



Your story matters.



MYRC.CHURCH



"HOPES AND FEARS"

Pastor Tom Lundeen

MESSAGE NOTES

O Little Town of Bethlehem

The last 2 lines, however, tell us more about why what happened in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago matters just as much, and maybe _____ at the end of 2021.

*The hopes and fears of all the _____
Are met in Thee tonight.*

1. _____ or Fears?

As you look honestly at your own life and heart and mind, what has been more real, _____, and dominant, hopes or fears?

Note Luke 2:8-10

So what is this _____?

2. Walking in the _____

Note Isaiah 9:2

We certainly got the _____ part down.

So where does the _____ come from?

Note Matthew 2 and Luke 2:9

Darkness produces _____.

Light brings _____.

3. And There are More Reasons for Hope (note Isaiah 9:6)

- A. *Wonderful* _____ – Jesus has the answers to the questions (both personal and cultural) that seem to _____ or discourage us because our attempts to answer them fall short.
- B. *Mighty* _____ – Jesus not only has the answers we need, He also has the power and ability to give us the help and _____ we need.
- C. _____ *Father* – He knows us, _____ and all, and still loves us...
- D. *Prince of* _____ (note John 14:27)
- E. *The* _____ *will rest on His shoulders – what this means is that Jesus can bear the full weight of the world and all it's* _____ (Pritchard). Too many of us are _____, full of anxiety, and bearing a weight we were not created to carry. We act as if we are the _____ of the universe...Christmas reminds you and me that we're not in _____. *God is God and* _____.

Christmas matters because:

- *Christmas reminds us God is God and we're not. He can arrange for a virgin to become pregnant. He can cause a Roman emperor to order a* _____ *at precisely the right moment in history. He can ensure the baby will be born at exactly the place prophesied* _____ *years earlier. He can put a star in the sky at the right moment. He can bring together angels, shepherds, and Wise Men to celebrate that miraculous birth. And He can take a tiny baby born in a stable and make that baby the* _____ *of the world.* (Pritchard)
- The light of Jesus that started shining from a manger still shines today in our _____.
- He's just waiting for your letter of resignation as general manager of the universe, or just _____ universe.

Tell someone about the next step you took today in your spiritual journey!

Let us know, too, and fill out our connect card (digital or hard copy).*

**[MyRC.link/connect](#) or text [riverside](#) to 94000*



SMALL GROUP
guide on the back

SG

Your group matters.

DISCUSSION GUIDE

Icebreaker: Are you in the “It’s got to be a white Christmas!” camp, or would you prefer a Florida Keys Christmas?

1. What comes to mind when you hear *O Little Town of Bethlehem* and contemplate what’s influenced your life most...hopes or fears?
2. Read [Luke 2:8-10](#). How would you react if God announced that He had good news for you? He just did, so how did you react?
3. Read [Isaiah 9:2](#) & [Luke 2:9](#). Pastor Tom said that darkness produces fear, but light brings hope. Where do you find yourself today, still walking in the darkness or bathed in the light of hope? Explain your answer to the group if you’re willing. (After answering, stop and pray for those walking in the darkness.)
4. Read [Isaiah 9:6](#). How has Jesus lived up to these things in your life, in the lives of those around you? What role do you need to choose to trust Him in today or this week?
5. What are some of your go-to excuses you use to keep from taking faith-filled steps in your life?
6. If you’re a Christ follower, what responsibility have you taken back that rightfully belongs to God, and what will you do about it? If you’ve never said your own personal YES! to Jesus (your letter of resignation) what’s holding you back from doing that right now?

Day One: [Matthew 13](#)

Day Two: [Genesis 13](#)

Day Three: [Romans 13](#)

Day Four: [1 Timothy 5](#)

Day Five: [Job 13](#)

*This Personal Guide has been adapted from
Professor Grant Horner’s Bible Reading System.*

PERSONAL GUIDE



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The last 2 lines, however, tell us more about why what happened in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago matters just as much, and maybe even more now at the end of 2021.

*The hopes and fears of all the years
Are met in Thee tonight.*

1. Hopes or Fears?

As you look honestly at your own life and heart and mind, what has been more real, influential, and dominant, hopes or fears?

Note Luke 2:8-10

So what is this good news?

2. Walking in the Dark

Note Isaiah 9:2

We certainly got the fear part down.

So where does the hope come from?

Note Matthew 2 and Luke 2:9

Darkness produces fear.

Light brings hope.

3. And There are More Reasons for Hope (note Isaiah 9:6)

- A. *Wonderful Counselor* – Jesus has the answers to the questions (both personal and cultural) that seem to befuddle or discourage us because our attempts to answer them fall short.
- B. *Mighty God* – Jesus not only has the answers we need, He also has the power and ability to give us the help and strength we need.
- C. *Everlasting Father* – He knows us, warts and all, and still loves us...
- D. *Prince of Peace* (note John 14:27)
- E. *The government will rest on His shoulders* – what this means is that Jesus can bear the full weight of the world and all its problems (Pritchard). Too many of us are frazzled, full of anxiety, and bearing a weight we were not created to carry. We act as if we are the general manager of the universe...Christmas reminds you and me that we're not in charge. *God is God and I'm not.*

Christmas matters because:

- *Christmas reminds us God is God and we're not. He can arrange for a virgin to become pregnant. He can cause a Roman emperor to order a census at precisely the right moment in history. He can ensure the baby will be born at exactly the place prophesied 700 years earlier. He can put a star in the sky at the right moment. He can bring together angels, shepherds, and Wise Men to celebrate that miraculous birth. And He can take a tiny baby born in a stable and make that baby the Savior of the world.* (Pritchard)
- The light of Jesus that started shining from a manger still shines today in our dark world.
- He's just waiting for your letter of resignation as general manager of the universe, or just your universe.

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