

Series: "THE CAROLS OF CHRISTMAS"

For Message: Luke 2:1-11; John 5:24, 10:10, 12:46, 14:6; 2 Corinthians 9:15

Message Title: "Silent Night"

Introduction: Merry Christmas BMZ! You MADE IT! The SHOPPING, the School PROGRAMS, the PRESENTS, the FRANTIC PACE of this Holiday SEASON. So, from me to you ... CONGRATULATIONS!

In the past few years, TIME Magazine did a study of the most POPULAR Christmas song of ALL TIME. They looked at all Christmas Songs (Religious and non-religious), at HOW many TIMES they had been RECORDED over the past 40 Years. Then, they RANKED them by sheer NUMBER of RECORDINGS. And, NO SURPRISE to ME, the #1 Christmas SONG of ALL TIME ... (Play Sound Clip here?)

NO! It was NOT that one, but I couldn't help myself! NO! It's the SONG we are looking at TODAY. It's the Christmas CAROL, "*SILENT NIGHT*". In fact, SILENT NIGHT was recorded over 730 TIMES in the past 40 years. Almost TWICE as many TIMES as the 2nd Most Popular Song of ALL TIME, which we SANG EARLIER ... "*JOY TO THE WORLD*"!

Now, SILENT NIGHT was written by an AUSTRIAN PASTOR, JOSEPH MOHR. It was a POEM he wrote called, "STILLE NACHT", which is German for "Silent Night". Then, a couple of years LATER, he asked his FRIEND, Franz Gruber, back in 1818, to write a MELODY and GUITAR accompaniment so it could be SUNG at CHRISTMAS SERVICES. That's how "Silent Night" was BORN!

Now, even though many have NEVER KNOWN Joseph Mohr or Franz Gruber, their SONG, "SILENT NIGHT" is sung by MILLIONS, if not BILLIONS across the world EVERY YEAR. And, we will do that too in just a LITTLE WHILE. Grab your message notes...

... *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 / MESSAGES ... find the NOTES and the CONNECTION CARD and follow along ... LET'S PRAY (turn off marked lights during prayer)!*

Let's jump right into our SCRIPTURE for Today/Tonight. We are in Luke 2 for The Christmas Narrative. Please REMEMBER this is LUKE writing. He was a PHYSICIAN and declared he would ONLY WRITE the FACTS. If he did NOT have multiple EYE-WITNESSES he would NOT WRITE IT ... here's what HE WROTE ... Luke 2:1-11 = *At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. ² (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) ³ All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. ⁴ And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. ⁵ He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.*

⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. ⁷ She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

⁸ That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. ⁹ Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, ¹⁰ but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. ¹¹ The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!"¹

Have you ever wondered WHY? WHY was Jesus BORN? Why did CHRISTMAS have to HAPPEN? Listen, GOD NEVER does ANYTHING ACCIDENTALLY! God has PURPOSE in everything He does. God has a PURPOSE for YOU being HERE RIGHT NOW! Well, if NOTHING'S an ACCIDENT with GOD, then WHY did JESUS COME to EARTH? Why was he BORN? That's the QUESTION I want us to EXPLORE tonight. I want to SHARE FOUR (4) REASONS from the BIBLE, WHY Jesus the SAVIOR was BORN ... open up your notes... **JESUS CHRIST THE SAVIOR WAS BORN TO... #1 =**

1. Reveal GOD'S IDENTITY

Jesus came to SHOW US what GOD is REALLY LIKE! I don't know if you've SEEN this, but there are some CRAZY IDEAS out there ABOUT GOD. And, I can't help but laugh when I HEAR people SAY things like, "Well, I like to THINK of GOD as..." OR, they say, "Well, in MY MIND, God is LIKE..." And, I think to myself, IT DOESN'T MATTER what you and I THINK GOD is LIKE. What MATTERS is what GOD is REALLY LIKE! That's WHY Jesus came at Christmas. To SHOW us what God is REALLY LIKE!

And, people walk around with ALL KINDS of FALSE IDEAS about GOD. Some think God is some WEAK, OLD, HARMLESS **GRANDFATHER** who is NICE, but He is TOO OLD and WEAK and OUT OF TOUCH to be able to DO anything of SIGNIFICANCE in our WORLD today. SOME think God is like a "STAR WARS GOD" ... some **FORCE** out there that is IMPERSONAL. But, God is NOT a POWER. God is a PERSON you can have a RELATIONSHIP with! SOME think God is an **ANGRY JUDGE** up in heaven WATCHING for us to make a MISTAKE, so He can ZAP US ... bring the HAMMER DOWN ... beat us up for our MISTAKES and SINS. OTHER PEOPLE think GOD is **just ANGRY at THEM** all the TIME! That's why their LIFE does NOT make SENSE, and NOTHING seems FAIR, and God is NOT ANGRY at OTHER people; just THEM!

Hear me: NONE of that is TRUE! You can THINK those things, but it doesn't make them TRUE! That's ONE REASON Jesus came to EARTH. To help us UNDERSTAND WHO God is ... to REVEAL GOD'S IDENTITY ... John 1:18 = ¹⁸ *No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.* ² He's talking about JESUS! The UNIQUE ONE. The ONE and ONLY SON of GOD! JESUS came to REVEAL the God of the UNIVERSE and to let us KNOW that we can KNOW GOD personally. We can KNOW GOD LOVES US. Do you know HOW we KNOW THAT? Because he SENT His ONLY SON to DIE on a CROSS, so OUR SINS could be FORGIVEN, and we can have a HOME in HEAVEN. Jesus came to TELL us that GOD is our HEAVENLY FATHER.

Did you know NO OTHER World Religion CLAIMS GOD is FATHER? But, Jesus told us to PRAY to our FATHER in HEAVEN. When we do, we find GOD is APPROACHABLE, PERSONAL, CARING, COMPASSIONATE, COMPETENT and CONSISTENT. Jesus came to make GOD VISIBLE to US! Back to the BIBLE ... John 1:14 = ¹⁴ *So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.* ³

¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Lk 2:1-11). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

² Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Jn 1:18). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

³ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Jn 1:14). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

It is so IMPORTANT to understand WHY JESUS came and LIVED as a HUMAN. So, we KNOW Jesus UNDERSTANDS US. Jesus was HUMAN and understands PAIN and PRESSURE and HABITS and FEARS and PROBLEMS. Jesus understands our FEARS we live with in 2018 and he UNDERSTANDS the FEARS we have for 2019! Jesus came to REVEAL God ... God is PERSONAL and if we TRUST HIM, we don't have to FEAR ANYTHING ... we can TRUST HIM. Jesus came to REVEAL God's IDENTITY ... #2 =

2. Relate GOD'S MESSAGE

Jesus came to COMMUNICATE God's MESSAGE in ways we can UNDERSTAND. BTW – It's the GREATEST MESSAGE EVER! It's the BEST NEWS! It's the NEWS about GOD and His LOVE and how GOD WANTS you and I to SPEND ETERNITY with HIM ... John 5:24 = ²⁴ *"I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life."* ⁴ Would you please CIRCLE the word "MESSAGE"? Jesus came to GIVE a MESSAGE of HOPE and REDEMPTION and LIFE-CHANGE and a RELATIONSHIP with GOD that can be RESTORED. Then, would you go back and CIRCLE the word "TRUTH"? Then, draw a LINE between those two words: "MESSAGE" and "TRUTH", BECAUSE, Jesus came to COMMUNICATE "TRUTH"!

Think about "TRUTH" for a moment. These days, we are NOT sure WHAT to BELIEVE ... am I RIGHT?! We do NOT KNOW WHO to BELIEVE. This person. That person. This NEWS FEED or THAT ONE ... we don't know WHAT to BELIEVE! With the INTERNET and SOCIAL MEDIA, anybody can LITERALLY say ANYTHING about ANYONE at ANY TIME and people will BELIEVE IT! People are HUNGRY for TRUTH ... BUT, where do you find TRUTH in a WORLD filled with LIES?!

I'm AMAZED at our WORLD. Today, we have more INFORMATION at our FINGERTIPS than EVER before, yet we CAN'T FIND TRUTH! We're TOLD TRUTH is WHATEVER you BELIEVE to be TRUE! And, we BUY IT! Wow! How many UNICORNS do YOU OWN? Just because we BELIEVE it to be TRUE, does NOT make it TRUE! (Packers?)

If we want to FIND TRUTH in a WORLD of LIES, we must go BACK to JESUS ... John 14:6 = ⁶ *Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me."* ⁵ This is a DIVIDING VERSE! It will DIVIDE people between those who will TRUST JESUS and those who WON'T. Jesus does NOT WAFFLE. He does NOT say He is an OPTION or "A" way or a "GOOD" way or even a "BEST" way. Jesus says He is the ONLY WAY to GOD and HEAVEN ... PERIOD! Now, YOU DECIDE if you BELIEVE that or NOT. We're FORCED to a DECISION, because either JESUS IS Who He SAYS He IS, or TODAY, across the WORLD, BILLIONS of people are CELEBRATING a FAKE!

Jesus said He is THE WAY, THE TRUTH. NOT a HALF-TRUTH ... or an OPTIONAL TRUTH or PART of the TRUTH. Jesus said, *"I AM TRUTH. I EMBODY Truth, and NO ONE goes to the FATHER except through ME!"* We must DECIDE. Is Jesus TRUTH or NOT?

Then, Jesus tells us HE is the LIGHT ... John 12:46 = ⁴⁶ *I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark.* ⁶ I LOVE that Christmas comes at the time of year when, for us, the NIGHTS are LONG and DARKNESS is prevalent. It REMINDS us of our NEED for LIGHT. We live in a DARK WORLD and Jesus tells us He is HERE to give some LIGHT!

⁴ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (In 5:24). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
⁵ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (In 14:6). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.
⁶ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (In 12:46). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Now, I don't KNOW what DARKNESS you are dealing with tonight, but CHRISTMAS and the Holidays tend to bring the DARK WORLD HOME. Maybe you're going through a FINANCIAL problem or a MARRIAGE problem or a PHYSICAL HEALTH issue or an EMOTIONAL issue or a RELATIONSHIP is DARK right now. Maybe you're ALONE this Christmas or there is a LOVED ONE that will NOT be at the Christmas TABLE for the FIRST TIME. Jesus tells you He can bring LIGHT when you TRUST Him as your SAVIOR and Lord.

Jesus came to REVEAL what God is like, to RELATE God's Message and then... #3 =

3. Recover GOD'S CREATION

To explain this, I need to go BACK to the beginning, because the BIBLE tells us GOD created the EARTH and it was PERFECT. No PAIN, PROBLEMS, STRESS, SIN, SUFFERING, SORROW ... THEN, Adam and Eve SINNED, and SIN entered the WORLD and HUMANITY! Now, our WORLD is BROKEN. Have you NOTICED? The THINGS of our WORLD do NOT WORK anymore. They are BROKEN. Our HEALTH doesn't work. The WEATHER doesn't work. Your RELATIONSHIPS don't always work. The ECONOMY breaks. EVERYTHING in our WORLD is BROKEN. Turn on the NEWS or catch the HEADLINES on your NEWSFEED and you realize everything in our WORLD is BROKEN! Relationships, DREAMS, Plans, PROMISES ... **BROKEN and Handcuffed by SIN!**

The Bible says JESUS came to FIX all that! He came to RESTORE the BROKEN and RENEW what has FALLEN APART. Listen: Luke 19:10 = ¹⁰ *For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.* ⁷ Would you CIRCLE the word "LOST"? Who are the LOST? US! We're ALL LOST. Because of our SIN, we're SEPARATED from our Heavenly Father.

How many of us PARENTS, if our CHILD wandered OFF, would just LET THEM GO? ***"Oh well. It's their fault. They wandered off and got LOST. NOT MY problem! One less mouth to feed..."*** Would you DO THAT? NO! You'd GO and RESCUE your CHILD from being LOST. That is what our HEAVENLY FATHER did for US! He sent his SON, JESUS on a RESCUE MISSION to RECOVER God's CREATION / PEOPLE! Here's what Jesus said ... Matthew 20:28 = ²⁸ *For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.* ⁸

People LOVE to celebrate CHRISTMAS and the BIRTH of a BABY. Then, many want to KEEP Jesus an 8lb/6oz BABY. It's easier to handle. BUT, the Bible says, *"For unto you is born a SAVIOR"*. Jesus grew into a MAN and he DIED on a CROSS, so YOU could be FORGIVEN, and you could RECOVER from your LOSTNESS and be back in relationship with Almighty God. That was God's PLAN! Listen, if you have **NEVER TRUSTED** Jesus as Savior and LORD of your LIFE, you are **STILL LOST!** And, GOD loves YOU and wants you FOUND!

AND, Jesus INVITES US to help OTHERS be FOUND! We get be on RESCUE mission as well! I know a GROUP of KIDS from SE ASIA who KNOW what it's like to be RESCUED. EVERY KID you are about to SEE was LOST. Abandoned or SOLD by their PARENTS and they LIVED in places we WOULD NEVER WISH on anyone. Garbage Dumps. Streets. Slavery. Brothels ... BUT, they have been RESCUED! Watch ... (INTERHOPE VIDEO).

We have an OPPORTUNITY tonight to PARTNER with GOD and RESCUE the LOST. Physically LOST and the SPIRITUALLY LOST. Interhope ... 100% ... MATCH-GIFT for SUSTAINABLE Solutions. Christmas is really a BIRTHDAY. It's JESUS' birthday and he says what we DO FOR the LEAST is what we DO for HIM. Kids need rescued. They are the LEAST and the LOST and WE are in a position to HELP. Eternities will change because of you tonight!

⁷ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Lk 19:10). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

⁸ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). [Holy Bible: New Living Translation](#) (Mt 20:28). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

Now, back to US. As we get to the FOURTH REASON why JESUS, the SAVIOR was BORN, I'm going to pass off to WAYNE and MARY ANN! MERRY CHRISTMAS!

4. Reproduce GOD'S LIFE IN ME

The Fourth Reason Jesus Came is to REPRODUCE God's LIFE in ME! He was BORN. He DIED and ROSE again from physical death to FORGIVE us our SINS and give us NEW LIFE. And, MOST of us NEED some NEW LIFE. We did things in 2018 and BEFORE that we are NOT proud of. Jesus says those can be FORGIVEN and we can have NEW LIFE. Listen to what Jesus says in ... John 10:10 = ¹⁰ *The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.* ⁹ Jesus did NOT say His PURPOSE was to give them RELIGION or RULES they couldn't POSSIBLY FOLLOW or Make you feel GUILTY enough to DO what I WANT. NO! He says he wants to GIVE US RICH and SATISFYING life!

Do you know what that means? That means UNTIL you KNOW JESUS, you're NOT really LIVING! Did you know MOST PEOPLE are NOT LIVING? They just EXIST! They get up in the morning and go to work and come home, eat supper, watch a little TV, go to bed and start again the next day. THEN, they go out on the WEEKEND and have some FUN and they call that "LIVING"! No! It's NOT! That is just EXISTING, BECAUSE you're NOT living the LIFE God has for you! Most LIVE lives without much MEANING / PURPOSE / DIRECTION. They DRIFTED through 2018 and they're bound to DRIFT through 2019!

See, MOST people REGRET their PAST, they FEAR the FUTURE, so they can NOT LIVE TODAY! BUT, Jesus came so you CAN have LIFE! NEW LIFE ... NOT, the same OLD life filled with REGRETS, but NEW LIFE filled with ABUNDANCE, PURPOSE, MEANING, PEACE and God's POWER and PRESENCE. And, RICH and SATISFYING LIFE is not just for HERE and now, but for ETERNITY! That is the GOOD NEWS of CHRISTMAS!

We talk about getting the PERFECT GIFT or GIFTS for someone at Christmas, but REMEMBER, God GAVE the FIRST Christmas Gift. The GREATEST GIFT EVER! The Bible says, "God so loved the world that he GAVE... His only Son ... Jesus!" This is what Paul says about the GIFT ... 2 Corinthians 9:15 = ¹⁵ *Thank God for this gift too wonderful for words!* ¹⁰

Let's pretend that I give you a GIFT for Christmas tonight (PRETEND!). And you take that gift and put it in a corner and NEVER OPEN it. Next year at Christmas I see you and ask how you liked it. And, you say, "*Well, I meant to get to that. It's been a busy year ... haven't opened it yet...*" You know what? I'd be OFFENDED, and you would too if it happened to you!

God has given you a GIFT. It's his SON, JESUS CHRIST! How MANY YEARS will you leave the GIFT of SALVATION / FREEDOM / FORGIVENESS / NEW LIFE / ETERNAL LIFE ... UNWRAPPED?!? If you NEVER OPEN the GIFT, you cannot FULLY ENJOY CHRISTMAS ... or, LIFE! That's the TRUTH!

Please DON'T, amidst ALL the THINGS of this season, MISS CHRISTMAS! Don't overlook God's GIFT to YOU. Don't MISS the HOPE the angels told the SHEPHERDS ... Luke 2:10-11 = ¹⁰ *but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people.* ¹¹ *The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!* ¹¹

Let's Pray!

Next Steps: *I will memorize Luke 2:10-11*

I will read the Christmas Story from Luke 2 with my family or a friend

I will give to InterHope to help feed kids in southeast Asia

I am believing in Jesus and giving my life to him for the first time

⁹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (In 10:10). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

¹⁰ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (2 Co 9:15). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.

¹¹ Tyndale House Publishers. (2013). *Holy Bible: New Living Translation* (Lk 2:10-11). Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House Publishers.