

He Brings Salvation and Redemption

Christmas Mixtape series

by Chris Famisaran

Good morning, everybody. Can you hear me? All right. Let's pray. Father in heaven, Lord, as we now continue our series, our mixed-tape series, leading guidance as we open the Word. Be with us in Jesus' name. Amen.

Paul Steele shares of a time when he was a young boy, maybe six or seven years old. Christmas was extremely exciting. All the previous months, even looking through the Sears Roboc and Company catalog. You remember that? I was like really big. As a child of the 80s, I had a bunk bed. I remember lying on the bottom bunk going through the catalog. Kids, this was a time where there was no Google. There was no Amazon. You had to actually look through catalogs and they would have pictures of the items that you would like to purchase, whether it was kitchenware or clothes and especially toys, not just any kind of toy, but trains.

Paul wanted a train set. He could have gotten a ball. He could have gotten wagons, bicycles, cowboy hats, but no. He wanted a train. In the catalog, there was about 10 trains one year. That was the area he decided, 'I want a train.' There were some very big sets and some very small sets. And as he was glancing through the catalog, he settled on the one that had eight cars towed behind the big train. It had a bell, it even had a whistle, and even a little smokestack, a real smoke apparently coming out of it. He dreamed about this train for weeks, if not months, and he had hoped it would be his. He tried to be as good of a boy as he could be. He tried to drop hints, some subtle, probably some very overt to mom and dad, 'Wouldn't it be great to have a train here in the house?' And in his mind, he would have the train do tracks in a circle, and then he'd switch it up to maybe a figure eight. He'd be able to add extra tracks and make it really, really huge. He would invite all of his friends over to see and come over and he could be the train engineer. Now, mom and dad, they didn't show us slight interest at all. They seemed to not care about whether he got a train or not. It didn't matter. And yet Paul, he prayed, prayed hard for a train.

And finally, on the night before Christmas, the tree was up and there were presents underneath. And he thought, maybe just, just maybe they could fit this train in a small box, because there was no big boxes. He was kind of worried. Now, mom said, 'We're going to open presents that night.' And he was excited. Mom made a big, huge meal. Everyone came over, had to go through dinner. Mom's aunt was over and she talked a lot, like a lot. And poor Paul, he's like, 'Come on, let's get to the presents. My brother and I had to just anxiously sit through the adults talking. All we wanted to do was open presents. And then just as we're about to open presents, dad says, 'We got to read Luke two.' Ah! Fine.

And so as dad is reading the story of Jesus coming into the world, Paul is thinking all kinds of questions. If he hasn't trained, what kind of train would it be? What have my name on it? Finally, they got the presents. He had to choose a few. He looked for the biggest box in his pile. And when it was his turn to open the present, he chose the bigger one. He ripped all the paper off and sure enough, there was a train, a train set. He had waited, he had longed, he had dreamed, he had even played in his mind with the train for weeks. Now that he had it, he had a locomotive engine close to him. It was mine. My dream had come true. true and I was full of joy unto me a train was given is what Paul says.

Hi, but what we can take from this now better yet those we find in Luke is now unto us a son is given. His name shall be called Jesus for he will save his people from their sins. Thank God. Thank God for Christmas. Let's open our Bibles to the book of Luke chapter 2. There are two big accounts of Jesus' birth. One we actually read a little bit earlier in the opening of our service today, but I wanted to go to Luke chapter 2 today. I want to focus on this a little bit as it will play a part in some of the songs that we're going to look at.

Luke chapter 2 and kind of just to give a heads up in those days Caesar basically said I want to take a poll of all the people who are in my kingdom so Everybody had to go to their origin their hometown and of course Joseph and Mary had to go back to Bethlehem and As they were there he was there he was registered He registered and also with Mary who was pledged to be with him who was Mary They were expecting a child and in verse 6 While they were there a time came for a baby to be born and she gave birth to her firstborn a son She wrapped them in

cloths and placed them in a manger because there was no room guest room available for them.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields that nearby Keeping watch over their flocks at night and an angel the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord Shown around them and they were terrified But the angel said to them do not be afraid for I bring you what? good news Not okay news, but good news so that will cause great. What? Joy for all of the people today in the town of David a savior has been born to you He is the Messiah the Lord there will be a sign to you You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger and suddenly a great company of the hosts heavenly hosts Appeared with the angel praising God and saying glory to God in the highest heaven and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.

What a beautiful image as it continues on when the angels had left them and gone into heaven the shepherd said to one another Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has told us they hurried off They found Mary and Joseph and the baby who was lying in the manger in verse 17 When they had seen him they spread the word concerning what had been told about this child and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds had said to them. But Mary treasured all of these things, ponder them in her heart. The shepherds returned glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen which were just as they had been told.

A beautiful story and a beautiful promise. And as we look at one of our one of the first songs that we're gonna be looking at is, Oh Holy Night. Imagine being a shepherd. You're watching your sheep. The stars are out brightly shining. It is the night of our dear Savior's birth. They didn't know that yet. But long lay the world in sin and error pining a world in need of a Savior. Amen. Until he appears the salt felt its worth.

A thrill of hope. The weary world rejoices. For yonder breaks a new and glorious morn. Fall on your knees, oh hear the angel voices, oh night divine, oh night when Christ was born, oh night, oh holy night, oh night divine.

Last week we talked about a Savior who was expected to be coming. Jesus, the Messiah, Israel had been waiting for years, hundreds if not thousands of years, for the one who would help them. And here we see that Jesus is born. Angels go and

tell the shepherds, a promise. It is the night of our dear Savior's birth, long lay the world in sin and error pining till he appears and the soul felt it's worth. Finally they could see, they could take this promise, salvation has come. If we continue in the next verse though, it talks even deeper. What did Jesus do? Truly he taught us to what? Love one another. His law is love. Oh I love that. Love God with everything and love your neighbors yourself. And his gospel is what? Peace. That strength and courage that we can have in our hearts to go forth with joy and courage. Chains he shall he break. Jesus breaks the hold that sin can have on us. For the slave is also our brother. We are all united and equal in Christ. In his name all oppression shall see. Sweet hymns of joy and grateful chorus raise we let all within us praise his holy name. Christ is what? Lord. O praise his name forever. His power and glory evermore proclaim. His power and glory evermore proclaim.

The beautiful thing is this and that's counted in recounted essentially in the song is Christ's birth signifies salvation and redemption. Christ's birth signifies salvation and redemption. You know it took a little bit to try to get a little bit of history on this song because as Bill pointed out you're not going to find this hymn in one of our hymn books nor majority of the hymn books out there because it has a very interesting story and just I want to give credit I found most of the history from Tara Johnson I want to give her give her her due you know we we have many favorite hymns in Oh Holy Night it was back in 1847 in a French village where a local priest made a very unusual request to a very non -religious poet named Placide Caput I hope I pronounce that correctly.

The priest is asking a very infamously worldly village man to write a poem for Christmas. And yet history is kind of quiet on the details, but as Kapo was a poet, he, the priest realized, you know what? He has credentials, the ability to write. He's a wordsman. And so he took the Gospel of Luke chapter two and out came this poem, Kantik de Noël. And here's some of the original pieces, actually. Midnight Christians is a solemn hour when God as man descended on us to erase the stain of original sin and to the end the wrath of his father the entire world thrills with hope on this night that gives it a savior. People kneel down, await your deliverance. Christmas, Christmas, here is the Redeemer. Christmas, Christmas, here is the Redeemer. The Redeemer has broken every bond. The earth is free and heaven is open. He sees a brother where there was only a slave. Love unites those that iron had chained.

Now Kapo, the writer was, he was rather pleased with the outcome of the, the poem. And he asked one of his friends, Adolf Charles Adams to add music. And so of course he agreed with a smile. But why was this interesting? Adolf Charles Adams was not a Christian. He was a Jew. Now this song was performed at a Christmas event in the French village and immediately it was well embraced. However, years later it was revealed that the writer was not a believer, nor was the musician. And it was because the composer was a Jew. The church banned the original hymn and yet parishioners, church people, continued to sing it in their own homes behind closed doors.

Now, forward several, several decades later in America, John Sullivan Dwight, who's attributed to writing, at least the current version, discovered *Kantik de Noel*. Dwight, he was an abolitionist, he meaning he fought slavery. He fell in love with this song, this sense of freedom. As in the Redeemer has broken every bond, the earth is free, heaven is open. He sees a brother where there is only a slave. Yo night, love unites those that had changed. So he rewrote a version of the carol that we know in his own magazine. And it bring a shattered nation among those during the civil war together. Oh, holy night seems to have this ability to unite those who are in conflict, especially during war, during the Franco oppression war. It's said that a French soldier stood up in the muddy trenches. He had no weapon and he began to sing *cantique de Noël*, the original version. Other sides, they sang French carols and also hymns written by Martin Luther. And there was a truce of some sorts. And it's amazing. Is that not what Jesus did? He came into the world to bring light where there was darkness, to bring love where there was hate. What's amazing about this story is that God used unlikely characters to write a beautiful song that we can sing that exemplifies God's grace. But also, why we should thank God and praise Him for coming into this world. Amen.

Now, the next song that I want to look at is not a hymn. It is not a new song. Frankly, I was very surprised. Bill informed me about this song several months ago. And it's from one of my favorite punk rock bands, Reliant K. They're known for their very spirited music, but every once in a while, they write an acoustic gem that's just amazing. And I love this song because we always think of Jesus coming into this world and that is amazing. He came to save us. But how often do we, even on Christmas Day, give God thanks and praise and celebrate the day?

So let's just go through with this song. And with this Christmas wishes miss, the point I could convey, if only I could find the words to say to let you know how much you've touched my life. Has Jesus touched your life? Because here is where you're finding me in the exact same place as New Year's Eve. And from a lack of my persistency, we're less than half as close as I want to be. And for the first time that you have opened your eyes, did you realize that you would be my savior? And the first breath that left your lips, did you know that it would change this world forever? How profound and deep is that, amen? Jesus coming into the world, and as soon as he breathed, there was a chance for us, amen?

And so this Christmas, I'll compare the things that I felt in prior years to what this midnight made so clear that you have come to meet me here, to look back and think that this baby would one day save me in the hope that what you did, that you were born, so I might live, to look back and think that this baby would one day save me, and I celebrate the day that you were born to die. so that I could one day pray for you to save my life. Where would we be without Christ? I definitely would not be here. We'd all probably be different places. Would our life be fulfilled and as peaceful and joyful as it is? It'd probably be a mess without Christ. But thanks be to God what Christ has done. He has come into the world to save and redeem us. And so as we move forward to this Christmas day, what are you thankful for as you reflect? Where would you be without Christ? But also think about give thanks and praise to the one who's coming to this world to save and redeem you.

So daily reflect. This is our challenge this week and don't just keep it to this week but continue on. Daily reflect on Jesus' birth, what it means to you, and give him thanks and praise for all that he is doing in your life. As you sing and as you pray and as we move forward to Christmas and even though we know Christmas probably most likely not the day he was actually born, it signifies the fact that God took the initiative to save and redeem us. And so may we go forward with confidence. May we go forward with strength and conviction. May we as Matt Thieson wrote, may we celebrate the day that he came to this world as a day of hope and of celebration of salvation. But may we also look with reverence of oh holy night the stars are brightly shining. And as God chose to reveal through the angel, angels that Jesus had been born, may we also be like the shepherds and go and share the good news with others.

Father in heaven, thank you Lord for your great love for us. May we never take you for granted. Thank you for your grace and your love and your redemption and may we never stop praising you for who you are. Be with us as we go forth. May you help us to be your faithful ambassadors that you've called us to be. Be with our church. Lord I know a number of us have not been feeling well so we pray for physical healing and just continue to lead and guide us. In Jesus' name everybody said amen.

Grace and peace everyone.