

Worth It!

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- [0 : 0 0] Thank you, Carla, and thank you, children, for helping me to read our passage tonight. Some of them got right on that and were wonderful at it, and some of them I lost quicker than I'll lose you tonight.
- It was a silent night. It was a holy night. Or was it? I mean, I don't want to break up the tranquility of it all, but I know that it wasn't silent at all.
- I mean, let's think about it together. For one, it was busy. It was bustling. It was busy because a census was taking place.
- There were no vacancies left, apparently. There were people, lots of people, and people, especially travelers, are not quiet people.
- If you think they are, you should have been in those cars at that youth scavenger hunt last Sunday. I had to lay out sick, but after giving my all up here on Sunday morning, but can you imagine youth and contest and time restraints?
- [1 : 1 2] Noise. Travelers are noisy. And there were a bunch of people in Bethlehem. Verse 1 of Luke chapter 2 says that all the world should be registered.
- It's been put this way, and I quote, This man, this king, this absolute monarch lifts his finger in Rome and 1,500 miles away in an obscure providence. A poverty-stricken couple undertake a hazardous journey at the whim of a king.
- Who was influenced by the Roman Empire? Who called for this census? Well, quite honestly, practically the world. And here they come, all to their own hometown.
- I assure you, it was busy, and it was noisy. And there was no room, no hospitals in that day. Births were usually at home with midwives.
- However, they were not at home. Therefore, they tried a hotel. There was no hotel, nor were there an inn. Now, that's not a hotel or even a motel like we would think of it.
- [2 : 2 6] Quite honestly, it's not much really of a building. Typically, they were typically a rectangular court with a wall in the center of it. Around the outer edge of this courtyard were rooms.
- Well, really, stalls. Usually mud-brick stalls. Sometimes only curtained. It was like an old-time emergency room where only curtains separated you from the one next to you.
- And whatever loud and painful ailment he or she may have next to you. But don't forget, that would be in the inn. And they were not in the inn because there was no room in the inn.
- They were in a cattle stall. Most likely a nearby cave close to the inn where they housed the travel animals. I assure you, it was not silent.
- It don't sound very holy to me. But it was there that the virgin chose by God bore a son. And laid him in a cattle trough after wrapping him in scraps of cloth, the kind you would find in a barn.
- [3 : 4 1] It does not stop there. The children helped me tell you about shepherds nearby in a field watching sheep. That probably wasn't very silent either.

The angel came to them and announced. Nothing silent about an announcement. Then a heavenly host came singing. No good heavenly choir is silent.

Not a lot of silence about the night the Lord was born. Or was it even at night? Sorry. The angel said to the shepherds, for unto us is born this day.

And they went quickly to see him. And I bet they weren't silent about it either. Like a Black Friday crowd waiting in the parking lot. Looking in the windows, jacked up and excited as they could be.

And when they left his presence, they were glorifying and praising God. Now some of y'all may glorify and praise the Lord silently.

[4 : 44] But heaven doesn't. No. Read Revelation. And the shepherds didn't do it either. Nor do I. Good praise the Lord will do you good.

Unless it's under your breath or silent. And then it'll hurt you if you're not careful. Let folks hear it. It'll do us all good. But I just don't think it was that silent.

I can't argue with the holy part of it. Because when the only begotten Son of God is born to a virgin. With angels in the region and royalty on the way.

That's a set apart time. There's no doubt about that. I mean let's be honest. There was chaos. They had no room. I choose to believe that Joseph was bargaining quite hard for some kind of quiet place.

And there was the struggle. They had went on an 80 mile trek while she was so pregnant that she delivered upon their arrival.

[5 : 45] And there was noise. And there was noise. As I've already made a lot of noise about it. But that's where it gets interesting to me. Because in the midst of the chaos.

In the midst of the struggle. In the midst of the noise. There was holiness. Because Jesus was right there in the midst. Caesar Augustus thought he was why Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

He is the one that made the decree. But the reality is the prophet Micah 700 years earlier had stated in Micah 5 verse 2. But you, O Bethlehem, Ephrathah, who are too little to be among the clans of Judah.

For you shall come forth for me, one who is to be ruler in Israel, whose coming forth is from of old. From ancient days.

And when Herod wanted to know where the Messiah was to be born. That's the passage that the chief priests and the scribes referred back to. Why? Because Bethlehem was a set apart place.

[6 : 59] That's what holy means. It was set apart for the purpose of the birth of the Lord. So even though it may not have felt like it at times. I guess it was holy.

And in the midst of that holiness. There was a bit of silence. If you'll pay close attention to the word. I don't know about the lambs that stopped bleeding. Or the cows that stopped mooing.

If they were there. Or the donkey that she rode in on. Which we don't even know about that either, by the way. But if so, they didn't stop kneeing and whining.

Who knows? But you know, sometimes silence comes in the midst of the noise. Sometimes peace comes in the midst of the chaos.

Somehow, all that happened for Mary. In Luke chapter 2, verse 17 through 20, it says this. And when they, speaking of the shepherds, saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child.

[7 : 59] And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured all these things. So in other words, in the midst of all the ruckus, there can be silence.

Even if it's still so loud all around you. And what a wonderful response that is in regards to this Christmas and the birth of Christ.

For this Christmas, in the midst of our chaos and the clutter and the noise, let us take a pause. Let us treasure it up.

Ponder on it. Take it in. Not the family festivities. Of course, enjoy and embrace them. But that's not what I speak of. Not the gifts around the tree.

Or the twinkling of the lights. But enjoy the beauty and the sharing. But in the midst of all that, I challenge you with this.

[9 : 15] Take time to ponder on the reason for the season. The babe in a manger that lived a sinless life and bore his life on Calvary.

To save all who would repent of their sins. That means turn from their way to his way and surrender their lives to him.

In the stillness of an early Christmas morning. Or when the dust is settled tonight. Take a moment.

And take it in. Remember. Ponder. On what God has done for you through Christ.

And how in this world have you responded back to him. What difference does the birth and the life and the death and the resurrection of Christ.

[10 : 15] What difference has it made to you? What difference has it made in your life? And when we leave that scene. It is my prayer.

We'll leave it like a shepherd. Glorifying and praising God. Letting everyone wondering. What is it? Or who is it?

That's changed your life? On second thought. Let's don't leave them wondering. Let's tell them.

Let's tell them how Christ changed our lives. And how we are to live it out. For him. Because I promise you. Whatever you've got to give to God tonight.

He's worth it. Thank God. For Jesus. Merry Christmas. Let's pray together. Lord Jesus. I love you. And I thank you.

[11 : 16] For the gift that you give us in Christ. I pray Lord. That if there's someone here today. Who's never surrendered his or her life to the Lord Jesus Christ.

They won't leave this room. Without speaking to me. About giving their lives to Christ. Let this day.

Be a new one for us. To change our direction. To be more focused upon. What you are about. The difference you make in our lives. And the difference we can make with you empowering us dear God.

Help this Christmas. Not only for us to celebrate each other dear God. But to celebrate the Savior. And I ask dear God. For your greatest blessings. Upon every household that's represented here.

Or are watching online. God bless them with the power of your presence. Draw them close to you dear God. And help us to live for your honor and glory.

[12 : 15] And it's only in Christ's name that we pray. And all God's people said. Amen. Amen. Stand.