

# **“Proclaiming Good News!”**

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**December 29, 2024**

**Readings:**

**Colossians 3:12-17**

**Psalm 148**

This season of Christmas, when we proclaim a great mystery, that God, God who Created heaven and earth, God who holds all things together, God in whom we live and move and have our being, God entered our world and took on frail flesh.

This God is difficult to understand, at least I still find him so.

I understand rulers like Caesar Augustus, a ruler of power, who collects taxes, a merciless despot who keeps the peace at all costs.

Caesar who wasn't content to be called king, but called himself “Augustus”, meaning the sublime one, consecrated and divine.

Caesar Augustus announced that “all the world should be taxed”.

“all the world”- well all the world that was the world that mattered- all of it was his, and he would collect from all the world.

Little did he know, while he was putting himself on a pedestal, claiming that all the world was his, the Creator of Heaven and Earth had a plan, Caesar was playing into God's hand.

Long before Caesar was a twinkle in his great, great, great grandfather's eye, before Rome even existed, God had a plan, God ordained that a King, his King, the King of all creation would be born in Bethlehem.

So, Caesar Augustus announced that all the world should be taxed, and each one should go to his home town, and so Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem, and there The King was born.

We do not easily understand God who enters this world silently and gives himself, entrusts himself in the gift of Jesus, to a peasant girl and a young carpenter.

We do not understand God who loves so freely, God who wants to draw us into his relationship of self-giving love, God who comes to us with a gracious invitation to know him and be known by him, God who gives himself for us, and for all the world.

Many of us stand before this God amazed and a little confused, for we have done nothing to deserve this love, in fact, we have done everything to forfeit it.

Humanity does not conduct itself as a partner with God.

We have cut the ground from under our own feet, turning away from God.

We have lost our whole reason for being, our *raison d'être*.

We were created for life and light in relation with God, but we choose death and darkness.

We were made for the glory of God, to revel in God, for faithfulness to God, but we have turned aside at every chance, consumed by arrogant pride and selfishness.

What place have we before God when we have shown ourselves so utterly unworthy ?

We have forfeited our salvation, but the inconceivable fact on this Christmas season is that all the same it is given to us in Jesus Christ.

Jesus, will save his people from their sins, from their fallenness, and brokenness, Jesus will save us, will save all people who come to him.

The word comes to us as it came to the shepherds.  
An angel and then a multitude of angels  
proclaimed the wondrous news.

Did you ever wonder how the shepherds rated  
such an invitation to see the great gift of the King?  
Why were they chosen?

They were chosen because God chooses them.  
They represent all the nameless, all the working  
stiffs, the great wheeling population of the whole  
world, they represent us.

God chooses all of us.

We are welcomed to hear the news rings out;  
“Do not be afraid, I bring you glad tidings of great  
joy that shall be for all people. For you a Saviour is  
born. He is Christ the Lord. You shall find him.  
You shall see him. A baby wrapped in bands of  
cloth, lying in a manger.”

Suddenly the sky filled with the praises:

“Glory to God in the highest  
And peace to his people on earth.”

Jesus will bring justice and teach us the way of  
peace.

Jesus is our mercy.

We are invited to run with the shepherds, to worship with them, and bow our knees, to receive our hearts gladdest desire, the longing of every heart.

This wondrous gift demands a response from us – a singing, joyous, wonderment.

Amazed, and still a little confused, we must sing, responding, chiming, worshiping, living in the presence of God with us, rejoicing and proclaiming the wondrous news that we have heard and seen.

Heaven comes to earth.

God loves us and that's the reason heaven moves towards us, in order to meet and marry in the birth of a baby.

We come to the child born in Bethlehem, our Saviour, our Messiah, God with us.

We come to God's strong arms among us.

From our obscurity; from the darkness in which we live our lives, unacknowledged, inglorious, from our truer condition as “no one, people that are not” we run to the Son of God, who knows our names, and will call us by name, and who will save us.

From sorrow we run to joy.  
From hatreds we run to love.  
From antagonisms we run to peace.  
From sickness we run to the healer.  
From sin we run to the Saviour.  
From death we run to life.

May our lives and our worship be the gifts we bring  
in response to all that God has done for us.  
Jesus came to be one like us, we yearn to be like  
him.

This gift is for us, for all people.  
Thanks be to God!