



UNWRAPPING HOPE THROUGH  
THE SONGS OF CHRISTMAS

PART 3:

“O COME LET US ADORE HIM”

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# Heaven and Nature Sing: *Unwrapping Hope through the Songs of Christmas* "O Come Let Us Adore Him"

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### Part Three : "O Come Let Us Adore Him"

O Come All Ye Faithful

Originally written in Latin and titled: *Adeste Fideles*.  
First print version from 1751, but likely composed in the 13th C.

*O come all ye faithful, joyful and triumphant  
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem  
Come and behold Him, born the King of angels  
O come let us adore Him...Christ the Lord!*

#### I. Attentive

Challenges: Neuroscientists tell us that this sort of world of multi-tasking makes 'paying attention' very difficult, and even disposes us to crave that sort of distraction.

"Multi-tasking creates a dopamine-addiction feedback loop, effectively rewarding the brain for losing focus and for constantly searching for external stimulation. To make matters worse, the prefrontal cortex has a novelty bias, meaning that is attention can be easily hijacked by something new – the

proverbial shiny object we use to entice infants, puppies, and kittens. The irony here for those of us who are trying to focus amid competing activities is clear: the very brain region we need to rely on for staying on task is easily distracted."

- Daniel J. Levitin

Christian spirituality calls us to pay attention:

1. To people around us as an act of love
2. To the world God made and loves
3. To our own internal "heart" space
4. To the brokenness of our world: Howard Thurman says that it is the duty of Christian spirituality to "keep a troubled vigil at the bedside of the world."
5. To God.

Because the Christian faith moves us long past the trivial and into the deep waters of the real world – the one where we experience guilt and loss and despair, as well as longing and desire; and the one where God is present and working if we would take have "eyes to see, and ears to hear" to quote Jesus. Living alive to God in the "real world" calls for attentiveness. And that's what our song is calling for: "*Come and behold him, born the king of angels. O come, let us adore him...*"



## II. Adore

### 1. Adore (means more)

“Adore comes from the Latin word *adorare*, meaning “to worship.” So, when you adore someone, it’s more than just a crush. However, like many words of strong emotion, *adore* gets used in lighter situations as well. Your aunt tells me you just adore the miniature fruitcakes she sends you every holiday.” – Vocaulary.com

Directing our adoration to the “newborn King,” is nothing less than bowing down in reverence, awe, and committed love.

Adore can also mean: “to love intensely.”

There is an *affective* – or emotional – element to love as well as the action of love. Love must be expressed in action but it is also something that connects to our hearts, our desires, our longings. This song calls us to shape our love, our affections, around a Person of Jesus.

“Come, let us bow down in worship,  
let us kneel before the Lord our Maker;  
for he is our God  
and we are the people of his pasture,  
the flock under his care.”

- Psalm 95:6-7

### 2. Why we come and behold Him

Jesus is the “Word of the Father, now in flesh appearing.”

“In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God and the Word was God.”

– John 1:1

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

– John 1:14.

These shepherds – the lowly ones in their day – who are entrusted with this great revelation of the nature and meaning of this baby. The angel tells them: “Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.”

– Luke 2:11

The Savior. The Messiah. The Lord. No wonder they come and “behold *him*” to “*adore him*.” No wonder we continue to!



### 3. Practices of Attentiveness and Adoration: Corporate Worship Engagement

The “Nativity Scene” is a picture where “heaven and nature” sing; every part of creation is bowing in worship to Jesus: the angels, and the star, and the animals; the shepherds, and even Mary and Joseph. “O come let us adore him,” is an invitation for you and I to take our place among the worshipers.

“We live in an environment filled with competing stories that hold out a vision of the good life. For example, every television commercial is a thirty-second “beatitude,” a story of what the “blessed life” looks like – and it’s inevitably tied to a consumer product. We are surrounded by stories. We need practices that draw our attention back to the story that, for us, trumps all others”- Barry Jones

“The public worship gathering is a school for our affections [our heart’s desires], a space in our lives where we take our eyes off the things we love more than we ought and put them, as it were, on the one we ought to love more than we do.” - Barry Jones

### III. We Praise What We Adore – And want other to as well

“But the most obvious fact about praise — whether of God or anything — strangely escaped me. I thought of it in terms of compliment, approval, or the giving of honor. I had never noticed that *all enjoyment spontaneously overflows into praise...*” - C.S. Lewis

“The world rings with praise — lovers praising their mistresses [Romeo praising Juliet and vice versa], readers their favourite poet, walkers praising the countryside, players praising their favourite game — praise of weather, wines, dishes, actors, motors, horses, colleges, countries, historical personages, children, flowers, mountains, rare stamps, rare beetles, even sometimes politicians or scholars....”  
“I had not noticed either that just as men spontaneously praise whatever they value, so they spontaneously urge us to join them in praising it: “Isn’t she lovely? Wasn’t it glorious? Don’t you think that magnificent?”

“I think we delight to praise what we enjoy because *the praise not merely expresses but completes the enjoyment.*” - C.S. Lewis

After celebrating with Mary and Joseph, we read that the shepherds “spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.”

- Luke 2:17-18

With the shepherds, our journey “to come and adore him” also becomes the fuel of our mission. When we “behold him”, we too, like the shepherds in this story, will have something to share.

### V. Who is invited?

Jesus says: “Come to me all who are weary and carry heavy burdens and I will give you rest.”

- Matthew 12:28



*O come all ye unfaithful, weary and heavy laden  
Fly to the King of Angels, forgiveness is your haven  
Christ was born, Christ was born, Christ was born for you*

*O come all ye destitute, broken and ruined by sin  
Behold God in fierce pursuit, chasing and hemming you in  
Christ was torn, Christ was torn, Christ was torn for you*

*We adore you, bow before you  
Come and undo our hearts today*

To sing these songs, even when we don't feel it – maybe especially when we don't 'feel it' – that is itself an act of faith. So come, all you unfaithful – weary and broken. Come all you joyful, all you triumphant, for Jesus is our Joy and Triumph.

### **Life Group Discussion and Reflection**

1. Who first invited you to “Come and adore Him” – who first introduced you to Jesus? What was that experience like?
2. **Read Luke 2:6-16.** How do the shepherds respond to the angel initially? What message did the angels deliver to them?
3. Why do you think it might be significant that shepherds were the first people outside of Jesus' immediate family chosen to have the **meaning** of Jesus' birth announced to them? How do you think hearing what the angels said was an encouragement to Mary and Joseph?
4. This scene is filled with both joy and praise. Why is that? How is the same true for us today?
5. How can we be people of joy and praise even when the world we inhabit, and the experience we might be personally experiencing are less than ideal?
6. The shepherds cannot contain their excitement about what they have experienced. Why is it that we often feel 'contained' with regards to telling others about the meaning of Jesus' birth? How might the regular practice of “beholding him” shift that?
7. The invitation of our song is directed to those who are “Faithful, joyful and triumphant.” What do we do with this song when we don't feel that way? How can it be true that both the 'triumphant' and the 'triumphant...failures' can both sing this song with integrity? **See Matt 12:28.**

**Pray** for each other, in whatever sort of trouble or triumph each person is going through. Pray that our church community would be deeply engaged with sharing the news of Jesus out of a deep encounter of joy in Him.

