worship and adore him. Come, come, let us worship him. Come and behold him, the king of angels.

[ 26 : 53 ] Come, let us adore him. This is what this song is all about. But there is one thing about this song which is a little bit troubling to me and possibly to you as well.

It is a great hymn. It is a wonderful hymn that we should sing. But there is one part that troubles me and maybe it troubles you as well. It is the very first line and the second line.

Look at it with me. It says, Oh, come all you faithful, joyful and triumphant. It's a wonderful description of maybe how we should approach Christmas.

And yet, if we're honest, how many of us really resonate with that? Maybe here this morning and you, as I said, you've gone through a difficult time. Maybe it's been a really hard year for you this year.

And you feel like there's one thing that I'm not this morning. It's triumphant, joyful. Maybe, friends, you don't feel very faithful this year. Maybe you've tried to hold on to Jesus.

[ 27 : 56 ] You've been buffeted by the winds and the waves and you feel like if there's one thing that I'm not, it's faithful. Friends, come all you faithful, joyful and triumphant.

It's what we should be, but it's not what we always are. How many of us could be said, Monday to Friday, at work, at home, at university, the deepest concerns of our hearts are to long to adore and worship Him.

And what about the final stanza? Ye, Lord, we greet you. Born this happy morning. Yeah, that's wonderful promise to what Christmas is. But, friends, if we are honest, some of us Christmas is not all that happy.

Friends, for some of us maybe you've lost a loved one. And as you come to Christmas Day and the build up to Christmas, actually maybe your heart is more carrying grief or mourning as you think about the loss of maybe a father, a brother, a grandmother, a daughter.

Maybe the anticipation of Christmas is not so joyful and rosy. It's actually, it's a time of sadness and grief in your heart. Friends, maybe you carry deep shame for something that's happened and Christmas reminds you of your unfaithfulness.

[ 29 : 17 ] And so, if you're a follower of Jesus, we carry this tension in our hearts because, yes, we want to come and worship and adore Him. That's where life is found. And yet there's this trepidation because, are we worthy?

Will Jesus really accept us? I mean, maybe, okay, Neil, yes, sure, I can understand that. Jesus would accept Him, okay, Justin, Annabelle, sure, but me? God, am I worthy to come to you this morning?

And friends, if all you hear is your pastor or the worship leader, Jeremy, saying, come, all you faithful, try harder, what happens? You feel either unwelcome and unwanted or you feel like a fraud as you fake your way through singing the Christmas carols.

So, is there any hope for people like us? Well, a couple of years ago, a lady called Lisa Clow, who is a worship leader and a singer at her church, was feeling the same tension in her heart.

She had gone through a difficult year and she arrived at church one day to sing Christmas carols and she found herself unable to sing. And so, let's listen to her story as I read it to her.

[ 30 : 31 ] She writes this. She says, I was struggling. It had been a long year and a half. Finances were very stressful. I had miscarried twins that year.

And on top of it, I was battling a deep relational bitterness with somebody close. My church was having their annual Christmas carol service and I, for once, was not singing that year.

I had told my church I wasn't able to sing, but what they didn't know was that I was too overcome with shame to stand on the stage before my church family that year.

That Sunday morning, I stood at my seat as we began to sing, O come all ye faithful. And the very first line of the song absolutely clobbered me.

It hit me like a giant wave of guilt. Come all ye faithful. Joyful and triumphant. I remember hearing those words and thinking, I have been so unfaithful.

[ 31 : 28 ] My joy has dwindled. I am a triumphant failure. I didn't sing for the rest of the service. I drove home, my mind still churning.

Is that really those who are invited to Jesus? The faithful? The joyful? The triumphant? If that's the case, I am hopeless. Later that afternoon, I was reminded of Jesus' invitation in Matthew 11.

Come to me, all you who are weary and heavy laden. And I will give you rest. Rest. Rest found in Jesus. Found in His death.

His resurrection. Not my death and resurrection. That evening, I sat down to write a song for the weary, for the broken, for the ashamed, for myself.

Friends, I wonder if you can resonate with Lisa's sentiment. Coming to the end of a difficult year of exhaustion, weariness. What do you have to bring to Jesus this morning?

[ 32 : 32 ] Maybe you hear the words of the Magi that bring their gifts and you feel like, Jesus, all I bring is my shame, my failure. I've got nothing to give. Jesus, do you even want me as part of your family?

The result of that afternoon was Lisa wrote a song and it's on the back of your insert. I wonder if you can turn and look at it with me and we're going to sing this song in a few minutes time, but I want to just look at these words together.

Come, all you unfaithful. Come, weak and unstable. Come, know that you are not alone. Come, barren and waiting ones, weary of praying ones.

Come, see what your God has done. Christ is born. Christ is born. Christ is born for you.

Come, bitter and broken. Come with fears unspoken. Come, taste of his perfect love. Come, guilty and hiding ones. There is no need to run.

[ 33 : 35 ] See what your God has done. Christ is born. Christ is born. Christ is born for you. He is the lamb who was given, slain for our pardon.

His promise is our peace for those who believe. So come, though you have nothing, Christ, he is our offering. Come, see what your God has done.

Christ is born. Christ is born. Christ is born for you. Friends, those of us that are Christians this morning recognize this tension in our hearts, this call of the scriptures and the gospel to come and worship and adore him, to bring our entire lives before him.

And yet, if we're honest, there's a part of us that feels, if I've got to bring my best, who is worthy?

Well, will Jesus accept me? How can I come before him when all I bring is my shame, my guilt, my failure, my unfaithfulness?

Friends, the message of the Bible and the message of Christianity is those that, though we have failed him, though we fail to worship and adore him, he has come to us.

[ 34 : 48 ] We don't come to him on our terms and our merits, we come to him because he first came to us. And so, though we feel bitter, and though we feel broken, and though we feel weary, and though we feel exhausted, and though we feel like we have got nothing to give, when we had nothing, Jesus Christ, the eternal, majestic, sovereign God, came to us to bring us to God, to save us, to reconcile us, so that we have nothing Christ came that we might have him, the one thing that we need, that we may come to him.

Weak, unstable, frustrated, weary, full of tears, shame, those of us who feel a triumphant failure, Jesus has come.

Look at, we sang it earlier, in the last stanzas, word of the Father, now in flesh appearing. What does that mean? The Bible is the word of God.

It is God's good word of hope and gospel. It's his word of grace. But God did more than just send us a prophet. He did more than just send us the scriptures.

He sent us his son. The word of God, now in flesh appearing, to tell sinners and sufferers, like you and I, that we are not hopeless, because God himself has come to bring us grace.

[ 36 : 22 ] Friends, do you feel like a triumphant failure this morning? Christ is born for you. Friends, do you feel weary and worn out? Christ is born for you.

You feel unjoyful, untriumphant. Christ is born for you. And friends, just consider as we come to a close, who the Bible recalls as the first worshippers of Jesus.

Shepherds and Magi. Shepherds and Magi. Who were the shepherds? They were uneducated, unsophisticated, unwealthy, the outcasts of society, the very first worshippers of Jesus, were stinky shepherds from the fields.

And who were the Magi? Yeah, okay, they were wealthy, they were sophisticated, they were upper class, but they were Gentile pagan astrologers, worshippers of the stars. They came from Babylon. They were the very people that the Old Testament, God's enemies. And yet God comes to them, says, come. Come, worship and adore him.

[ 37 : 30 ] Do you know what that means? It means there is no human being in all of the world that is unwelcome, unworshipped to come and worship and behold him, if only we will trust in Jesus.

And so look at, or think about the angels' words, the shepherds out in the fields, and that's faithful might. Behold, I bring you good news of great joy. For all people, religious and rebels, sinners and sufferers alike.

For unto you is born this day, Jesus Christ the Savior, Christ the Lord. And so come. Friends, this Christmas, whether you feel worthy or unworthy, whether you feel like a failure, or you feel triumphant success, this Christmas, come.

Come worship and adore him. Come behold him, Christ the Lord. Come. Come and worship him.

Let's pray together. Lord Jesus, we marvel God at the wonder of the gospel, Lord.

God, it's utterly astounding when we do think and ponder who it is that you invite to come and worship. That first Christmas night, the shepherds.

[ 38 : 47 ] A few months or years later, the magi. And still, God, thousands of years later, you invite sinners and sufferers, unworthy rebels like us. Those who are anything but faithful, joyful, and triumphant.

You call us, invite us to come to you that we might find life. That we might find hope. That we might find promise.

Jesus, I pray this Christmas, God, may we not miss the call of Advent, the call of Christmas, to come worship and adore you and to find life in your name.

God, I pray especially, God, for those of us this morning that feel unworthy to come to you. You, God, feel like maybe this year we've walked away from you.

You feel this year, God, we haven't really walked with you. God, won't you flood us with your grace and mercy. Won't you open our eyes to see you for who you are.

[ 39 : 54 ] And won't you remind us, God, of the profound invitation of Christmas to come and find our hope that the Savior who is born, the Savior in the manger, Christ the Lord.

God, I'm Lord, ■■■■ you're ATM. Person, God, don't you really promise to come and don't you say well, God or what? I love you. What th■ one is. Basically love is to H grace to come and see you in the place to come, in love.

God, pray to you right, I'll thank you, God, for■. You and