

FROM THE PASTOR

**THE MAN AND THE BIRDS
 BY PAUL HARVEY**



The Christmas Story ... the God-born-in-a-manager and all that ... escape some moderns. Mostly, I think, because they seek complex answers to their questions, and this one is so utterly simple. For the cynics, the skeptics and the unconvinced I submit a modern parable. This is about a modern man. One of us.

He was not a Scrooge. He was a kind, decent, mostly good man. Generous to his family, upright in his dealings with other men. But he did not believe in all that Incarnation stuff which the churches proclaim at Christmas time. It just didn't make sense and he was too honest to pretend otherwise.

He just could not swallow that Jesus story. About God coming to earth as a man. "I am truly sorry to distress you," he told his wife, "but I am not going with you to church this Christmas Eve." He said he'd feel like a hypocrite. That he would much rather stay home. But that he would wait up for them. He stayed. They went. Shortly after the family drove away in the car, snow began to fall. He went to the window to watch the flurries getting heavier and heavier, then went back to his fireside chair and began to read his newspaper.

Minutes later he was startled by a thudding sound. Then another, then another. At first he thought someone must be throwing snowballs against his living room window. When he went to the front door to investigate, he found a flock of birds huddled miserable in the snow. They had been caught in the storm and in a desperate search for shelter had tried to fly through his large landscape window.

Well ... he couldn't let the poor creatures lie there and freeze. He remembered the barn where his children stabled their pony. That would provide a warm shelter if he could direct the birds to it. He quickly put on a coat, galoshes. Tramped through the deepening snow to the barn. He opened the doors wide and turned on a light. But the birds did not come in. He figured food would entice them in and he hurried back to the house, fetched breadcrumbs, sprinkled them on the snow, making a trail to the yellow-lighted wide-open doorway of the stable. But to his dismay the birds ignored the breadcrumbs and continued to flop around helplessly in the snow.

He tried catching them. He tried shooing them into the barn by walking around them waving his arms. Instead they scattered in every direction – except into the warm lighted barn. Then he realized they were afraid of him. "To them" he reasoned. "I am a strange and terrifying creature. If only I could think of some way to let them know that can trust me, that I'm not trying to hurt them, but to help them." How? Any move he made tended to frighten them, confuse them. They just would not follow ... they would not be led or shooed because they feared him. If only I could be a bird myself, he thought. If only I could be a bird and mingle with them and speak their language and tell them not to be afraid and show them the way to the safe, warm barn. But I'd have to be one of them ... so they could see ... and hear and understand...

At the moment, the church bells began to ring. The sound reached his ears above the sounds of the wind. He stood there ... listening to the bells ... Adeste Fidelis ... listening to the bells pealing the glad tidings of Christmas

And he sank to his knees in the snow.

MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM THE WHITE HALL STAFF



ANNOUNCEMENTS
Up Coming Events

		Weekly Schedule
		Sunday: 9:30am Sunday School 10:30am Morning Worship Service 5-7pm AWANA 5:00pm Discipleship 6:00pm Evening Worship 7:00pm Choir Practice Wednesday: 7:00pm Bible Study, Youth and Children
Welcome Center Volunteers		
September 4th:	Carolyn Cranfield Eileen Elliott Virginia Hickerson	
September 11th	Barbara Jones Barbara Taylor Diane Yarbrough	
September 18th	Janice Harper Kay Taylor Sheila Williams	
September 25th	Joe Ethridge Ruth Ethridge Linda Tilley	



It Came Upon a Midnight Clear

Edmund Hamilton Sears, a Unitarian minister in Wayland, Massachusetts, wrote this hymn in 1849. It was a troubled time. The California Gold Rush was creating excitement, but also disrupting the lives of men and women caught up in the Gold Fever. The Industrial Revolution was pulling men and women from farm communities into cities and into poverty. And of course, the territories over the North and the South would soon plunge the nation into a terrible war.

Sears wrote this hymn that emphasized peace as a gift from "heaven's all-gracious king" (vs.1). He portrays angels bringing peace to a "still weary world" (vs.2). He portrays a painful view of life with its "crushing load" and "Painful steps and slow", and a "weary road", but offers the hope of "glad and golden hours." That will "come swiftly on the wing" (vs.3) And he looked forward to the fulfillment of prophecy, "When the new heaven and earth shall own the Prince of Peace their Kind" (vs. 4).

When the angels first sung about peace on earth and goodwill to all men, the shepherds must have wondered what was going on. They certainly did not hear angels choirs every day and First Century Palestine was hardly a peaceful place. The streets buzzed with rumors of revolution and tension often boiled over into violence. Society was split along lines of gender, race, wealth, and religions. The shepherds, themselves were only a few rungs above beggars on the social ladder. Sounds a lot like the world when Sears wrote this hymn and a lot like today.

When Jesus came He confronted the world with peace. He gives us all cause to be at Peace. He loves the world so much that He gave His Son for it, but to those of us who are His... He wants us to know His love, His peace, His mercy, His grace and that's something that should give us peace as His children.

May you have the Peace that God has for you.

Have a blessed Christmas,

Jim

I hope you all had a great Thanksgiving. The children, youth and parents that went on the Family Retreat at Liberty Retreat had a great time. We learned about being God's light in this dark world and how to face our monsters around us by trusting God. We had fun on the obstacle course and just enjoying each other's fellowship. Our children and youth are one of the most precious gifts that God has sent to White Hall. The children will be traveling to Shelby Farms on Friday December 9th to have a hayride and see their Christmas lights displays. There will be signup sheet in the hall with the details. Awana and Bible drills are going strong. It is a joy to see these little minds absorbing God's word and sharing it with their families. The children's ministry team and I would like to wish you all a VERY Merry Christ-mas.



The youth of WHBC did an outstanding job at the Family Retreat in November. They taught the classes and did the crafts, games, and music for the children. I was very impressed with their dedication and willingness to work with these kids. The youth will be taking up gifts for the children and mothers' store at Galloway. We will be going on Saturday Dec. 17 at 7:30 am. If you would like to donate a gift or money please let me know. Some of the things suggested are dolls, footballs, gift sets of art for children, body spray sets for the moms, and hats, gloves, scarves for all. This is a way that our youth and you can be the hands and feet of Jesus. We appreciate all White Hall does on the mission fields here, Galloway and abroad.

I hope you have a Blessed Christmas with Jesus being at the center of all our celebrations. The youth of WHBC did an outstanding job at the Family Retreat in November. They taught the classes and did the crafts, games, and music for the children. I was very impressed with their dedication and willingness to work with these kids. The youth will be taking up gifts for the children and mothers' store at Galloway. We will be going on Saturday Dec. 17 at 7:30 am. If you would like to donate a gift or money please let me know. Some of the things suggested are dolls, footballs, gift sets of art for children, body spray sets for the moms, and hats, gloves, scarves for all. This is a way that our youth and you can be the hands and feet of Jesus. We appreciate all White Hall does on the mission fields here, Galloway and abroad.

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Merry Christmas



SUNDAY NIGHTS FROM 5PM-7PM



Here is a list of events for December:

December 17th @ 5:30 -- Seasoned Seniors Christmas Event

December 18th @ 10:30 AM—Adult Choir Christmas Cantata "Come Let us Adore Him"

December 25th @10:30 AM—No Sunday School, Morning Worship only. No evening services.

2017 Events:

January 19th @10 AM—WMU Winter Meeting, Trenton, FBC

March 5th @ 3 PM—West TN Evangelism Rally, Union University

March 9th @ 5:30 PM—Senior Adult Event, Salem Baptist Church

Be sure to place your order with Elaine Harper for your Poinsettia given 'In memory of' or 'In honor of' someone special. Christmas is almost here and the Poinsettias beautify the sanctuary each year. Deadline is December 4th!