

Christmas Eve meditation

Rev. Bill Pinches

Mason First Presbyterian Church

Mason, Michigan

December 24, 2023

So ... why are you here tonight? Are you here because you're here pretty much week in and week out? Are you here because you come from time to time? Are you here because you're in town visiting your family? Are you here because somebody dragged you here, or because you'll feel guilty if you don't show up? Are you here because you saw our beautiful building and wanted to come check us out? Are you here because of the traditions, or the music? Are you here looking for *hope*?

I'll tell you why you're here. You're here because there is a *God*. A God who created this magnificent universe. A God who birthed the stars of Orion, the rings of Saturn, and the moons of Jupiter. A God who fashioned this world and all the creatures, both great and small, that inhabit it—the beasts of the earth, the fish of the sea, the birds in the sky. A God who made us, our hearts, our lungs, our eyes, our minds, our baby toes and our pinky fingers. A God who gave us desires and longings, passions and feelings, the gift of wonder, the blessing of joy, and the capacity to experience grief and pain. A God who created all this because it was *very good*. A God who delights in *you*.

But that's not all. This God didn't just *create*. This God also *moves*. *Breathes* over the surface of the earth. Blesses us with gifts, tangible and material, the ones we can see and touch and taste, and blesses us with intangible gifts as well. Love. Friendship. Peace. The precious gift of the Holy Spirit.

But that's not all. This God does more than breathe; this God *grieves*. Grieves at the stark reality of human suffering. Weeps with those caught in harm's way, whether from natural disasters or disease or man-made war or seemingly random acts of violence. Comforts us in our suffering. Sends healing and comfort in a myriad of ways. This is a God who listens to us, who hears our fervent prayers. This is a God who yearns with us for a better world, a world free of sin and suffering and death. Yearns for the creation to be as God originally intended it to be, a place of freedom and joy.

But that's not all. This God does more than yearn. This God *acts*. This God sent us a Savior. A Redeemer. A Lord. To save each and every one of us. To redeem this world from the ravages of sin and death. To guide us and to lead us. Someone whom we can trust *absolutely*, someone whom we can follow *resolutely*. Someone who wants to be our Teacher, our Brother, and our Friend.

So why are you here tonight? Are you here to worship our Savior and Lord? That's the *right* reason. But it's just the beginning. If you're here to worship our Savior and Lord, then I invite you to take the next step. Give him your heart. Follow him. Sit at his feet. *Learn* from him. Do as he bids you. I guarantee you: if more people did that, if more people made that a priority in their lives, this world would be *such* a better place. A world *radiant* with peace and joy and blessings for *all*.

Go home. Enjoy Christmas. Then, ponder. Ponder the blessings in your life and the gifts that you have been given. Ponder your commitment to our Lord who came to earth because *he loves you*.

© 2023 Rev. Bill Pinches