

Wednesday, December 2, 2020 - Scripture: Isaiah 63:9; Song: "Who Can"

It's the first Wednesday night of the Advent season coming tonight and normally we would be gathering in person for Worship and enjoying a meal together before the service. But like so many other things that's not happening. We will do our best to feed you with God's Word and later tonight we will post the first virtual Worship with our theme "The Jesse Tree." Hopefully by now you have your daily devotion book as well. But it's still a mess and nobody can seem to get it fixed. That brings us to our song for today by Cochran and Company that asks the question we are all asking, "Who Can"? We have tried all the human answers and none have worked or will ever work my favorite line of the song says it all, "I'm a mess, I confess but you carry me through." When all else fails we turn to God. Life would be a lot easier if we went to him first, but our sin doesn't let us do that. In Isaiah 63 we hear, "In all their distress he too was distressed, and the angel of his presence saved them. In His love and mercy, he redeemed them; he lifted them up and **CARRIED** them all the days of old." And that was before Jesus came. God has always carried his people and he continues to do so. He proved how much he loved us as the song tells us as does all of Scripture by sending his Son. So whatever mess you are in, Covid-19 or otherwise, remember that God carries you and he won't forsake you. Listen to this song and be encouraged but above all be encouraged by God's great love for you and he will carry you.

[Cochren & Co. - Who Can \(Official Lyric Video\)](#)

Monday, December 7, 2020 - Scripture: Isaiah 40:31-32; Song: "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus"

December is moving along, and Christmas is coming closer. Two and half weeks left, and it will be here, a bit different than other years probably because of Covid-19, but all the kids know it is coming. In a tiny way, it mirrors what the people of Israel must have felt as they waited for the Messiah to come. They had been waiting since the God promised to send him in Genesis 3. So, when we sing today's Advent hymn, "Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus" we remember that the people of Israel it truly had been long. As the hymn reminds us, Jesus, the Messiah was born

to set God's people free." But they were mixed up and thought he would come as a King to free them from their bondage to the Romans. As the second verse said, he would be, "Israel's hope and consolation; Hope of all the earth he would be" As we know that hope would be to set us free from sin, not from earthly slavery to a political leader. As Isaiah 40:31 and 32 reminds us, "Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles, they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and be faint." These are all things we hope for in these difficult times as we come close the end of a rough 2020. Don't put your hope in presents and music and food and visiting friends and relatives but put your hope in the Lord and as he promised, you will accomplish these things. This Advent hymn hits all of the comings of Advent, his first coming at Christmas, his coming back for you again to save you from this world and his continued coming into your hearts that you might soar like eagles and run and not grow weary. Enjoy the Advent hymn and be encouraged.

[Come, Thou long expected Jesus \(with Lyrics\)](#)

Wednesday, December 9, 2020 - Scripture: Psalm 8:3-4; Song: "Hey Moon"

I promised myself I wouldn't introduce any Christmas hymns or songs to these song devotions until the week of December 15th but it's hard to find Contemporary Advent hymns and this particular song for today talks about the preparation for Christmas by God that certainly is a part of Advent so today's song combines the two. It is a song I first heard last year by the Sidewalk Prophets titled, "Hey Moon." Now what does that have to do with anything or Advent or Christmas you might ask? Well, the song cleverly tells the Christmas story and what came before through the voice of the Christmas star that was shining brightly over Bethlehem as he talks to the moon. Creative and appropriate as God created the moon and stars together in the words of Genesis. And they are an awesome gift from God to us. As our Scripture verse for today, Psalm 8:3 and 4 states, "When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you

care for him?" The star says that he wishes people could have seen what they observed before the first Christmas and how it should affect the way they celebrate Christmas. The star says, 'it would help them know they were made for a reason,' just like the star did as he shined over Bethlehem at the first Christmas to point the shepherds and wise men to Jesus. There is so much here in this song for all of us, especially as we prepare for this Covid-19 Christmas. Remember that God created everything for a reason, including the moon and stars and each of you. Watch closely this Christmas and see the wonder of the baby born in a manger for you, the same baby who would grow up to die on a cross for you and be raised from the dead for you, that you might live in harmony with God forever, the reason you were created. Praise God for the creativity of the Sidewalk Prophets as they perform this song and know that same Jesus as well.

[Sidewalk Prophets - Hey Moon \(Official Lyric Video\)](#)

Friday, December 11, 2020 - Scripture: Isaiah 7:14; Song: "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Today's hymn, "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel," is often thought of as a Christmas hymn but its origin is really as an Advent hymn, with each verse corresponding to one of the traditional Advent prayers. And if you look at the verses, each one has a specific prayer pointed toward Christ's coming, some at Bethlehem and some about his second coming. Hence, the reason for it being an Advent hymn. The title fits with the Advent prediction of Christ's coming from Isaiah 7:14, "Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign, The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel." And you might say wait a minute, they aren't the same, the hymn says, "Emmanuel," and the Scripture passage, "Immanuel." Google it and you will find out that it is a matter of translation whether it is from the Hebrew or the Greek, but they are both the same, "Immanuel, God with us, as Matthew tells us. So don't get hung up on the wording, instead focus us on the message of Advent, God is coming in the Messiah, the Christ child in a manger, born to be "God with us." As you sing along with the Advent hymn, sing them as if you were praying, and you will be

doing the same thing that Christians have been doing for hundreds of years to together. And may your prayers be answered in the coming of Christ, the Messiah, born in a manger for you.

[O Come, O Come, Emmanuel \[with lyrics for congregations\]](#)

Monday, December 14, 2020 - Scripture: Luke 2:8-9; Song: "A Great and Mighty Wonder"

In a week and half, Christmas will be here, and things at church are switching from Advent and looking forward to Christ's second coming to the celebration of His first coming in a manger in Bethlehem. As we come closer and closer, there are lots of angels. The angel comes to Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, the great messenger of Advent, and because he can't believe that he and Elizabeth who he thinks are too old to have a child, God stills his voice. At least until John is born and in the temple God opens his voice so Zechariah can say, "His name will be John." And then the angel came first to Mary to tell her that she would be the mother of the "Son of God," (more about that Friday) and then to Joseph, to let him know that Mary would have this miraculous child and give him time to take in the prophecy that a virgin would conceive and bear a child and his betrothed Mary would be that virgin. And then, of course there were the angels who came to the Shepherds. All that brings us to our hymn for today, "A Great and Mighty Wonder," which certainly describes all that I just shared. It isn't only Jesus' birth that is a great and mighty wonder but all that led up to it and what comes after as well. And the chorus of the hymn, echoes the words of the angels from Luke 2:8-9 as they appeared to the shepherds before they went to Bethlehem: "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests." The chorus says it all, over and over again, "To God on high be glory, and on earth peace, good will to men." The verses speak of the Jesus, the incarnate one and even echo some of the Advent promises as they speak of the vales and mountains rejoicing in this birth as well. This hymn will be the opening hymn next Sunday as our children from the Sunday School present the Christmas story in their own special way. It's a great title for Christmas as well as the great and mighty wonder of Jesus

on earth begins. Enjoy the hymn today and contemplate the wonder and then join us on Sunday as the story continues.

[A Great and Mighty Wonder \[with lyrics for congregations\]](#)

Wednesday, December 16, 2020 - Scripture: John 1:1-5; Song: "The Hope of Christmas"

The secular world has quite different hopes for Christmas each year than those of us who are Christ followers. Especially in a year like this Covid-19 one, part of the hope of Christmas for our secular world is escaping the dreary days of Winter to celebrate with parties and presents and concerts and whatever you can find. This hope is so superficial and most often just leads to the doldrums of January when everything goes back to normal and the bills pile up from all the spending we did to encourage this false hope. Christians, however, know the Hope of Christmas is Christ himself, coming to save us from our sins as he grew up to live the perfect life we can't, and died to suffer the punishment we deserved for our sins. Then God raised him from the dead, as proof that his suffering was enough to cover our sins and give us the gift of eternal life. Matthew West's song: "The Hope of Christmas" catches all of this. He thinks back to his childhood at church when the candles they lit at the Christmas reminded him of the peace that Jesus brings. He then refers to how the world now is not so easy and the peace is hard to find. He asks to be taken back to that peace and refers to the hope of Christmas as Jesus, the light of the world, who shines through the darkness. The darkness might be Covid-19, loss of loved ones, family issues, illness, or a host of other things. Jesus shines through in all of them. John's Gospel in chapter 1 reminds us of that. In verses 1 through 5, Jesus, the Word made flesh came into the world, John writes. And then later in verse 4 he writes, "In Him was life and that life was the light of the world. The light (Jesus) shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood." It's still that way today and that's why Matthew West has to sing of "The Hope of Christmas" in this way. Many things may be missing from Christmas this year but Jesus is still here, "The Hope of Christmas." At the end of the song, Matthew sings of praying with his young daughter and remembering doing the same thing with his Father when he was growing up. May you spend time praying at Christmas this year, especially being thankful for Jesus, the hope of Christmas. In this way Christmas will be what it has always been, the celebration of God with us, come into the world as the baby Jesus for us.

[The Hope Of Christmas - Matthew West Lyrics](#)

Monday, December 21, 2020 - Scripture: Isaiah 9:6; Song: "For Unto Us a Child is Born"

Christmas week is finally here and there are so many Christmas songs to choose both traditional and contemporary. I am so happy that there are 12 days of Christmas in the church as that gives time to choose more hymns and songs and write more devotions. When I was growing up my parents tried to teach my brother and Sisters and I to be cultured so we attended many concerts and plays throughout the year, some exciting and some boring. One of those concerts that we attended at different places for many years quickly became one of my favorites. It happened at Christmas and it involved the performance of Handel's "Messiah." From the old Testament prophecies set to the music of the angels in the famous "Hallelujah Chorus," there was much to enjoy. My love for that music and the Scripture he set to music lasts until today. I will probably choose the "Hallelujah chorus" next week but today I want to share one of my favorites. It sets the words of Isaiah 9:6 to wonderful music. It's title, "For Unto Us a Child is Born." As Isaiah predicted, the child of Christmas came to save the world. Isaiah writes: "Unto Us a Child is born, to us a Son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor; Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." And this week as Christmas comes, we see this prophecy come true. Nothing can get in the way of that. The child born in Bethlehem would overcome all of our problems, including the greatest one, sin. As we worship the Christ child predicted by Isaiah, the issues that have plagued us throughout 2020 pale in comparison to the birth of the Prince of Peace who, when he grew up, would remind us that the peace he gives, the world cannot. As you prepare for Christmas in 4 days, prepare your hearts for the birth of the Prince of Peace, come to save us from our sins and as you listen to this magnificent music, may the true peace of Christmas begin to flow into your hearts and may it prepare you for the Silent Night when Christ was born.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q27auTc1FIQ&t=2s>

Wednesday, December 23, 2020 - Scripture: Luke 2:8-14; Song: "Oh, What a Glorious Night"

So, it's two days until Christmas and I have chosen a contemporary song called "Oh, What a Glorious Night" by the Sidewalk Prophets for our song devotion for today. It's a beautiful song but even more than that the beginning to the video brings back more childhood memories of Scripture being part of our family Christmas traditions. Maybe you don't know this but Charles Schulz, creator of the Peanuts cartoon and Charlie Brown television specials and much more, was a dedicated Christian. And one of the places it is most evident is in the Christmas television special, "A Charlie Brown Christmas" which still airs each year around this time. And the center of that special is Linus reading the words of Luke 2:8 to 14 and then ending with these words, "That's what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown." So, when you listen to the video, don't be surprised to hear those words echoing across the video with the music on the song in the background. It starts out with the shepherds being out in the fields and ends with the angels singing, "Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men." Then the Sidewalk Prophets remind us of what Christmas is about as they retell those words in song and remind us what a glorious night that was. As you ponder the meaning of Christmas in these Covid-19 times, remember that nothing has changed, it is still about the Christ child coming in a manger to bring peace on earth to men. May that peace wrap around you as we come to Christmas 2020. It may be different in a lot of ways, but as Linus said, what Christmas is all about does not change. Read Luke 2 in preparation for Christmas, or better yet, listen to Linus recite the words and then enjoy the announcement through this song of what a glorious night it will be.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KgEO9O4P7Rg>

Monday, December 28, 2020 - Scripture: Revelation 17:14; Song: "Hallelujah Chorus"

It is Monday, December 28th and to the world, at least, Christmas is over. It is back to work for at least for a few days until New Year's and with the darkness of winter and the lockdowns of Covid-19 it seems dismal for many. So, for the non-Christian, my choice of the "Hallelujah Chorus," as our song for the day might seem a bit ridiculous. For the Christian though, Christmas isn't over. In fact, for the Christian, Christmas lasts twelve days, until Epiphany on January 6th. So lots more Christmas songs for us and lots more celebration. And Handel's words remind us why Christmas is not over and why we still celebrate. For Christmas is much more than just a baby in a manger. It is the beginning of Immanuel, "God with us." and as the song says over and over again, He shall reign forever, King of Kings and Lord of Lords." And we will reign with Him because of His perfect life, death, and resurrection for us. As the Scripture reminds us, He has overcome the darkness of winter and especially our sin and all that plagues us because of sin, including Covid-19. Revelation 17:14 reminds us, "They will wage war

against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because He is Lord of Lords and King of Kings- and with him will be his called, chosen, and faithful followers.” That is us. The Lamb has triumphed for us and because He has, so do we. So, if you want to overcome the doldrums of Winter and the issues you have with the Corona Virus and not having enough money because the economy has tanked, and the depression of not celebrated Christmas with family, listen to the “Hallelujah Chorus” and know that our God reigns and we have so much to look forward to, “forever and forever” as we hear sung, over and over again. 8 more days of Christmas to come and life forever with the Lord of Lords and King of Kings after that! Hallelujah! Happy day 4 of Christmas as you listen to today’s song:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9jvsK798Lbs>

Wednesday, December 30, 2020 - Scripture: John 1:14; Song: "What Child is This"

It is hard to believe this is the last song devotion for 2020 and #145 since I started writing and publishing these last March. Hopefully, we are closer to the end of the Pandemic than when we started but sometimes it does not seem like it. The news was talking about the depression that many will suffer in the coming months as they are forced to continue to stay home and they cannot get outside because of the weather and they cannot get enough sun because there isn’t much in the winter in Michigan and so on. Praying that the vaccines will finally be the answer and sooner than later. The hymn for today continues the Christmas season then as we are about halfway through the 12 days of Christmas that will end on Epiphany. Any of the hymns of the season are powerful and joyful like the Hallelujah Chorus and some are quieter and more peaceful like many would imagine it would have been like on the first Christmas Eve. Today’s hymn: “What Child is This” is written from that viewpoint. The tune is peaceful and quiet, and the words are quite contemplative. We are asked to think, “What Child is this, who laid to rest on Mary’s lap is sleeping? This, this is Christ the Lord. Whom shepherds guard and angels sing. In the second verse the writer quotes our Scripture verse for today, John 1:14 and Jesus is called the “Word made flesh.” John writes this: “The word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” And the writer of the song really understands who Jesus is. More than just a cute baby, but God’s

Son who would grow up to be pierced by spear and nails, dying on the cross for us so as you sit and ponder at home alone or with family during this Christmas, ponder the question. "What Child Is This?" Know that he came for you and for me, to overcome our depression caused by sin and all the rest of our problems as well. Enjoy this peaceful hymn and be at peace.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wO8qluGa-tM>