

## **HYMNS OF CHRISTMAS AND EASTER**

Early Monday morning as I was preparing Coral's lunch bag for school, I found myself starting to sing a few Christmas hymns. Naturally, one would think with this being Holy Week that I would be singing Good Friday or Easter hymns. As I began thinking about the strangeness of singing Christmas hymns at this time, I realized that this was not a conscious decision on my part but a "God choice" instead.

I am not musical like some ministers are. Usually when I find myself starting to sing around the house it is a result of God placing some song on my heart rather than me choosing something familiar. Based on this experience, it made me begin to ponder why God would place Christmas hymns on my heart during Holy Week. Once again, it took me walking our dog Daisy around the block to discover the answer – **BOTH CHRISTMAS AND EASTER DEAL WITH LIFE!**

Appearances by angels at both of these times remind us of this connection. It was just over three months ago that we were reading a lot about the angels appearing to the shepherds in the fields that night.

***I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Saviour – yes, the Messiah, the Lord has been born today in Bethlehem, the City of David. (Luke 2: 10-11)***

Thirty-three years later we would see the appearance of two angels at the tomb when the women arrived early that Sunday morning. These two angels clothed in dazzling robes said:

***Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive?  
He isn't here! He is risen from the dead! (Luke 24: 5-6)***

The angels' words remind us that Christmas and Easter both have connections to LIFE. The hymns bring out this same message.

Think of some of the hymns we sing at Christmas. Remember these opening words to *Hark! The Herald Angels Sing*:

**Hark! the herald angels sing  
Glory to the newborn King,  
Peace on Earth and mercy mild,  
God and sinners reconciled.**

Or the ending words to *Angels from The Realms of Glory*:

**Come and worship  
Come and worship  
Worship Christ the newborn King.**

And of course, the words from *Joy to The World*:

**Joy to the world the Lord is come.**

**Let Earth receive its King.**

Christmas hymns such as these bring out the themes of life, joy, Jesus as King, worship, and reconciliation. Don't we see these same themes come out in our Easter hymns.

Take for instance the hymn, *Thine Be the Glory*:

**Thine be the glory, risen conquering Son,**

**Endless is the victory thou over death hast won.**

And let us not forget these words from *Jesus Christ Is Risen Today*:

**Jesus Christ is risen today, Hallelujah!**

**Our triumphant holy day, Hallelujah!**

**Who did once upon the cross, Halleluiah!**

**Suffer to redeem our loss. Hallelujah!**

There are common themes between the hymns of Christmas and Easter: life, rejoicing, triumph and victory, reconciliation, and Jesus our King. When we look at it in these terms it is not unusual that God had me singing Christmas hymns rather than Easter hymns early Monday morning.

The fact that as Christians we can find ourselves singing hymns about birth and life in a week that is about a loss serves as a reminder of the blessings that come from having a faith:

- No matter what season it is, Jesus can keep us singing,
- Even in periods of death, we see life,
- Even on Fridays not considered "good", we still see God's goodness,
- Even when there is despair, we see hope,
- And even when it is Easter we can still sing about Christmas and Christ's birth.

It was not just a mere coincidence that I suddenly found myself singing Christmas hymns on Monday of Holy Week with Good Friday and Easter fast approaching. This was God's doing to remind us all that Christmas and Easter are joined together to show us how blessed we are to live our lives now and forever with Jesus as our King and Risen Lord.

Keep singing this week and if you should happen to sing a Christmas hymn or two don't worry, it's okay, at least you can say "my Pastor does it too!"

God Bless and Keep Safe

Pastor Dean