

Advent in Biblical Perspective  
*The Spirit of Christ at Christmas*  
“Let Us Adore Him”

Luke 2:1–20

Mr. Bruce Stallings

December 24, 2016 – Christmas Eve (late service)

In preparation for Communion we will spend a few moments focusing on a couple of passages with the first being from Luke 2. One of the things I love about Christmas is that there are two handfuls of Christmas carols. The only time we ever sing them is at Christmas and to me a Christmas carol is like an old friend that lives far away. Every once in a while you get back together but as soon as you get back together you pick right up where you left off. So when I hear that first line of that Christmas carol that first Sunday of Advent, to me it's like that old friend is back and immediately the tune, the words and the meaning of the carol just come to life. It's a refreshing thing to hear and sing them.

One of my favorite carols we sing at Christmas is ‘O Come All Ye Faithful.’ It has that wonderful line in it that says ‘Yea Lord we greet Thee, born this happy morning.’ We will get to proclaim that to the Lord tomorrow on Christmas morning. That carol is written in Latin and in Latin it is “Adeste Fideles.” Adeste means to gather together and Fideles means faithful. In that carol repeated twelve times is ‘O come let us adore Him’ throughout those four verses. The Latin words for that phrase is “*Venite adoremus.*” Venite is an invitation to come so he is inviting all the faithful ones to gather together and to personally adore Him together. In personally adoring we then collectively adore and there is no better setting to personally adore and yet collectively adore our Savior than to come to the Lord's Supper Table. We come personally but we gather together with one another to do this.

As we think about coming to the Table to adore our Savior we do it because He is adorable. Even when I say that we have so diminished the word adorable. When we say adorable we think of puppies, small rabbits or small children. The word means so much more than that. It's not just about a cute little thing. Adorable literally means something that insights adoration. In other words, when you are near it, it causes you to adore, worship and praise. You might not be intending to do that but if this person comes into your mind it insights you immediately and consistently to worship.

One of the things I enjoy as my children are getting older, now all those movies about people coming back home tend to make more sense to me now. You wait for your kids to come back home to get them all together and there is a lot about that I enjoy but there are a few things about that I don't enjoy. One of the things I don't enjoy is that somehow when my daughters come back home my television gets fixed on the Hallmark channel. I thought I had it fixed on sports. I spend a lot of time convincing my wife that sports is very educational and beneficial because it really unites us as a couple. I also found out recently that there are multiple Hallmark channels. In fact one of them is called the Hallmark Mystery channel. That's a contradiction in terms. To me there has never been any mystery to any hallmark movie and if you see the first two minutes of the show and don't know how it's going to end then ‘bless your heart.’ I guess you're just one of those purely optimistic people in life that just rides that roller coaster in life. Hallmark is the love story. It will end how you want it to end. It will be gooey and happy, even when they act like they are throwing a curve ball.

I want to take a few minutes for a particular reason to tell you a Hallmark story. It's a Hallmark story because it has such a wonderful ending. In 1987, I was in Panama Beach, Florida and I walked to this table to register to be a participant on this Campus Outreach Beach project. I think I knew only one person who was going to be on that project. There was this girl sitting at the registration table and she inspired adoration in me. It took me two hours to fill out a 3 by 5 card that wanted me to write down my name, my car and what campus I was from because immediately I adored her. If you had seen me at that moment you would have thought of a Hallmark movie and said 'they are going to get together.' This guy who doesn't deserve that girl will end up together, that's just the way it works.

I can prove to you that I adored her because after that I changed my job. I took a much harder job with terrible hours with less pay in order to possibly get to see her a couple of times extra during the week. If any of you know me then that should shock you. I would go on walks with her and talk with her but normally when I would go on walks I would intend on getting somewhere. When my wife goes on a walk there is no destination, it's just conversation. It's still a little foreign to me but I'm kind of catching on after many years of marriage but we would go on walks together and talk, talk, talk and I actually didn't care where we ended up. I adored her but some would say I worshipped the ground she walked on. That would be adoration. She changed me. If she said she liked something then all of sudden I liked that something. I thought I adored her so much that I wanted to marry her. We did get married and I did adore her completely at that time.

Then she gave birth to our first child. Then I adored her as a mother. Then we went on to have three more. I watched her minister to other women and adored that about her. I have watched her counsel my children. If there is anything that you think that is good in my children it came from the hand of the Lord through my wife. I adore that about her. I adore her friendship. I adore the way she took care of my father as he died. I adore the way she takes care of my mother now and loves her as if she was her own mother. My point is this, at any phase along the way I would have told you that I adored her all that you could adore a woman yet to only find out that as more unfolded I actually could adore her more. I thought there ought to be different words after adore that increase that but that is not the way it is.

It is not the word that has to change but as we think about adoring Christ, Christ is not saying that you have to reach a new level of adoring Him but He is saying that if you know Him at a deeper level then you will adore Him more than you ever thought you would. If you understand Him at a deeper level, if you have a personal relationship with Me at a deeper level, then your adoration will grow exponentially. In the Christmas story from Luke 2 there are several different people and groups of people that we see adoring Christ. I want to point out at least three of them to you.

The first group I want to point out is the shepherds. Luke 2:10–14 says [10] *And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. [11] For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. [12] And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."*

[13] *And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, [14] "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"*

There are these shepherds in a pasture taking care of their flocks at night and an angel appears to them and speaks to them. Of course they are afraid. They are not afraid because that

is what you are supposed to do but they are afraid because this is an angel. The angel tells them to fear not for they are hearing good news where these shepherds are going to get to see the Savior who will be born. I can only imagine that these shepherds probably thought 'are you talking to us? We are going to really get to go and see this Jesus, the Savior that is born?'

Luke 2:15–20 says [15] *When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."* [16] *And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. [17] And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. [18] And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. [19] But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. [20] And the shepherds returned, (adoring) glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.*

When they get to the place where Jesus was they find out that it's exactly what the angel said. It's true. I would say they engaged with Mary and Joseph and told them what the angel had said. Mary might have told the shepherds what the angel said to her and Joseph may have done the same thing. When you adore something you can't stop speaking about it. If you really want to know what you adore then ask your best friends. Ask the people you are around the most. If I adored anything in my life, what would it be? See what your friends would say to that because when you truly adore something you can't stop talking about it. You might even drive others away because they are tired of hearing about that thing you adore.

The shepherds see the baby Jesus and adore Him, they worship Him. They give Him praise. The shepherds were not a well-informed group of people. I would guess that they have some understanding about some prophecies but I would think they weren't watching the stars to see when the Messiah was coming. They are taking care of sheep so they aren't the most learned people in the world. They have this experience with the angel and they are drawn to be able to witness the Savior.

On the other hand, the second group of people I want to point out to you are the wise men. This is a learned group. The wise men have been reading and studying and they are on this journey. They have been looking at these prophecies and they know that a Messiah is coming. They have figured out that He is coming now. That is pretty incredible. Why is it incredible? The Messiah hasn't been declared of for over 400 years. So they have figured this out and the Lord is leading them to that. They in their intelligence and study recognize Him to be the King of Kings and to come and have some sort of platform or throne. They are smart and they want to go see and adore this baby King to be. They don't know how this is going to happen but they do believe that the earth as they know it is going to change. Perhaps it will be a new kingdom or a new king or out with the old king who they would deceive and in with the new King. The wise men want to worship Him and they go prepared to worship. They adored this One who they had not seen yet and went prepared to worship.

One of my favorite moments in life is when you are at the hospital and a woman gives birth to a baby. There is a family out in the waiting room. They don't do it the same way anymore but I sure wish they would go back to the old way. The old way was where this family would be looking through this glass window. Let's say there are 12 babies in the room. This family has all this pinned up love and they are ready to say that one of those 12 babies look just like them. He has Uncle Bob's ear or he has my eyes or he is the most precious one. One of these babies is getting ready to be the most adorable baby and the rest in the room are average. They just don't know which one until the nurse points out which one is theirs. As soon as the

nurse says ‘this is your child’ then they all say ‘that’s the best one!’ All of a sudden all their love gets poured onto that child. They are glad I’m not a nurse because I would mess with them so bad. ‘This is yours, oh no sorry, this one’s yours.’ If that happened the love would just keep shifting to whichever one was pointed at.

The wise men are prepared to worship, they just haven’t seen Christ yet. They are going to worship the Christ, the Messiah, someone just needs to point out which one He is. Finally the Messiah gets unveiled and they come to give gifts fit for a King. They come and adore and worship the King. It’s the fulfillment of all their study, all that they know.

The last person I want to point out is Mary. The Scripture tells us that Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. It’s not surprising that a mother would adore her baby and especially her first born but this is unique. When Christ is born here now begins the fulfillment of this series of promises that Mary has been told by Gabriel but she has no idea how they will unfold. All mothers look at a newborn and wonder what they will be like and how their life will unfold. Mary knows in a sense a context of what it will be but she has no idea how it will unfold. How will He become the King of Kings? How will He become the Lord of Lords? How will He save His people from their sins? She doesn’t know these things but she ponders all that she has been told and she adores her baby. She seeks to honor and worship Christ. I’m sure Mary had a lot of questions about herself. Will I be a good enough mother for a King? I imagine Mary was quite overwhelmed that night.

We come this night to adore our Savior and we can adore our Savior far beyond what the shepherds did and what the wise men did. We even adore our Savior far beyond what Mary could have. We know more than the shepherds. If you know Christ you have had an experience that far outweighs seeing an angel on a hillside. Would you rather have an experience of seeing an angel on a hillside and a multitude of angels declare to you ‘glory to God in the highest and peace among whom God’s favor rests’ or would you rather have the Holy Spirit live inside of you 24/7? You have had a vastly more experience as a brother or sister in Christ than to just see an angel.

You know far more than the wise men who figured out how to find Jesus for you have the Word of God. You have all the truth put before you in His Word. Everything that you need for life and godliness Scripture says is in His Word. You know far more than the wise men and you know more than Mary. You even have a deeper personal relationship than a mother with her child. You have a deep personal relationship with Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord and you adore Him. You adore Him because He is your Savior and you know this is true.

You know that the truth is that you were dead in your trespasses and you could not do anything to save yourself. At some level you wanted to be saved and not to sin the way you were sinning. At some level you wanted to worship Christ and adore Christ at a much deeper level than just at Christmas, yet you couldn’t because you were incapable of saving yourself. So when you adore the baby Christ you adore Him for what He becomes and what He did. God made Him who knew no sin to become sin for us so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God. We might become holy and sanctified through Christ the Savior that we adore.

As the Latin hymn “*Venite Adoremus*” was written – come together all you faithful ones and adore Christ – this evening I can think of no better way to usher in Christmas than to adore our Savior at His Table, the way that He instructed us to remember Him, adore Him and worship Him. The sad reality of Christmas is that many people will celebrate Christmas but they are only going to celebrate the facade of Christmas. They will celebrate gift giving, family and

good times. They will celebrate a weak image of what Christmas truly is. As brothers and sisters in Christ we absolutely celebrate Christmas but we adore our Savior for He, His birth, points us to His death which points us to His resurrection and that points us to His coming again. Does He insight worship in you? Come to the Table and adore your Savior. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, I thank You so much for Jesus Christ. Thank You for Your incredible sacrificial gift to us. Thank You that You have given us a Savior that is adorable and insights adoration, worship and praise from us. It is with all of our being that we want to honor, glorify and praise You. If there is anyone reading this that doesn't know You as their personal Savior, would You by the power of Your Spirit allow them to know and understand the truth of the Gospel, to acknowledge and confess their sins to You and receive You as their personal Savior and Lord? And may they adore You above all things on this earth. Lord, draw Your children now to Your Table that we would do as our Savior instructed us to do and that is to come in remembrance of Him, to come worship and glorify Him, to come and adore Him. O come let us adore Him for I pray that in Christ's Name, Amen.