

CHRISTMAS EVE SERMONS

Our Dear CHRIST Enters In

Great
Joy



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SERMONS FOR CHRISTMAS EVE

SERMON

❏ Some of you have come to be home tonight: You traveled from college, work, another town, a different state or maybe even a distant country to be home for the holidays. And you know what? Jesus did that too. In a very real way, that's what the very first Christmas is all about. Jesus left his home above and made his dwelling among us. He came to the manger in the little town of Bethlehem to be born. He came to Mary, his mother, and Joseph, standing by. He came to shepherds abiding in the fields. He came to angels to come from heaven to see him. And he came so that we can spend eternity at a new address. Where is this new home? Jesus would say to his disciples during his ministry that it's the Father's house. And this house that Jesus would begin to describe to his disciples in John 14 is nothing short of spectacular and glorious.

The sight of the little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay says to us, "Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me" (John 14:1). So we welcome him this night with great comfort and great joy.

Several years ago, a man by the name of George Tulloch set out on a quest to raise a 16' x 24' section of the Titanic that had broken off from its hull as it sank 2.5 miles to the Atlantic floor. This particular piece weighed 20 tons and was buried in ocean muck.

Special submarines were able to go down to that 16' x 24' section of the hull and attach six large balloons to it. The balloons were filled with diesel fuel. Then six large pulleys on Tulloch's ship above began to slowly wench that 20-ton piece from its ocean bed.

However, on its 2.5-mile journey toward the surface, the wind and waves began to pick up. Tulloch's vessel was ordered not to try to tow the rising piece towards the shore. Sure enough, under the added pressure from the wind and waves, all six ropes on the pulleys began to fray. When that 20-ton piece came within just 70-yards of the surface, the ropes broke, and that large piece sank back to the ocean floor.

You can imagine the heavy hearts on Tulloch's ship that day.

We come to this Christmas Eve with heavy hearts, anxious feelings and worried minds. Jesus knows that we are hurting, and during his ministry as an adult, he knew when his disciples were hurting. "Let not your hearts be troubled," he said to them. Why would Jesus' disciples have such heavy hearts? Jesus spoke these words in the Upper Room on the night before he went to the cross. The disciples were afraid for the life of their Master and their own lives as well.

We see now why the disciples had such troubled hearts that night. Jesus had completely shaken up their world. And the truth is, we can relate: Wars rage, and there is unrest around the world. There are natural disasters. There are family and friends who are living without Jesus. There are broken homes and marriages and loved ones who are no longer with us this Christmas. We, too, know what it's like to have deeply troubled hearts—even now on Christmas Eve.

But did you catch Jesus' antidote to any troubled heart? He says, "Believe in God; believe also in me." The antidote to any troubled heart is faith. In the midst of life's hardships, faith looks beyond earthly circumstances to Christ, to his manger bed on Christmas, to his cross on Good Friday and to his empty tomb on Easter morning. Not only do hurting hearts and homes find refuge in his perfect redemption, but Jesus points our faith past the trials and tears of this temporary abode to a new and abiding reality above: the Father's house

He gives us three promises concerning the Father's house. First, Jesus says in John 14:2: "In my Father's house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you?" So what is Promise #1? **The Father has ample space for you.** There was no room for Baby Jesus in the Bethlehem inns. But in the Father's house are many rooms. Those rooms are infinitely better than any room on earth. And God's house has a throne, and encircling this throne are angels and archangels and all the company of heaven, lauding and magnifying his glorious name. And forget the best restaurant here on earth, Revelation 19 pictures the banquet feast of the Lamb that will have no end. And no Discover or Visa cards are required; Jesus has already paid the price of our eternal stay in full. In fact, one of Jesus' last words on the cross, "It is finished," The Greek here is *tetelestai*, a word meaning "paid in full," We are covered in the blood of Jesus Christ, just as he is covered in swaddling cloths now as the Babe of Bethlehem.