

Series: "THE CAROLS of CHRISTMAS"

For Message: Luke 2:10-11, 6:46, 9:23; Romans 10:9-10; Ephesians 2:8-9; Proverbs 3:5-6;  
Matthew 6:10

Message Title: "Away In a Manger"

Introduction: Good Morning BMZ! MERRY CHRISTMAS! I'm so glad you are with us today as we CONTINUE our WORSHIP SERIES called "The CAROLS of CHRISTMAS"! Over the next few weeks, between now and Christmas, EACH SUNDAY, we are looking at ONE of the more POPULAR CHRISTMAS CAROLS we sing EACH YEAR. And, we are looking at the SPIRITUAL / THEOLOGICAL (God Thought) MEANING behind each one.

This has been a FUN Series, but also, VERY MEANINGFUL... Again, there is a DIFFERENCE between Christmas CAROLS and POPULAR Christmas MUSIC. We sing songs about SANTA, DECORATIONS, REINDEER and PRESENTS under a TREE. And, those might bring back WARM MEMORIES and NOSTALGIC THOUGHTS, and there is nothing wrong with those. BUT, the ORIGINAL Christmas CAROLS were MORE than THAT...

Christmas CAROLS were WRITTEN to REMIND us of THE MOST IMPORTANT EVENT in HUMAN HISTORY! These SONGS REFLECT on the FIRST Christmas when GOD STEPPED OUT of HEAVEN and CAME to EARTH as JESUS ... SO HE could BRING HOPE and SALVATION to a DARK and LOST WORLD!

Today, ONE of MY FAVORITE CHRISTMAS CAROLS... There are HAND motions!

If you have your Bible with you, turn to **LUKE 2**. If you don't have your Bible with you, no worries. We will put up all the Scriptures on the screen and it's also printed in your program. ... *If you haven't already, I invite you to take out your 3-HOLE PUNCHED MESSAGE NOTES and CONNECTION card. You will see that there are blanks to fill in ... Please take the time to do so. Grab a pen and write down whatever else you think is important to you and your faith journey. After worship, drop off your CONNECTION CARD and take your MESSAGE NOTES home. Please Re-read the Scripture and the notes to keep growing and learning. For those of you joining on-line, you can go to our website, [www.bmzchurch.org](http://www.bmzchurch.org) / MESSAGES ... find the NOTES and the CONNECTION CARD and follow along ... LET'S PRAY (turn off marked lights during prayer)!*

Today, we're looking at the Christmas Carol, "Away in a Manger". We DON'T know the whole STORY behind "Away in a Manger", but we know it FIRST APPEARED in a LUTHERAN Sunday School curriculum back in 1885. But, although many have tried to figure out WHO the AUTHOR WAS, the ORIGINS of the song remain a MYSTERY. What's NOT a MYSTERY is the POPULARITY of the SONG that is sung THOUSANDS of times every year. As WE SING this, I want you to FOCUS on the WORDS and the IMAGERY. Picture the HUMBLE environment ... the PEOPLE involved ... and the SIMPLE way in which the SAVIOR of the WORLD, was born. Let's STAND and SING...

### **AWAY IN A MANGER**

Away in a manger, no crib for His bed.  
The little Lord Jesus laid down His sweet head.  
The stars in the bright sky looked down where He lay.  
The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay.  
The cattle are lowing the poor Baby wakes.  
But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes.

I love Thee, Lord Jesus look down from the sky.  
And stay by my side, 'til morning is nigh.

Author Unknown, 1885

Now, it would be EASY to OVERLOOK *“Away in a Manger”* and consider it MERELY a good CHILDREN’S SONG, but I think that would be a HUGE MISTAKE. The HUMBLE environment and CIRCUMSTANCES around that first Christmas has GREAT POWER and SIGNIFICANCE. We THINK of the STABLE as a comfy, COZY, WARM and kind of SCENIC SETTING for the BIRTH of a BABY, but it WASN’T. The “STABLE” was most likely a CAVE dug into a HILL behind someone’s HOUSE. A LITTLE covering for the animals in case it RAINED or SNOWED. There was NOT much PROTECTION from the WIND and the COLD.

And, JESUS did NOT have a CRIB. He was born and LAID in a LIVESTOCK FEED TROUGH. It wasn’t made of WOOD, like we picture it. It was PROBABLY made of STONE (Picture of Stone Manger), like the ones still being UNCOVERED TODAY over in the Middle East. Even if there is some HAY in there, it’s not very WARM or COMFORTABLE ... I KNOW ... I TRIED IT (Picture of Stan in Stone Manger). That is a HUMBLE place for a BABY to be BORN. And, that’s WHERE the SAVIOR of the World ENTERED the WORLD.

Would you please look BACK at the LYRICS of *“Away in a Manger”*? I want us to FOCUS today on the FIRST 4 Words of the 2<sup>nd</sup> LINE ... **“THE LITTLE LORD JESUS”**. Would you please UNDERLINE those words?

I don’t know about YOU, but when I sing this song, I tend to FOCUS on the CUTE BABY parts ... 8lb. 6oz. BABY JESUS who is CUTE, SAFE, WARM and FUZZY. BUT, the most POWERFUL part of this song is that JESUS is LORD! He WAS, IS; will ALWAYS be, LORD! So, TODAY, we are NOT going to focus on Baby Jesus and how he *“LAY DOWN His SWEET HEAD”*. We’re going to FOCUS on Jesus as “LORD”!

I understand the we don’t use “LORD” very much these days and it might carry some NEGATIVE connotations, but it’s IMPORTANT that we take TIME for it. Why? Because Jesus is referred to as LORD 740 TIMES in the NEW TESTAMENT. If it appears 740 TIMES, maybe we should PAY ATTENTION to it. In fact, as JESUS was BORN, an ANGEL appeared to some SHEPHERDS outside of Bethlehem and made an ANNOUNCEMENT ... Luke 2:10-11 = <sup>10</sup> *but the angel reassured them. “Don’t be afraid!” he said. “I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. <sup>11</sup> The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!* <sup>1</sup> See? He’s just BORN, and Jesus is ALREADY “LORD”!

But, what does that MEAN for US, like, DAILY in 2018-19? For the ANSWER, let’s go back to ORIGINAL, GREEK Writings of the New Testament. In the Greek Language, the word TRANSLATED as “Lord” was “KURIOS”. Here’s what it ORIGINALLY meant ... Please WRITE this DOWN in your notes ... **“KURIOS” = Supreme in Authority / Controller / Lord**

Let’s be HONEST. That word, “CONTROLLER” is a PROBLEM, isn’t it? It’s a PROBLEM because WE like to be IN CONTROL, don’t we? Well, if I want to be in CONTROL and JESUS wants to be in CONTROL, we have a PROBLEM ... Jesus is going to have some COMPETITION for His LORDSHIP! Now, I don’t know about you, but I DON’T HAVE CONTROL ISSUES ... as long as THINGS GO MY WAY, and everyone DOES what I SAY, I have NO CONTROL ISSUES. I think we ALL have some of that IN US. We WANT our KIDS to DO what we say and even this CHRISTMAS; we want EVERYTHING to GO as PLANNED, right? Unfortunately, life’s NOT like that. Most LIFE is lived OUT of CONTROL.

So, WHY is it IMPORTANT for me to allow Jesus to be LORD / LEADER of my life?

Well, ONE, Jesus says it's a MATTER of LOVE! In John 14 Jesus says over and over that our OBEDIENCE to the COMMANDMENTS REVEAL our TRUE LOVE for JESUS. Our BIBLES also tell us that ONLY when we SURRENDER CONTROL will God be able to TRULY BLESS US ... the ONLY WAY we will experience God's BEST for our LIVES...

Ok. IF I want to be FULLY SURRENDERED to JESUS, HOW do I KNOW if I am?

### **3 QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE IF I'M FULLY SURRENDERED TO JESUS CHRIST**

Today, is NOT going to be a WARM Christmas Message about Jesus LAYING DOWN His SWEET HEAD. Today's Message is going to CHALLENGE US to give God CONTROL! Let's look at these 3 QUESTIONS to FIND OUT if I'm fully surrendered to Jesus/LORD. #1 =

#### **1. Have I ACCEPTED God's Gift of Salvation?**

If you were here LAST WEEK, this will sound FAMILIAR, but it is VITAL to our FAITH. Let me ask ... Have you ACCEPTED God's GIFT of SALVATION? The BIBLE teaches that we NEED to ACCEPT the GIFT of Salvation, so we can be SAVED from the CONSEQUENCES of our SIN.

Here's where SIN comes FROM. SIN is when we DECIDE to make OURSELVES LORD. God says, *"I've created you. I have a plan for your life. I want you to LIVE your life this way."* And we say, *"No. You're NOT going to be my leader / Lord. I'm LORD of MY LIFE. I'm in CONTROL. I'm going to do LIFE MY WAY."* That's SIN. That is us TURNING our BACKS on God and the BIBLE says it SEPARATES US from GOD. That is the CONSEQUENCE of SIN is SEPARATION from GOD, His Blessings, His JOY, His PEACE and His POWER.

Jesus is the GIFT from GOD to help us OVERCOME the CONSEQUENCES of SIN. Jesus' DEATH and RESURRECTION Rebuilds our RELATIONSHIP to a HOLY GOD. Jesus died on a CROSS, so our SINS could be FORGIVEN, and Consequences REMOVED.

How do I ACCEPT the GIFT of SALVATION? We used this LAST WEEK. It's worth KNOWING ... Romans 10:9-10 = <sup>9</sup>*If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.* <sup>10</sup>*For it is by believing in your heart that you are made right with God, and it is by openly declaring your faith that you are saved.*<sup>2</sup>

Two PARTS: 1) BELIEVE in your HEART. 2) DECLARE JESUS IS LORD! To accept the GIFT of Salvation, we need to do BOTH! Otherwise, we CHEAPEN what God has DONE for us KIND of TREAT GOD like an IDIOT! *"God, I want your SALVATION, but I'm NOT going to let that AFFECT the WAY I LIVE my life at all!"* You can't PLAY GAMES with God.

If you THINK / ACT / LIVE that way, you've MISSED the point of SALVATION! SALVATION leads to a CHANGED LIFE. Your SALVATION you receive from GOD is FREE FOR YOU, BUT, REMEMBER, it COST GOD EVERYTHING! He gave His SON! Our only REASONABLE response to God's GIFT is to SURRENDER our WHOLE LIVES back to God.

SOME of you may need to WRESTLE with THIS TODAY. If JESUS is NOT CHANGING your life / IMPACTING your DECISIONS / SETTING your DIRECTION; you should ASK YOURSELF, *"Do I really KNOW Him? Do I REALLY BELIEVE in Him?"*

Listen, IF you DO receive God's GIFT of SALVATION, it CHANGES YOU! Jesus ALWAYS CHANGES you. Paul WRITES about this FREE GIFT ... Ephesians 2:8-9 = <sup>8</sup>*God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God.* <sup>9</sup>*Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.*<sup>3</sup> If you've NEVER ASKED God for His GIFT of Salvation, why not ask now? From your HEART (You can't head-fake God!) ... A simple prayer: *"Jesus please forgive me and come into my life as Savior and Lord. I surrender to You. In Jesus' name. Amen."*

<sup>2</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Ro 10:9-10). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

<sup>3</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Eph 2:8-9). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

When I SURRENDERED my LIFE to JESUS and made Him LORD at the age of 16, I had RECENTLY been TOLD by a GIRL I was the MEANEST PERSON she'd EVER MET. I could NOT ARGUE with HER. I was. After I MADE JESUS LORD of MY LIFE, things CHANGED. I hope you do NOT experience me that way NOW. If you have NOT CHANGED, then you have NOT SURRENDERED to JESUS and asked for the GIFT of SALVATION from your HEART. Jesus ALWAYS CHANGES YOU!

I look back through my life, and I recognize JESUS has LED me through the POWER of His HOLY SPIRIT. I'm SURE since I was 16/17 years OLD, Jesus LED ME around some LAND MINES. I pray JESUS STILL LEADS me TODAY! So far, the best part of receiving God's GIFT of SALVATION has been JESUS LEADING ME in THIS LIFE. Heaven to come, but SO FAR... #1 = Have I accepted God's gift of salvation? #2 =

## 2. **Have I SUBMITTED Every Area of My Life to Jesus?**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> QUESTION to ask to DETERMINE whether I'm FULLY SURRENDERED to JESUS is if I have SUBMITTED EVERY AREA of MY LIFE to JESUS... First, you Accept the GIFT of SALVATION. Then, you make sure you are ALLOWING Him to be LORD over every AREA of your life. If we are HONEST, many of us fall SHORT here because we say, "*I Surrender to God*", but there are certain areas of our lives we still FIGHT for CONTROL over!

Jesus uses STRONG WORDS in Luke 6 ... Luke 6:46 = <sup>46</sup> "*So why do you keep calling me 'Lord, Lord!' when you don't do what I say?*"<sup>4</sup> That's PRETTY CLEAR. Don't call Jesus "LORD" and then LIVE however YOU WANT! He's asking, "**WHY do you keep CALLING me THAT? It's just WORDS and you're LYING! Stop it! Stop trying to HEAD-FAKE ME!**" Jesus KNOWS US. He KNOWS we want SALVATION and CONTROL at the same time. He KNOWS the AREAS of your LIFE you WON'T SURRENDER to HIM. Jesus is NOT DUMB.

It's kind of like THIS: "*Jesus, I want you to be Lord of EVERY AREA of my life. I want to FOLLOW YOU. But, I know what YOU SAY about MONEY and FINANCES and I do NOT TRUST You in that area, so, I'm going to TAKE that area BACK from YOU and do it MY WAY. BUT, again, Jesus, I want you to be LORD of my life. I want YOU IN CONTROL, but, JESUS, when it comes to SEX ... you know, EVERYONE ELSE is saying/DOING something DIFFERENT from what the BIBLE says, so I'm going to FOLLOW CULTURE on that one ... Anyway, JESUS, I want you to be LORD of MY LIFE. I will FOLLOW YOU ... But, about my CAREER; I know you want me to be a LIGHT to the WORLD, but listen, if I start TELLING people I'm a Christian, I'm NOT going to FIT IN anymore, so I guess I'm going to GRAB a BASKET and HIDE that LIGHT from a WORLD that needs some LIGHT. Now, God, don't get me WRONG here ... I WANT you to be LORD of EVERY AREA of my life...*" Jesus is NOT FOOLED! And, the AREAS YOU are trying to CONTROL are probably the areas of life you are experiencing the most STRESS, FEAR, WORRY and HURT. Unnecessary pain...

In your NOTES, there is a list of THINGS we LIKE to CONTROL. The QUESTION is: WHAT areas of your LIFE do you need to SURRENDER RIGHT NOW? Hint: It's probably the area where you're experiencing STRESS, FEAR, WORRY and HURT.

### **Today Lord Jesus, I Surrender to You...**

My Relationships

My Career

My Family

My Finances

My Free Time

Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Would you, for YOUR SAKE, CIRCLE the ONE you will CHOOSE to SURRENDER to Jesus TODAY? If yours is NOT listed, use the “OTHER” line to WRITE it down... WOULD you ALSO mark that AREA in your NEXT STEPS on your CONNECTION CARD too?

Listen, GOD KNOWS we STRUGGLE with TRUSTING Him and His plans for us. That’s why, THROUGHOUT the BIBLE, God REMINDS us that HE KNOWS. Proverbs 3:5-6 = <sup>5</sup> *Trust in the Lord with all your heart; do not depend on your own understanding.* <sup>6</sup> *Seek his will in all you do, and he will show you which path to take.* <sup>5</sup> I CHALLENGE you today ... DO these 2 VERSES. Trust the LORD and STOP DEPENDING on your own UNDERSTANDING.

Want to KNOW IF you are fully SURRENDERED to JESUS? ASK: ***Have I Accepted God’s GIFT of Salvation? Have I SUBMITTED ALL areas of my Life to Jesus?*** Finally, ...

### 3. Have I SACRIFICED My Will for God’s Will Daily?

(repeat) We sacrifice our will to God when we make the decision to become a Follower of Jesus. BUT, surrendering your WILL to GOD is NOT a ONE-TIME decision and then you’re done. It has to be a DAILY DECISION. WHY? Because we are NOT PERFECT. We are BROKEN people and we’re CONSTANTLY fighting with God for CONTROL in our LIVES. Therefore, we need to make an INTENTIONAL DECISION DAILY (sometimes by the minute) to make JESUS, LORD!

Please allow me to correct myself. I’ve said, “MAKE JESUS LORD” a few times and that’s a bit ARROGANT to think I can make JESUS LORD. You and I don’t make Jesus LORD. Jesus IS LORD! Whether I BELIEVE it or not. Whether I LIKE it or not. Our part is to simply SURRENDER to WHAT ALREADY IS. I surrender to Jesus who is ALREADY LORD. I give CONTROL of MY LIFE over to the ONE who is ALREADY IN CONTROL! Jesus says it this way ... Luke 9:23 = <sup>23</sup> *Then he said to the crowd, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross daily, and follow me.”* <sup>6</sup>

Would you CIRCLE the word “CROSS” please? Two things: 1) It reminds us that the same BABY who was laid in a manger we sing about in “Away in a Manger” would grow up and GIVE His LIFE on a CROSS so we could have ETERNAL LIFE. And, 2) It reminds us that JESUS PATH is SELDOM the EASY PATH. That’s why we need to Sacrifice our WILL for God’s WILL DAILY. We need God to RE-DIRECT our lives EVERY DAY.

I need to be REMINDED: I HURT MYSELF every time I do NOT SURRENDER. I bring UNNECESSARY PAIN into my life ... more STRESS, HURT, ANXIETY ... just more DIFFICULT when I don’t allow GOD to LEAD through His HOLY SPIRIT EVERY DAY!

SURRENDER is simply TRUSTING GOD’S PLANS MORE than I TRUST the PLANS I’VE MADE! BTW – Here’s the TRUTH: We ALL SURRENDER to SOMEONE or SOME THING. IF it’s NOT GOD, guess what?! You will SURRENDER to the THING you CIRCLED in your NOTES. You will EVENTUALLY be CONTROLLED by the AREA of your LIFE that you are TRYING to CONTROL. Some of you will SURRENDER to a RELATIONSHIP. Some of you will SURRENDER to CAREER ... to MONEY ... Addictions, etc.

Here’s how JESUS TAUGHT us TO PRAY THIS ... in the Sermon on the Mount ... Matthew 6:10 = <sup>10</sup> *May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.* <sup>7</sup> I say we SURRENDER to the GOD of the UNIVERSE. The One who CREATED YOU with a PURPOSE in MIND. The one who LOVES YOU and KNOWS what’s BEST for YOU...  
Let’s PRAY!

<sup>1</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Pr 3:5-6). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.  
<sup>4</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Lk 9:23). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.  
<sup>7</sup> Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Mt 6:10). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Next Steps:    *I will memorize Proverbs 3:5-6*  
                  *I will Read Luke 1-3*  
                  *I will Submit this area of my life to Jesus Christ: \_\_\_\_\_*  
                  *I will pray for and give to the annual Christmas Offering to support orphans*

*“Truth without Grace is Fundamentalism (Brutality). Grace without Truth is Sentimentalism (Hypocrisy).”*  
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