

Silent Night, Holy Night
2 Corinthians 8: 9
December 20, 2009

Christmas Eve, 1818, in the village of Oberndorf in Austria – it is discovered the organ in St. Nicholas Church would not function (legend has it the culprit was a hungry mouse who ate the bellows), and the music planned for the Christmas Eve service could not be used. Father Joseph Mohr, the assistant priest, decided to compose a new song suitable to be performed with a guitar.

The story of the origin of “Silent Night, Holy Night” demonstrates the amazing, unusual way someone met a pressing need. It is a beautiful illustration of God’s provision for us of a Savior. Just as the meeting of a need on that Christmas Eve in 1818 resulted in a beloved song revered to this day, God’s provision of Christ has resulted in a new song, which the Bible tells us can only be sung by the redeemed (Rev. 14: 3). Paul speaks of this new song in 2 Corinthians, Chapter Eight Verse Nine (read).

This verse shares three truths about Christ’s sacrifice for our salvation which we also find in the three verses of the wonderful hymn “Silent Night, Holy Night.”

1. His Was a Willing Sacrifice (2 Corinthians 8: 9a) – Verse 1

A. It was with “heavenly peace” that Jesus came in this world.

1. His coming to pay the price for our sins was a decision settled long before that day in Bethlehem (Revelation 13: 8 – “*And all who dwell on the earth will worship Him, everyone whose name has not been written from the foundation of the world in the book of life of the Lamb who has been slain.*”).

B. Paul reminds us Christ’s sacrifice was a result of God’s grace.

1. The classic definition of grace is “unmerited favor or blessing.” It is the granting of such undeserved favor by Almighty God that makes the miracle of Christ’s birth, life, death, and resurrection possible.

C. You and I will one day stand before the Almighty God of the universe, and we will be aware we are sinners guilty of breaking the laws of God.

1. We can be grateful that, because of Jesus’ sacrifice – and our acceptance of it – we will not receive justice, but mercy instead.

D. The Bible tells us we are all sinners (Romans 3: 23); so we are under condemnation for eternal death (Romans 6: 23a); but through Christ, God has made available the “gift of eternal life” (Romans 6: 23b).

1. Jesus chose to willingly go to the cross for our sakes, despite the fact we were/are undeserving!

2. “But God demonstrate His own love for us in this: while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5: 8).

2. His Was a Wondrous Sacrifice (v. 9b) – Verse 2

A. Indeed, at the birth of Christ, “glories did stream from heaven afar.”

1. The glory of God was brought down to man in human form.

2. **John 1: 14** (read); or as Paul puts it, “Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor.”

B. The thought that the God of the universe would take upon Himself human form is wondrous in itself.

1. But the reason why He did it is even more amazing: He did it to identify with us in our humanity!

C. Jesus knows just how each of us feels; how each of us struggle with temptation, loss, rejection, and yes, looming death.

“Right from the beginning God’s love has reached, and from the beginning men have refused to understand. But love went on reaching, offering itself. And still today, after two thousand years, patiently, lovingly, Christ is reaching out to us today. He is reaching, longing to share with us, the very being of God. His love is still long, His love is still reaching, right past the shackles of my mind. And the Word of the Father became Mary’s little Son. And His love reached all the way to where I was.” – Gloria Gaither

3. His Was a World-changing Sacrifice (v. 9c) – Verse 3

A. Jesus’ birth was indeed the “Dawn of redeeming grace.”

1. The birth of Christ marked the beginning of the work of God to make our salvation possible.

2. As Paul expresses it in 2 Corinthians 8: 9, “*..that you through His poverty might become rich.*”

B. God’s primary desire is to share the wealth of His love with mankind.

1. Christ’s sacrifice makes that possible.

2. **Grace – God’s Riches At Christ’s Expense**

3. All that God is free to do for us, in us, and through us is due to the sacrifice of Jesus Christ.

B. Truly, Jesus’s birth, life and sacrificial death enables me to live a changed life!

1. I don’t have to be good in order to receive the blessing of God’s grace; it is because of the blessings of God grace we can be good!

2. I don’t have to change, grow and be good to be loved by God; I am loved by God so I can change, grow and be good.

3. “Jesus, like any fisherman, first catches His fish, then cleans them.”

As Gloria Gaither expressed it, “And still today, after two thousand years, patiently, lovingly, Christ is reaching out to us today.” Have you received Christ as your personal Savior?

Near the entrance to the Alamo there is a portrait and the inscription: “James Butler Bonham – no portrait of him exists. This is a portrait of his nephew, Major James Bonham, deceased, who greatly resembled his uncle. It is placed here by the family so that people may know the appearance of the man who died for freedom.”

My prayer is that we, who have discovered the grace of God, live the changed life Christ died to give us, so others might see His likeness in us, and come to know the One Who died for their freedom!

Let's pray!