

What Peace To All Men

Darryl Delhousaye

Psalm 139

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Good afternoon, and Merry Christmas. Folks, we've got one week left of our week. Come on, what time of the year do you ever have... You're going down the mall and you hear Beyonce singing, Oh, Holy Night. I mean, come on. That doesn't happen in any of the other months. And then, you can talk about Jesus and people don't get weirded out if it's around Christmas. And when people say at the shops, "Happy holiday," don't get all weirded out. Just say, "Happy holy days to you," and just walk on. And let them think about it. Let them think about it. But at a time when Christmas like this, we reflect on the Christmas story a lot. And I love the Christmas story, although at the very end, the last part of the story leaves me with a question that each year I just wonder.

And the question's basically this, do angels lie? I'm not talking about fallen angels, because they're their father of the devil according to Jesus and John eight. Of course they lie. I'm talking about the angels of God. Do angels lie? And the reason I ask is because of this poor subscription, that first Christmas night. And you got the angels basically showing up to the shepherds. And you know the story, Luke 2, listen to verse eight. And in the same region there were shepherds out in the fields. That's always so embarrassing, isn't it? The phone is going. If it's Jesus, let me know. On that one. But the shepherds are out in the field. Now, this is wintertime and some critics say, well, this has got to be a myth because shepherds wouldn't be out in the wintertime with their flocks. Well, they need to know their facts, because the temple sacrifice went all year long. And the shepherds for the temple were out seeing the sheep that would be the slaughtered sheep for the sacrifices throughout the winter.

So of course it's wintertime, shepherds are in the field keeping watch over their flock by night. And the angel of the Lord appeared to them. Now, I'm not sure which angel, who this is. But I love guessing, myself. We only have two angels named by name. Of course, we got Michael, the archangel, and he fights spiritual wars. But who showed up to Mary to tell her about the story, the first Christmas story? That was Gabriel. Who showed up to Joseph. And I said, "Joseph, relax, it's going to be okay. That was Gabriel." So my guess, is I wonder, this seems to be a Simon Gabriel has. So an angel of the Lord, possibly Gabriel, shows up. Appears to them. And the glory of the Lord shown around them, and they were filled with fear. You would be too, and so therefore the angel says, "Fear not. For behold, I bring you good news of great joy."

Remind me of that little kid that he was going to speak had a line at the Christmas pageant. Back in the days we had Christmas pageants, and all the kids would do the Christmas story. And this little kid was assigned the angel part, and he only had one line. "I bring good tidings." That was it. But he didn't have a clue what tidings meant. So he asked his buddy, "What does tidings mean?" He said, "It means news. News." So of course the night pageant comes and finally in the

middle of it the angel speaks, and here's his time for his one line. And of course, he forgets it. And after about a moment of pause and embarrassment, he just blurts out, "Boy, do I have good news for you." And that's really what you have right here. This angel, or Gabriel says, "Boy, do I have good news for you, that's going to be for all people. For under you is born this day in the city of David."

He would've known this because God had told Micah the prophet 600 years before it would be in Bethlehem. So this angel knew all about that. City of David, where David was born, would be the very little town that the Savior would be born. He says, "The Savior who was Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign to you, you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths lying in a manger." But then suddenly there was, with the angel, a multitude of heavenly hosts praising God. I'm always curious about these kinds of things. How big is a multitude? Who all shows up to this thing? You understand, there was a custom in the early days at this time in a village that if a baby was born, everybody in the village showed up to celebrate the birth of the baby.

But Mary and Joseph, they're 80 miles away from anybody even knows that they're there. So who's going to show up and celebrate the birth of this child? Well, what's interesting to me, years ago in my study of Hebrews. I have some of my Jewish friends and some of my Islamic friends, they say I'm a blasphemer. They like me, but I'm a blasphemer. And I say, "Well, why do you say that?" "Well, because you worship Jesus as God." "There's only one God. We worship God. And if you worship Jesus, you're a blasphemer." To which I always take him to Hebrews 1:6, it says, "And again, when he brings the first born into the world, he says that all God's angels worship him." So I said, "If I'm a blasphemer, I'm not doing anything different than the angels are doing that God commanded them to do."

But here's what's interesting. Notice the verse. And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world. Now, when did he bring the firstborn, the one over authority, over this new family of God? When did he bring him into the world? Now, when in doubt, just say Christmas. Christmas. So at Christmas, this is when he brought the firstborn into this world. And at Christmas, God tells the angels to do what? Worship him. Now picture this. Psalm 68 tells us there's thousands upon thousands of angels. Hebrew says there's myriads upon myriads and thousands upon thousands. A myriad is 10,000, 10,000 times 10,000, that's 200 million. Plus thousands and thousands. There's a lot. Now here's my question. If you knew, because 600 years ago the prophet said it's going to happen in Bethlehem. If you knew, because 800 years before that, before this Christmas, Isaiah talked about the birth of this child. Emmanuel.

And you knew that God the father has commanded you to worship the son, the firstborn, when he comes into this world, are you going to stay home and have a cup of coffee? When he says multitude, guess who's there? I don't think any angels stayed home. I think we're talking about all the angels in heaven showed up because this is a big deal. And their spokesman says this. They're saying glory to God in the highest. And on earth, peace among those with whom he is pleased. I am well acquainted that the traditional translation of the King James is glory to God and the highest and on earth, peace, goodwill to men. I like that translation. It's not what the

angel said, but I like that translation. But what the angels actually said, glory to God and the highest. And on earth, peace among men with whom he is pleased. Now who would he have been pleased with? Well, John 1:12, as many as received this child, this Christmas child.

To him God gave the authority to become the children of God. No longer just a mere creature, but a child in a relationship with a heavenly Father. So those who receive the Christmas gift received this child, recognize who the child was. These are those whom God is pleased. And he makes a promise here, and the angel promises there's going to be peace. Now that brings up my question, do angels lie? Because I'm looking around and I'm not seeing a whole lot of it. On the other hand, Jesus comes later as he grows. And he says in John 14:27, that I come and I brought peace. So there's a peace between God and me. And there needed to be a peace, because we had a problem. Think about it. Here's a loving God who creates us, and we turn our back and we walk away, and we pretend he doesn't even exist or has nothing to say.

We want to be left alone. We want to be out of his presence. That's what the Bible calls sin. The greatest insult ever been committed. And for all of us we've sinned. But God so loved the world, he made Christmas. In other words, he provided a way that we could receive forgiveness for that cosmic betrayal, and we could be invited back into his family. Instead of being a mere creature fearing some creator who is mysterious, we could actually be as it says in 2 Corinthians 6:18, I will be a father to you and you'll be sons and daughters to me. That was the relationship he wanted. And that's the peace between you and God. God and you provided by Jesus Christ on that cross. When he took upon himself the just wrath of God upon our arrogance, and he paid the price. And God accepted that gift of the Son because on the third day, oh, we'll celebrate that in a few months. Raised him from the dead.

So here we are. And so I understand that he came peace between God and man, between God and me. But Jesus seems to imply something else when he says, but I don't give you peace like the world gives. I'll give you my peace, the peace I've lived with during these three years on this earth. And he had a lot of stuff to fear all around him all the time. But he promises this fear. And again, is he lying? Do the angels lie? How's the peace going to be manifested? Well, remember Jesus plays this part of God, spirit of God within every one of us. Because like in Ephesians 1:17, you heard the gospel, you believed. It says you were sealed by the Holy Spirit. Jesus put it this way in John 14, when the guys are all bummed out, he says, I'm not going to leave you as orphans, I'm not going to leave you alone.

But he says, I will ask the Father and he will send the paraclete, the Holy Spirit. And then he says this, he'll not only be with you, he'll be in you. So how do I know? How does the Holy Spirit in me manifest himself? If I'm in the right place, apparently it's manifested by the experience of things like love, joy. And what? Peace. But where is it?

Sometime ago I was asked to write an article for Arizona Republic. That's a newspaper. We used to have newspapers we'd read the news out of. And I wrote the short article. And the big surprise, it was supposed to be our hope for our community, as a one of the spiritual leaders of the community. And I was surprised they printed mine, because mine was about the fear of my

community. I had read this article by Linton Weeks in the Washington Post, and I was interested in his title, Fear Factory. Urged on by our leaders, America's a quivering land of cowardly scaredy cats. I thought, I got to read this. And he goes on, he writes, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, bird flu, hurricane, sex offenders, new and terrible forms of cancer, sexually transmitted diseases, Alzheimer's. I'm interested in that one now. Crystal meth labs, lawsuits, prison breaks, female suicide bombers, wildfires.

He goes on a big list, and it really puts you in a Christmas spirit. Then he says the land is in lockdown. 70 years ago, Franklin D. Roosevelt told the country the only thing we have to fear is, fear itself. Today we are told to fear everything. But fear itself, let's admit it, we are living in a fraidy cat nation. I'll tell you, this last couple years, boy, what I've learned is I was surprised at how many people are driven by fear. Dear lady riding her bike on a beautiful day last week. Air, beautiful, clear. And she's by herself on her bike and she's wearing a mask. And that's okay, because I felt very protected. Okay, she got near. But I just was praying, Lord, I hope that does not signify that her life, that we're afraid of each other. We're afraid of disease, we're afraid of this, we're afraid of that.

But that's pretty much where the world feeds us. Well, in this article he says our core problem... I love when scientists begin to study and understand how the functions of the design that God has designed our bodies with. And apparently, at the very stem of our brain we have a thing called the amygdala. The amygdala, kind of fun to say. The amygdala. And it's a bobsled shaped little organ at the stem of the brain. And it has no intelligence, it doesn't think, it just feels. It's the center of your emotion connection. And it's the first thing when you sense something, any of your senses, it first goes to your amygdala. And your reaction is how you feel about what you just sensed, would smell, taste, whatever it is. Probably is, have you ever been with anybody inconsolable? Or absolutely so angry they are unreasonable?

It's because they're stuck in their amygdala. It's supposed to go up and then process in the frontal cortex where you draw some conclusions, you process the information. Some say that's why you slap somebody in the back of the head to get it out of the amygdala. I do not suggest that's what we do. All right? I've been just told that. But what's interesting is this doctor, New York medical doctor who studied this, wrote an article called, False Alarm: The Truth about the Epidemic of Fear. And he said the same amygdala that processes fear also processes positive emotions. The amygdala, if it's not fueled with fear, it's free to experience courage, passion, laughter can get in. What they're saying, is they found that the amygdala can only feel one emotion at a time. So whatever emotion you put there, it's there, and no other emotion can be felt.

That's why when you're really, really angry and you're losing it, you can't really feel any other emotion, as long as you have your amygdala stuffed with anger. So it does with fear. The media, people around, there are people that don't feel they had a good day unless they somehow scared you to death on something. And so this fear, have you ever been to the northern coast of California? There's a place we go there often. And during the wintertime the fog, it comes in at night. Early in the morning, the fog. But then the land begins to warm up and the fog doesn't go

away, it's just pushed out about two miles into the ocean. And then it waits. And then during the evening when the land starts cooling down, the fog returns, again and again. And it's just like fear. It's like our fallback.

We live in a broken world with broken people trying to break people. And every day, throughout the day, there's things to fear. And that fog keeps coming in, keeps coming in. And so what happens, if I live fear, if I'm totally thinking, focusing on fear, it will paralyze me so that I cannot feel even the promised peace that an angel promised. That Jesus promised. That the spirit of God promised. Because I cannot feel another emotion even if it's promised and produced by God, as long as I have stuffed my amygdala with fear. I've never seen a fraidy cat with joy. Have you? Now, here's what Jesus actually said in John 14. Peace I leave with you. That's your relationship with God. But my peace I give to you, not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful.

Because apparently Jesus knew, way before these doctors, that fear would keep you from experiencing the peace that he's offered. Now, okay, so Jesus says, okay, so don't fear. All right, I'm not going to be afraid. I'm not going to be fearful. I'm not going to fear. I will not think about fear. I will not embrace fear. And guess what I'm thinking about right now? Fear. It's like red. Think of the color red. Last night I wore my red vest. This morning people started saying, "Where's your red vest?" You haven't seen my shoes and my socks, have you? Only once a year I can get away with it. But red. Think of a red shirt, a red horse, a red dog. Just red, red. Get in your mind red. You got it?

Now, how do you stop thinking about red? By going, okay, I don't want to think about red. Okay, I will not. No, no red. Red doesn't exist. I will not think about red. And the more you think about not thinking about red, the more you're going to be thinking about what? Red. So how do you stop thinking red? Think blue. Very good. Think blue. If you think blue, you're not going to think about red. If red is the fear, the fog that keeps coming in, and in, and in. How do I fear not and clear my amygdala for a promised peace? So when I stop thinking red, I start thinking blue. Well, how do you start thinking blue? Meditation.

What is meditation? Usually we think of a meditation about eastern meditation. You just kind of close your eyes, light a candle, put a little spa music on and open your mind to whatever pops in. I wonder if Judas did that? Lit his candle, little spa music, and just opened up his mind as the thought came in. Let's betray Jesus Christ. That John 13:2 says, the devil put it into the heart of Judas. It's dangerous just to open our minds up to anything. And that's not biblical meditation. Biblical meditation is given to us in the first Psalm. Psalm 1:2, when it says, and when we meditate, we meditate on the word of God. Because all the word meditate means is to tell yourself, talk to yourself.

Sometimes people catch me talking to myself. That's okay, I'm not embarrassed. That's the most intelligent conversation I usually have the whole day. But the fact is there is somebody that no matter what you tell them, they're going to believe you. You can lie right through your teeth, they'll believe you every time. And you know who it is? It's you. It's me. Whatever we tell

ourselves, we believe. So if that be the case, bad case of the normals, what should we be concerned about? Whatever I'm telling myself needs to be the what? The truth. I need to make sure I'm telling myself the truth. Because I'm telling myself lies because other people have told me to believe and think about these lies, then I am going to believe them. I got to start thinking blue. Because how can I be sure I'm thinking truth? Blue? It's the word of God.

What does God say about this thing, about fear? What's the blue? What am I supposed to be meditating, telling myself so I can get off the red, away from the fog, and have space to accept what the angel promised? What Jesus promised? What the Holy Spirit's ready to produce? Rabbi ben Ezra, talk to any of your Jewish friends, they know of this man. 12th century ad, probably the most famous Jewish rabbi ever lived. And he said there was a Psalm. He said, the Psalm of the Psalms that more than any other Psalm tells us the ways of God. That when you think about God, your heavenly Father, think about him this way. And Psalm 139, and it really has you ask yourself four questions. Why am I fearful if my heavenly **Father's omniscient**? Why am I fearful if my heavenly **Father is omnipresent**? Why am I afraid if my heavenly **Father's omnipotent**? Why would I be fearful if my heavenly **Father's intimate**?

See, we got to ask ourself the question, do we believe what we believe? In other words, do I trust? Do I choose to trust what I believe? So when I'm thinking red, think blue. What's the blue? What does God say? What's the truth? I need to start telling myself the truth. And that's what Psalm 1:39 does. He begins by saying this. This is a Psalm written either by David, or they said in the spirit of David by Zechariah during the Babylonian exile when the children of Israel really down and depressed, because seemed like their whole country was gone. But he says the first thing when you think about your heavenly Father, almost like my dad can beat up your dad.

Let me tell you the first thing about my spiritual father, he's omniscient. It says, "Oh Lord, you have searched me and known me." The Psalm ends with, "Oh Lord, search my heart and know me." So this is all about God and what he knows about you. "You know when I sit down, you know when I rise up. You have discerned my thoughts from afar. You search out my path and my lying down. Ah, you're acquainted with all of my ways. Now, even before a word is on my tongue, behold Lord, you know it altogether. You hem me in from behind, from before. You lay your hand on me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It's too high for me to attain it."

Did you know that God fully understands me? Even before I speak, he knows what I'm thinking. He knows why I'm thinking it. He knows how I feel about thinking it. And he knows what I'm going to say before I even say it. It says that God knows me, he's acquainted with all my ways, speaks of this intimacy. He says he searched me out, sifting through until he finds what the reality of my true emotions are all about. God's aware of everything I think, every motive I have, everything I desire.

Have you ever been misunderstood? It's really a bummer, isn't it? I remember I was preaching here about a year, year and a half ago I guess it was. And I had mentioned that there's one playground I don't want to play on, and that's the playground between the ears of God. I don't want to be thinking about, I know how God thinks and processes information, when it's a

mystery within the mind of God. That's what Job learned in the Book of Job. Infinite mind of God, trying to be understood by puny, finite mind like yours and mine. It's logical there's going to be spillage. When I say, well, I'm sorry. If I can't understand it, it can't be understood. Why God would do this, why this would happen, why a child would die. I'm sorry, if I can't understand it, it can't be understood. How arrogant is that? Can an infinite mind maybe understand things that I can't? That's the omniscient of God.

Well, what you have here, is his whole point is that God is going, well this guy, he went to Pastor John and complained. He says, you have an open theist on your staff. What's an open theist? Open theism teaches that God does not know the future or control the future, he's as surprised about it as you are. He just knows how to handle it. I am not an open theist. That's not what the Bible says God's like. And I so begged John to tell me who this person was so I could just go and smack him in the back of his head. No, just lovingly share, clarify what I was meaning by what I said.

But I have a heavenly Father who absolutely understands me. My motives. Never misunderstands my heart. This is the blue dot. This is blue. This is the truth. This is my heavenly Father. He's got my back because he doesn't misunderstand me. But not only is he omniscient, but also omnipresent. Look at verses 7-12. Where shall I go from your spirit? Or, where shall I flee from your presence? I want to run somewhere, hide somewhere that you don't know where I am. That is so ludicrous.

Some people believe they've done it. Like you're outside the presence of God. Listen to what he says. "If I ascend to heaven, you're there. If I make my bed in Sheol, the grave, you're there. Boy, if I take the wings of the morning, speed of light, and I dwell in the other most parts of the seas far as you can go, and even there your hand shall lead me. Your right hand shall hold me." If I say surely the darkness will cover me. I'm going to get a little closet and hide and God will never see me, and then I can do whatever I want. He says, that's stupid. That's my translation. Sorry, mom. "And the light about me be night. Even the darkness is not dark to you. The night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light with you."

You know what he's saying? God's omnipresent. Says wings of the morning, I can't get out of his presence. I'm always in his presence no matter where I go. Some people take Jeremiah 23 and they misunderstand that he's talking about pantheism, that God is everything. God is this stage. God is this, whatever you call this thing. Podium, made out of tubes and pipes. Excellent. But this is God. That's pantheism. But that's not what the Bible says. Jeremiah 23:23 says this, "I am I of God at hand, declares the Lord. And not a God afar off. Can a man hide himself in secret places so that I cannot see him? Declares the Lord, do I not fill heaven and the earth? Declares the Lord." Oh yeah, Revelation is right, God has location, throne. But everything is in his presence.

Everything is in his presence. And no matter if it's distance or it's dark, you're never going to be abandoned. You're never going to be alone no matter how much you want to be alone in this universe. And it makes absolute sense. Why? Remember what Jesus said? I will ask the Father,

he'll send the comforter. He'll send the spirit of God who'll be with you. And where? In you. If part of God's presence is in me, how do I get out of God's presence? I can't. Because in my life, not only is he omniscient, he knows my every thought. Not only is he here, omnipresent. But thirdly, he's omnipotent. Listen to this mystery, verse 13. "For you were formed. For you formed my inward parts. You knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are thy works, and my soul knows it very well."

Boy, I need that verse from time to time. I look in the mirror, it don't look so wonderful. But God defines me, not me. Wonderful are your works. My frame, that's my bone structure. There's a reason I never made six foot, because that was never designed in my mother's womb to be six foot. That's your bone structure. My frame was not hidden from you. When I was made in secret, intimately, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. That's a picture of mother's womb. He says, your eyes saw my unformed substance. That means every part of me. Inside of every part of me, God, you designed it. And in your books were written. What was written? Were every one of them. Every one of what? The days that were formed for me when is yet there were none of them. This is God's omnipotence. He created me in my mother's womb, my inward parts, my bone structure, my skeleton. Every simple organ that he designed and formed my unformed substance.

What's interesting is that this has really something to say about some issues in our culture today. This whole pro-choice, pro-life. Jeremiah 1:5, God says, "Jeremiah, I called you to be a prophet to the nation of Israel when you were in your mother's womb." Isaiah 49, God says, "I formed you in the womb of your mother, and have formed you to be my servant here, wonderful how thy works." Every part of my body created by an omnipotent powerful God. See, there is one statement that cannot be denied on either side. On either side. A life is lost. You can debate what the life is all you want, but a life in the womb of a mother is lost. And God's engaged. But what he's talking about here is my heavenly Father is omniscient. He knows everything about me. He's omnipresent. I'm always in his presence. He's omnipotent. He made me. All the parts of me. He made me.

But then one more, His imminence. Look how intimate he is, verses 17 and 18. "How precious to me are your thoughts. Oh God, how vast is the sum of them. If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake and I'm still with you." I awake and I'm still with you. I don't know how that works. This is, again, infinite mind to trying to be understood by this finite brain. But somehow I know we think about God off and on. But according to the scripture, the truth, the blue, is God's always thinking about you. Does that tie to his spirit within you always communicating to the father about you? I don't know how that works, but I know that's the blue. That's the truth. That's what scripture says.

So it's not like God has bits of thoughts about you from time to time when he's in a good mood. He's always thinking about us. I have his focus. Next time you think about your unimportance, just remember, like I said, you don't define yourself. God defines you. And you have a heavenly Father who's always with you. And the heavenly Father who is there close, intimately involved

in every detail of your life. This whole Psalm is Psalm'd up really in one short little Psalm. I know I memorized it long, long time ago. And sometimes in the middle of the night and I wake up and the fog starts rolling in, and the red starts filling my amygdala. How do I start thinking blue? How do I heat up and push the fog away so that the spirit of God can produce that?

I'm going to be okay. My heaven Father has my back. It's a 23rd Psalm, just a short little Psalm. Memorize it in 10 minutes. And it begins it, it ends. It's a peak. And there's three words right in the middle. Right in the very middle. It starts off, the Lord is my shepherd, so I shall not want. I'm going to be okay. I'm covered. He makes me to lie down in green pastures. I'm a sheep, I don't like to lie down. He makes me lie down and enjoy the blessings of the green grass. And yeah, times he'll take me aside to the cool, cool water and restore my soul. Remind me who I am, one of his children.

And then he guides me in the paths of righteousness. All the right paths, for his namesake. And here we go towards the peak. And though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, the fog's coming in. The thoughts are all red. But then he says, I fear no evil. Now we're right in the middle of the Psalm, and there's three little Hebrew words. We translate it, though I walk through the valley shadow of death, I'll fear no evil for thou art with me. In the Hebrew it's simply, you with me. At the very peak, you, my child, with me. Then you go down the backside of the mountain. Therefore, he presents before me a table in the presence of my enemies. People want to hurt me. I get hurt a little bit here and there. He anoints my head with oil, my cup overflows.

Of course, surely goodness, and loving kindness. Mercy going to follow me all the days of my life. And what should I fear when the whole thing ends? I shall dwell in the house of the... How long? Forever. Why would I fear? I need to be telling myself the truth, because my heavenly Father is big. Is powerful. My dad can beat your dad. Because my heavenly Father is omniscient, he's omnipresent, he's omnipotent, he's imminent. Might read you just part of my little article I wrote, since no one is ever going to read it again.

I have a plaque in my office that keeps asking me the question, what would I do if I was not afraid? As one columnist of the Washington Post has written, we are being so traumatized by everything around us that we are fearing everything. But what we ought to be fearing is the fear. What has happened to us? We've become a frightened people. And as darkness is the absence of light, fear is the absence of peace. I've been told that the devil is in the details, but my experience is just the opposite. I find great comfort knowing that my God is in the details of my life. Do we have God's attention? Do you want to summarize Christmas? It's the answer to that question. Do we have God's attention? My hope for our community this year is that we would begin to look for God's presence and engagement in our lives.

I just finished a series on first, second, third, John. And I love those books because they're written by John when he was an old man, like me. And you can get a little snarky when you get older, people forgive you. They think, he's just an old guy. So my filters are getting a little thinner. I know, but I just don't care anymore. But he summarizes this whole thing when he says in chapter four of first John, there is no fear in love, but perfect love cast out fear. You know

what love feels like? Feels like you're safe. You know you're loved when you feel safe. God, our heavenly Father, loves us. And he's powerful. And he's the one that wants to make us feel safe. Because when I feel safe is when I feel peace. And angels don't lie. And Jesus didn't lie. The spirit of God is real. And that sense that I don't have to be afraid. That silent night wasn't so silent.

I read this article about these two ladies standing in the street, looking in a department store through a big glass window. And they had a Christmas scene. All the clay figures, they had the clay figure of baby Jesus, the manger, Joseph, Mary, the shepherds, the donkey, the animals. The one lady looked and she was just disgusted. Said, "There they go again. Church trying to horn in on Christmas." Beloved, this is our month. Christmas belongs to us. And we have one week left when we celebrate. For in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. And the Word was God. All things came into being through him. Without him, nothing's come into being. And remember verse 14. What is verse 14? What's the answer? Christmas. For the Word became flesh and dwell among us, so that we could behold the glory of God himself.

Oh, man. Merry Christmas. Heavenly Father, I would pray that this week, we've got a week left, that we would show Christmas. Not so much by our lights on our home, or our Christmas trees, or the gifts that we give, or the food we enjoy. But Father, this week would you give us this prayer request? That we would just in our interactions as we talk to people, as we shop, as we're working, that we let people just see the peace within us. That we're not driven by fear, we're not afraid of them. We're not afraid of anyone, because we have a heavenly Father. A heavenly Father who's powerful, and he has our back. And he keeps thinking of us wanting to say, I've got you. I've got you. I've got you. And then Lord, with that peace, may people see the truth of Christmas. This we ask in the name of Jesus Christ. And God's people said, amen. Merry Christmas.