



O Come All Ye Faithful

Carols of Christmas | 12.17.23

Libin Abraham

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Libin Abraham 0:00

If you come to our house, there are going to be a couple of buckets of toys that our children no longer use or play with. Now, mind you, our kids are seven and four. So these are toys not from that long ago. toys and things that our kids begged us to buy for them. They prayed for God, to move in the hearts of their parents to get them. toys that they told us, if you could just get this one thing, we will be the happiest kids in the world. And we got it and their excitement lasted for about a day, maybe a day and a half at best. And now those things have joined the pile of unused toys in our house. So a few years ago, I said it says he wouldn't never buying them new things. Again, what we're going to do, here's our strategy, we're going to start at the bottom of the pile every Christmas year, we're going to take one of the toys they've forgotten about, and we will Reeboks it and rewrap it and give it to them and say Merry Christmas, they'll never know the difference. She's way nicer than me and still buys our kids toys. But that's what I'm thinking we should be doing. I grew up as the youngest of four siblings in a family of six. And I remember our very first car that our family was able to purchase it was a heavily used Ford Taurus, little white sedan. And it worked fine for all six of us until it did it. And then it started breaking down. And I don't know if it was because six of us trying to fit into a four car four person sedan or if it's just really really used more than we thought. But it would start breaking down and there were a few times my brothers and I would get out of a car and push our car all the way home. Okay. And then my dad surprised us and he bought us our first new car. It was a Plymouth Voyager I can still smell it and see it it was purple but it was fine. It it got us to point B from point A just fine. It's I was grateful for that. So spacious and you know that new car smell. It's just it's a piece of heaven. They got air fresheners trying to duplicate an indigenous it's not the same. Just go to a card to don't buy a car, just go smell the cars. And that's good enough. So my dad brought it home. And then we went to picked up our mom, all for the kids and my dad, we were so excited to go pick up mom in this new car and we picked her up and she was excited. We came back home and everybody else went inside except me. And my parents don't know this. But I actually, you know, stay for a little while went back in and it's not out of the house just to come and spend the night in this minivan. Not because I didn't have a bed inside. But I was so excited to have something brand new, so excited for this new car our family had bought. And then within a couple of weeks I did with that van, that new car all my kids do with their toys. I lost the wonder for something I had already possessed. I lost the wonder, the excitement, the joy that kind of waxed and waned, I lost the wonder of something I possessed and maybe you got a few things at your house that you are one so excited about. Now it's just taking up space. For some reason you refuse to throw it away, but it's just taking up space. Now, you may even have some people in your life don't elbow anybody just look straight at me, sir. Ma'am. Some relationships you were so excited about now they're more annoying that exciting. Okay. You remember the first day of a new job first date, first Christmas as a couple with kids. And you're just the joy and excitement of it. And it's possible, just the natural course of life, that that initial joy and excitement has faded. And that's a part of life. We grow in experiences and over the duration of time, the thrill we had towards something lessons. But it could be that unfortunately, many of us have done that with the Christmas message. This breathtaking story of God coming to earth as a manual, the creator of the universe, be born as an infant to save us. That was exciting when we first heard about it or our first service where we gave our heart to Christ. But now, it could be that joy has faded, and you've lost the wonder of Jesus who you possess. And today my prayer is that the Holy Spirit of God will rekindle a deep within us fresh wonder as if this was the first day we had met Jesus. And he would renew deep profound joy as only he can. And that is the heart of the hymn called Oh Come All Ye Faithful are calm. Are you faithful week one. We looked at the hem O Come O Come Emmanuel and that was about the anticipation, the longings we feel the anticipation. We took we looked at there now spit Hark the herald angels sing the announcement of Jesus. And today I want us to look through the lens of this hymn. At our response, when

we have encountered Jesus, when we've heard about him, what should be our response? Oh, come, all ye faithful. Most people say that this Carol or him was written by John Francis Wade, in the middle of the 1700s. The first Latin manuscript we have is from 1743. And then it was translated into English and 1841. But the heart of this hymn, and this Carol, is to help us not do what we do with new stuff. It is to push back and is to resist the temptation of our soul, to grow callous, to the wonder of who Jesus is to become unimpressed, even over the course of time, to the nature of the Incarnation, and it invites us to come to come and behold, to come and see, and even to come and sing. The song opens up like this in the first verse, Oh, come all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant. Oh, come, O come all ye to Bethlehem. Come and behold Him, born the King of angels. 16 times in this, Carol were told to come, are commanded to come, come and see, Come and behold Him even come and sing about him. This Carol places us right there among the shepherds who heard the announcement from the angels that a Savior was born to them, and they left the sheep in their flock of sheep at night, and they rushed to Bethlehem to see Jesus. This hymn also places us in the long procession of people over the last 2000 years, who, especially during this time of the year, they make a spiritual pilgrimage, a journey of the heart, a spiritual journey, all the way to Bethlehem. They rekindle their wonder of Jesus, God who came to save us or come, or come ye to Bethlehem. It could be that even as we've just read the first line, couple of lines, you've already counted yourself out from coming to Jesus. And here's why. The Carol begins with Oh, come all ye faithful, joyful, and triumphant. And you read that line, and you're thinking, Well, I'm not all that faithful. I don't feel all that joyful, and unsure. Don't feel triumphant. And therefore, you're wondering, how could I come? Maybe it's for those who feel faithful, Joyful and triumphant, but not for me. And even if you think you are all those three things, your family members may have a different set of three words that would use to describe you. Maybe a little bit more cranky than joyful, more disappointed or disappointing, than triumphant, maybe even faith less than faithful. So you could be hearing music Well, good for them. All those people who are yea joyful, try often victorious and faithful. But this Jesus, this Christian faith, it just can't be for me because I am not those two or three things. wanted to hear the words of Jesus from him directly of who is invited to come to Him. Jesus started like this in Matthew chapter 11, verse 28, come to me, all of you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Jesus has a different version of the song, doesn't he? If not Come All Ye Faithful, Joyful and triumphant. No, no, no, come if you're feeling burdened, weary, restless, come to me and I will give you rest. In one instance, Jesus is lounging and sitting and hanging out with sinners and tax collectors. And it drove the religious people crazy. The originalist, the religious leaders. They're wondering, why is Jesus spending all of his precious time with them and not us? And Jesus overheard the conversation. And notice what he said in Mark two, verse 17, When Jesus heard this, he told them, it is not those who are well who need a doctor, but those who were sick. I didn't come to call the righteous, but sinners, who say I have come for those who feel discounted from God disqualified from enjoying the presence of God, I've come for the sick, not the well. I've come for the weary, not the rusted, for the burden and heavy laden for those who are tired of life. It's for you that I've come and it's you that I call

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to come to me. So Jesus says, Come to me all who are weary and burden all those who are sick and feeling unrighteous. Then why would the hymn writer say, Oh come, all ye faithful, Joyful and triumphant. I want to propose to you, that being faithful, joyful, and triumphant. Those are not the conditions by which we come to Jesus. Those are the result of coming to Jesus. Faithful, joyful trial. That's not the condition by which we are allowed to enter the presence of Jesus. That's not the conditions by which we come to Jesus. They are the results of coming to Jesus, you come to Jesus as you are, and he makes you those things. You come to him faithless without an ounce of faith, and he begins to produce and build faith in you, you come to him, no feeling or having joy at all. And then the fruit of the spirit becomes joy, meaning the Spirit of God goes to work in your soul. And he begins to cultivate over time, real joy, real Thanksgiving deep inside of you. Yet, it's a work of the Spirit. It's not circumstantial. It's not something you create on your own. It's the work of God in you. You may feel defeated, overcome with life, but you come to Jesus, and He is always victorious and Christ in you enables you to live triumphant, you may feel like a sinner hope has no chance at all of having a relationship with God. But he sees who you can see yourself to be in the middle of your sin and the middle of your dog, our he sees you as a saint, close in his righteousness forgiven of your past, present and future. He sees you covered in his perfection. And he's saying to you, I have a vantage point, I've got a perspective of who you are that you don't have yet. Because long before you can even come to him. He sees you as the byproduct of a person who already has come to him. He sees you as joyful, faithful, triumph, and he says, Just come to me. And I'll make you these things are produce these things in your heart. They're not the conditions by which we come. They're the results. So we come as we are, we come broken, we come with our doubts and our fears and our failures. We come with our pain. We come with our anger. We come however we come. We come to Jesus, and he goes to work on us. He begins to transform us, he begins to give light and joy into our being. The shepherds were anything but joyful, triumphant, and faithful. They were defeated. They were bitter. They were mad at the world. They were alienated all by themselves, but it

was for them and to them that Jesus came. And you heard the message of the angels that it is for you. This day in the town of David as Savior has been born. And they went searching for him. They went looking for this Savior. I think about that event where the angel came and announced the birth of Jesus and a host of angels appeared suddenly singing to God, Glory to God at the highest, and the sky was lit up with the glory of God shown all around them. What a climactic moment for the shepherds. But do you know what happened after this amazing, climactic moment? The angels left that's what happened. The sky went back to being dark. That's what happens. There was no more singing. No more celestial beings. It was dark and the shepherds were all by themselves again. I mean, there weren't a few angels who stuck around just to remind them now they were all gone. And you think about that moment of the shepherds, what would they have felt had this climactic moment and now the glory has faded. The Wonder is gone, the glamour has disappeared. Shepherds could have done a number of things, they could have gone back to just life as usual. Because they still have to raise the sheep and fellows we got to get back to work because this sheep herd is not going to raise itself. They could have said well good for those in the town of David but woe to us out on this field all by ourselves. They could have gone back to life as usual. I think if I was one of the shepherds, I would have been maybe more enamored by seeing the angels than even the message they brought. Think about it when you have a sighting like this, and 1000s of angels show up, that's unlike anything you've ever seen. And that makes really good content for an Instagram reel, or social media post. Like, that's amazing. You would tell everybody about it, you would find the nearest group of shepherds, and you won't believe but we saw. We were all by ourselves tonight. And boom, these angels show up and start singing. We were afraid. But they were praying and told us not to be afraid. I could have been so enamored by seeing the angels and not even been so impressed that a baby was born in Bethlehem. So I saw a bunch of angels. If you think about it, the angels never explicitly even told the shepherds to go look for Jesus. They came they announced, and they told them what would happen what they will find. But there was no command, okay, leave everything behind and go. They came and they laugh. And everything went back to normal. So what did the shepherds do? What was their response? And how do we take cues from their response? I think there was at least two parts to the response. First was come and see, they heard the angels, but they decided we got to go and see for our self if this is true, come and see. And this is what Luke two verse 15 says, When the angels had left them and returned to heaven, the shepherd said, one to another. Let's go straight to Bethlehem and see what has happened, which the Lord has made known to us. They decided we're not going to just take a second hand account of the news of Jesus, even if it came from angels singing about him. We're not going to settle for the angels telling us about Jesus. We want to go straight to Bethlehem and see him. We will leave the sheep behind. And we'll go straight to Bethlehem, no stopping buches no visiting family members. No, no, we're going to Bethlehem to see for ourselves if this is true. And one of the tragedies around this time of the year, as a so many settle for hearsay about Jesus, and they never actually pursue Jesus for themselves. You hear about him at church, maybe you heard about him growing up. Maybe you heard about him from a pastor or teacher or a parent who told you about Jesus. Maybe you follow somebody on social media or on Tik Tok, who posts Bible verses and you've kind of settled for a secondhand account. A hearsay, I've heard about him. But my question today is but have you gone to see him? Have you engaged in a personal pursuit to see if he really is the Savior of the world to see if what they said about and what the angel said is actually true. Have you gone to see Jesus for your self? Or have you settled for somebody else's account of who he is? Last week, they said I took the kids to grapevine all decked out for Christmas apparently, is the Christmas Capital of Texas. I didn't know that. Which means it's the Christmas capital of the world because Texas is the world right? It's amazing, beautifully lit streets and all kinds of activities and rise. I was amazing. The only thing is in this Christmas Capital of Texas, there wasn't much about Jesus at all. I mean, Santa was big and bright everywhere and lots of reindeers and elves and and snow globes, you can purchase and see tons of rides, places for photo ops, pretty awesome. Just missed one person. Jesus walked for a few blocks. And finally he found a little nativity scene on the side of the street. No lights, no grammar, no cameras, no lines. It wasn't bright. It wasn't colorful, not exuberant at all, just tucked away to where you could easily miss this. And there was a very unimpressive nativity scene with a cradle with some hay and the baby Jesus and a few of the characters of the Christmas story. It's as if as a culture we're more enamored with the angels glow than the pursuit of Jesus. That the message they brought love the glamour, the lights, the commercialization, all of the other stuff, which is all good. We love that too. I mean, we got all kinds of stuff in our house that are Christmassy. But don't miss Jesus the season. Go on a pursuit

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to discover if this is true. He's either one did he come from me? DC my savior? Go on her journey of discovery for yourself. There was a man who was a nice man. He wasn't a scrooge. He was kind and decent. But just did not believe in this. You just said, This can't be true. It doesn't make any sense. Why would God leave everything and become a child and be born as a human being to save people? That just makes no, no sense. I'm not going to believe it. So he didn't believe the gospel. He

didn't believe in the Christian faith. And so it was Christmas season and his family invited him to go to their Christmas Eve service at church. And he said, No, politely. He said, No, I'm good. I'll pass. I don't believe in this. Y'all go have a good time. And I'll be home when you get back. So they went and then he's sat down by his fireplace and began to read a book. And then as he was reading a book, he heard a loud thud. And then a few more boo, boo, boo, boo. Oh, man, all those kids in the neighborhood are not throwing snowballs at my door again. So he went outside to investigate. And there he found a flock of birds that had been caught up in the storm that night, because the snow and Flurry were getting heavier and heavier. He found a flock of birds were trying to get out the storm. And they saw light from his window. And we're running to the light to get warm. And of course, he ran against his screen door or his window. So there he is, looking at this flock of birds shivering, about to freeze to death, they can't really move all that well. He's thinking I can't let these poor creatures die. out in the cold right in front of my house. I gotta save him. So he opens his barn door, okay, I'm open the barn door, he turned the lights on. He's trying to shoot the birds in his barn house. And they didn't go they didn't come. He said maybe if I can just feed them. So he got some bird food and started to feed these birds and they will not eat. He tried to catch them, but ever too fast for him. Regardless of what he did, every move he made frightened them. They were confused. They were frightened by him. And he was frustrated. He's thinking, I'm just trying to save these few birds. I don't want them to die and freeze to death. But they don't get me they keep being afraid of me. So he thought if I could just tell them, I informed them I'm trying to rescue them. If I could just mingle with them, if they could just understand me. If I could just be one of them. Then I could rescue you and save them. Then he heard the church bells rang on that Christmas Eve and he fell to his knees and said to God, this is what you did. I can't it. This is why you have to come as a human. We are in that predicament, in that peril, have no hope at all. The Human Condition is pretty bad. And everything God did, whether it be prophets or judges or angels, we still didn't get it. We couldn't save ourselves. So God took on flesh. And he came in a form we would understand and recognize and see, so that he could lead us to the safety of himself. Home, alive, saved and rescued. That's why Paul says it like this and Colossians chapter one, verse 15, hear these words, he meaning Jesus is the image of the invisible God, the first born over all, creation, for everything was created by Him in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created through Him and for Him. He is before all things and by Him all things hold together. He is also the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might come to have first place in everything. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him and through him to reconcile or rescue everything to himself. whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross. The invisible god we cannot comprehend. came to us to save us to reconcile so that we could have peace with him. And my prayer this Christmas season is that you would see this Jesus that your heart will be opened the inner eyes of your soul will be open to come and see him. But here's what I've learned in life that it's almost impossible to see what you are unwilling to seek. It's impossible to see what you're on willing to seek if the shepherds had just gone on with the night as usual and took care of their sheep and never went on a pursuit of Jesus, they might have never seen him. They might have missed him. And maybe you're here today and you're so closed off like you got all of these reasons why you can never believe. But I'm just asking you will you seek him out? Just see for yourself, if there was anything to this Jesus, see if he came, if he lived if he died, if you rose, seek him out. And then I believe if you seek Him, you'll find Him. Jesus said, knock and the door will be open seek, he will find Ask, and it shall be given what if you could just get an a posture of seeking, asking wondering, what of curiosity with a start up within you this Christmas? And you just wondered, could he be the savior? Not just the world? But my savior? And could I come to him this Christmas? So here's I would invite you to do that just began with any of the four gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John, speaking to read with an open heart. Ask God, God, if You're real Jesus, if you're true, show me yourself. reveal Yourself to me. Look in the written word. And I believe you will meet the living word. Who is Jesus, open your heart to Him and just ask God to show him this Christmas season. And let's see what he does in your heart. Come and see. And the beautiful thing is you don't have to go all the way to battle ahead. Because I met you, you may you right where you are. And unlike the shepherds, you're gonna meet a baby Jesus, who is helpless and unable to interact with you, you will meet the God of the universe who speaks back to you, who answers your prayers, who meets you, who engages with you, who joins you on the journey, and be one with you. You'll meet that kind of Jesus simply seek and I believe you will see that the shepherds left their sheep, and they were looking for Jesus and they saw him. But the second response wasn't just to come and see, the second response on the shepherds was come and sing. Come and see and come and sing, we finally make it to the stable to the manger. And notice what happens after they see Jesus, the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had seen and heard, which were just as they had been told. The shepherds find Jesus, and their only response is to glorify to praise, I believe that we're singing at the top of their lungs, because of what they have seen and heard right before they found Jesus. They were not joyful. They were forgotten. They were alienated, even hostile to the world. But now seeing Jesus, they got a new song on their lips. They got fire burning deep inside of them that they got new life brimming in their soul. And their only response to

seeing Jesus hearing about him is to glorify Him. Think about this Christian, if you've been following Jesus, all the things you have seen and heard. But those things which have not led you to glorifying and praising God, the times you've seen God come through for you go down memory lane of how God met you at your worst at show Lois all of the things God kept pouring out over your soul, how he saved you rescued you how he met you in the hospital rooms, how he brought that child home, how he restored your marriage, how he gave you meaning and purpose all in himself, you seed and you've heard, but today is a fresh wonder of gratitude. We can come and see but the immediate response to coming and seeing is coming and singing. And I'm not just talking about music. I'm talking about a fresh delight of the heart worship that is passionate before him. Because once our mind sees our hearts sings and you can't help by moved, but be moved by gratitude. Thanksgiving, and all often say that a church with great theology should have the most passionate worship because they go hand in hand. Once you've seen and tasted that the Lord is good. How could you not delight in who he is? Once you've seen how deep His mercy is, how deep your sin war sins are and how great he has rescued you. How can we not respond with self abandoned medicine god Are you worthy of my whole being?

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So the song writer says sing choirs of angels sing in exultation Uh oh, sing all ye citizens of heaven above. Who is that? That's you. So the songwriter is summoning all of the angels in heaven and all the people on earth, angels come and sing, and people, citizens of heaven come and sing. Paul said in Philippians 320, we are citizens of heaven. That's where our citizenship is. So now come and sing, and what is the we sing, glory to God? Oh, glory in the highest, the same song that the angels sang. So when we see him, our song now joins in the choir of angels. And we think God, you receive the highest glory we could ever give, because you are so worthy of it. Your discovery of Jesus must lead you to delighting in him, seeing him is to savor it is a sing of him. Knowing him through our mind, leads to the worship of our mind and of our hearts. Jonathan Edwards once said, like this, God is glorified, not just in his glory being seen, but by his glory being delighted in or rejoiced in. When you see him for all he is, we don't just see, know our whole being delights and we rejoice in the goodness of who he is. It's ironic that around Christmas, we do a lot more worrying than we do worshipping don't wait. The time of the year, we should be the most worshipful were the most worried are the things we got to buy and wrap and send and places to go and parties to attend or hosts? A lot of worrying going on? How would you pause long enough to stand in all of the one you have seen. Don't stop at seeing, go on to singing. Don't stop at Discovery, go on to delighting go on to a rejoicing from deep inside of you, or your whole being joints in the song of exultation. And it's just not in the melody or the songs we sing. What what an act of worship be for you. That will keep Jesus in the forefront of your mind. Maybe it's journaling. Maybe he's going to lead extended walks and just thinking about the faithfulness of God, I have a pastor friend who goes in a cemetery once a week and just walks and looks at the dates of the people who died. It's a little more but I know. But it fills them with thanksgiving, especially as he sees people younger than him who are no longer here. Sometimes it's morally neutral thing that God brings into your mind, or some vehicle some mechanism, it doesn't have a moral value. But God uses that to channel worship inside of you music has no moral value. It can be used to do good or harm. But if you can use it to sing, if you can use whatever God has gifted you with, to worship and to praise, let your discovery lead you to delight. Let your singing lead you to singing. So maybe you weren't asking? Have I settled for the glow of the angel. And miss Jesus and the pursuit of him have been captivated by all the things that Christmas has come to be about, at least here in North America. And we are more worrisome than we are worshipful. And would you do something between now and Christmas Day to pass? Maybe it is to gather your family gather with a few friends. So let's just read about him. Let's just talk about him. Let's just sing of his faithfulness. Let's just go down memory lane and think of all the ways he has come through it. We're going to worship not just for what he's done, but because who has who he has been for you in to you. Faithful, victorious. That's why the emphatic chorus of this him is oh come. Let us adore him. Oh, come let us adore Him and again. Oh, come let us adore Him. Christ the Lord. But that's not just the call of the song. It's the call of the scriptures. Notice how the psalmist would say over and over again. Psalm 95. Verse one to to come. Let's shout joyfully to the Lord. Shout triumphantly to the rock of our salvation. Let's enter his presence with thanksgiving. Let's shout triumphantly to him in Psalm Do I hear shouts of Thanksgiving in the room. Amen. Come out. When you think about him, when he's on the forefront of your mind, it's not a silent play. Sometimes that's the case. But there was a shout of triumph to the rock of our salvation for six years Come, let's worship and bow down. There's a sense of humility. You look at your story and you said I would never be here had it not been for grace. A sin was so great my failure so deep but he rescued me. So my only response is to come, bow down. Let's kneel before the Lord our Maker. No room for self boasting no room for some reservations, but I bow I deal with I see, I sing. When I discovered him, I delight and this is my posture. This is my worship. Psalm 100. Shout for joy to the Lord, or the youngest to the oldest, newest of the most experienced all of your worship the Lord with gladness come before him with joyful songs. When you seeing when you see your sing. Today, maybe as you've grown in your Christian experience, this is

your 40th or 50th Christmas season. If you're lacking one, I believe the Holy Spirit is here to set your heart on fire again for him. Caleb Willis, who I heard is a very frequent peloton, user, at least during quarantine. He said one of his instructors on peloton was to hate. The fact that you're here means that you've just done the hardest thing you showed up. Some of you who work out a lot may not agree with that. But sometimes showing up is the hardest thing. And you were here this morning. You're online with us this morning. You're leaning in, you showed up but guess what God has also showed up? And he is here to meet with you. He's here to speak to you. Today Would you come Would you stand on your feet. For some of you, you're going to see Jesus for the first time. Your mind is going to be filled with the news of who Jesus is. Your hearts gonna feel wonder again, passion again, you're going to see Him as King of kings and Lord of lords. Some of you are going to forge feel joy for the first time in a long time. So go down that memory lane and just all the ways God has met you. He's here. Wherever your wonder may be today, the Holy Spirit is here. So Father, we just invite you, Holy Spirit, we ask you to make much of Jesus. Not just in this room but in the depths of our soul. put Jesus on the forefront of our mind. We just want him point us to Jesus, let us see him a fresh today. Let us see him in new ways. Let us sense Him in fresh ways. rekindle the wonder of our heart, Holy Spirit. Do what only you can do. Let us see and let us sing. Let us discover and let us delight. change the tone of the tune of our heart to worship today. No more worry. No more anxiety but worship in the middle of that. We see you standing there. We see You high and lifted up. Put our eyes on you as we come as we adore Come on church. Let's see. Let's see