

Good News Told Four Ways



The Stories of Christmas

Luke: His Christmas Story

Luke

If you're a little older than I am and you listen to NBC radio, some of you remember in the 1950's there was a popular show on the radio called Name That Tune. A few years later in the 1970's that radio broadcast was turned into a television show. If you're my age, you probably saw Name That Tune on television. How many of you have seen that show before? Here is what we're going to do; we're going to begin our sermon today by playing the family game, Name That Tune. One of the Christmas traditions in our family is we love to get together, and after we exchange presents we play board games, we play cards, and we do all kinds of things. So I thought this is a family day, we celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ, so as a congregation, we're going to play Name That Tune. Now, if you get it first, there is no hundred thousand dollar prize at the end of the sermon for you today, but I want you to participate. As soon as you think you know the song, just yell it out and we will stop. If you miss, that's ok you can't win if you don't try. (Tunes are played and the congregation guesses the song titles. Words appear on the screen, and the congregation tries to guess the song titles.) The three songs written by men that we played, everyone got. The song written by God that appeared on the screen, no

one got. Shouldn't we feel bad? Open your bibles to Luke chapter 1. The name of the song is the song of Zechariah. Let's stand and open our bibles to Luke 1, beginning in verse 16. I'm going to do something that I'm not gifted in doing at all, and that is I'm going to analyze a song. I'm not going to sing any of the song, but we are going to analyze Zechariah's song this morning. Welcome to Christmas Sunday, we hope everybody has a very, very merry Christmas. We're in a four-part sermon series that talks about the four stories of Christmas. If you've been with us previously, we looked at the story of Christmas according to Mark and John, and then last week, Kory revealed to us the story of Christmas according to Matthew. This morning, we're going to see the Christmas story according to Luke. I want you to remember that from now on so that we never this song again, it's the song of Zechariah. It's inspired by the Holy Spirit of God. It's a prophetic song, and it's absolutely beautiful. Let's let the Holy Spirit of God reveal the truth of one of the true Christmas carols in verses 68-79.

Scripture

"Blessed be the Lord God of Israel,

For he has visited and redeemed his people

And has raised up a horn of salvation for us

In the house of his servant David,

As he spoke by the mouth of his holy prophets from of old,

That we should be saved from our enemies

And from the hand of all who hate us;

To show the mercy promised to our fathers

And to remember his holy covenant,

The oath that he swore to our father Abraham, to grant us

That we, being delivered from the hand of our enemies,

Might serve him without fear,

In holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

***And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High;
For you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways,
To give knowledge of salvation to his people
In the forgiveness of their sins,
Because of the tender mercy of our God,
Whereby the sunrise shall visit us from on high
To give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of
death,
To guide our feet into the way of peace.”***

(Prayer)

Father, what a privilege we have to gather this morning and study one of Your songs, not a song inspired by Isaac Watts, or Chris Tomlin, but a song inspired by Your Holy Spirit as You moved in the life of a priest and You penned a Christmas carol for him. In my mind, it just captures the truth of Christmas. Father, we confess to you that this is not one of the normal passages we use, this is not one of the normal songs we sing, but thank You for opening my eyes, and hopefully we want to thank You ahead for opening our eyes to the truth of this glorious song. Open our minds now, open our hearts to grasp the true meaning of Christmas. It's in Your precious Son's name we pray, amen.

We've all heard the stories about a song that we love, and then we find out what actually caused the person to write that song. Sometimes songs that are sung, that are popular, that are written actually come out of people's brokenness. Do you agree? Kory shared last week with us that Christ came through brokenness to heal brokenness. So this morning, we're going to look at a song of the Bible that's a Christmas song, but before we actually look at this song, I want you to see the story behind the song. You can't really get the true meaning of the song until you see the story behind the song, and once you see it, you will see the story that emerges from the song. There will be two parts to the sermon this morning. If you want to know where we're at, at any time, we're still in the first half of the sermon

when we're talking about the story behind the song. When you see us switch from where we're talking about the story behind the song to talking about the song that emerges from the story, you know we're in the last half of the message. Are you ready? Luke begins his gospel by introducing us to a couple that are well advanced in age. They're a priestly family, not just on the daddy's side, but on the momma's side. They're a priestly family. Luke tells us they are righteous, they are blameless before God, yet they don't have a child. Now you have to understand what it would have been like to be Elizabeth and Zechariah and spend your entire married life and never had a baby. In the culture in which they were raised, if you were righteous, if you were blameless, God would grant you the desire of your heart and the desire of a man was to have a son, and the desire of a wife was to give her husband a son. To not be able to give him a child meant that you struggled as a wife in society to hold your head up. You didn't want to go the supermarket, the village well, or to family reunions because you felt everyone looking at you thinking this thought...what do we not know about you that God knows that would cause God to close up your womb and prevent you from having a child. So we meet a family that's broken; they struggle.

You need to remember that in the biblical days, there were about twenty thousand priests. They were divided into twenty-four divisions, roughly nine hundred in each division. Twice a year, your division would be called to go to Jerusalem to go and serve in the temple. It was an opportunity of a lifetime. When it was your week to serve God in the temple, for the lot to fall to you and you get to burn incense. See, you didn't volunteer. When those nine hundred priests would gather together and the lot would be cast, the lot would determine God's will, and in this particular instance, the lot falls to Zechariah. It was the opportunity of a lifetime. He gets to go into the temple and while the morning or evening sacrifice is being offered, he gets to light the incense and that incense rises to God, and it is a sweet smelling offering. It just shows how much that offering that was made pleases God. If I can say this, he is closer to God than he's ever been, and Gabriel appears to him while he was in the temple. Gabriel has a message from God. He says, Zechariah, your prayer has been answered. Before we rush to judgement, before we hear Gabriel say to him your prayer has

been heard by God, it's being answered and your wife will bear a son and you will call his name John, let's not assume he's praying for a son for himself. I don't know about you, but just in that brief story, I get this thought...they're already past the age of having a baby. You do know there comes a time in a woman and a man's life when they know it's not possible now to have a child. It seems like that's Zechariah and Elizabeth's lot.

What I want to suggest is they're probably not praying for the birth of a child for themselves, but possibly Zechariah is praying for the birth of a son, but not a son for himself, but for the nation. As that incense rises to God and he sees the culture in which they're living, he believes it's time for God to send the Messiah. So he asks God because he's close to God than he's ever been, could today be the day you send the Messiah. Guess what Gabriel says...got it; done. You're going to go home, your wife's going to deliver a baby, you're going to name him John; it's going to bring joy to you. Many are going to rejoice at his birth. He's going to be great. Don't ever let him drink wine or strong drink because he's going to be filled with the Holy Spirit. He's going to go before the Lord and turn the heart of the child to the father and the heart of the father to the child. Get this picture. You're Zechariah and you're trying to gasp this. God has just told you that your wife is going to have a son who will come in the spirit and power of Elijah and he's going to be the forerunner of the Messiah, and you know that you and she cannot have a child. What do you do when you need the impossible? See, Zechariah knows God's going to send the son, but he just doesn't believe God can send the son through him so he doubts. The moment he doubts, Gabriel says here is how you'll know; you're not going to speak another word until this is fulfilled, and he couldn't talk. He comes out of the temple, the people are waiting for him to bless them, and he can't say a word. They're wondering why he's been in there for so long, and he comes out and he can't speak, so they know he's had a vision from God. Watch this; Gabriel visits Zechariah, tells him God's plan, and now Zechariah visits Elizabeth and guess what happened. She gets pregnant. Now ladies, can we just be honest. Wouldn't you want to show the baby bump? Wouldn't you want to say I know what you've been thinking? Do you know what this godly, blameless, righteous woman does? She hides for five months. Whoa! Can you imagine what must be going through her

mind as her husband comes home, tells her what God's plan is for their life and all of a sudden, she, past the age of having a child, now finds herself having a child, and she's now in the line of Sarah, Hannah, and Rachel? Wow! What did Kory tell us last week? Jesus came through brokenness to heal brokenness, and Elizabeth is going healed from her brokenness.

Now, this is crazy, but Gabriel, who has just visited an old man whose wife could never give him a child and they're now past the age to have children, has just announced they're going to have a child. And now, Gabriel goes to visit Mary, not in Jerusalem, but in Galilee in the city of Nazareth. When Gabriel visits Mary, Mary is not an old lady. Mary is a young lady; she's a virgin. Please see this. Luke's Christmas story is about a young woman who was intimate with her husband for a desire to have a son, and she couldn't. Now she's carrying a son in her womb, and now the opposite is going to happen. Gabriel is going to appear to a woman who's never been with a man; she's a virgin. Gabriel tells her too; you're going to conceive, you're going to give birth, it's going to be a son, but you're going to call him Jesus. God is going to give Him the throne of His father, David, because He's the Son of the most high God, and of His kingdom, there will be no end, and He will reign forever and ever and ever! Mary is not a priest, just a young girl, raised in the Galilean hillside, never doubts. She just says, God, I know you're going to do this, but do you mind telling me how You are going to do it because I've never been with a man. God said, here is what I'm going to do...the Holy Spirit is going to move on your womb and you're going to conceive, but the child you're going to conceive is not going to be of man; it's going to be of God. She said amen! Amen! Let it be so! Do you know what she does? She does the very same thing that Zechariah did after he heard the message from Gabriel. He ran to Elizabeth, and guess who Mary runs to. She runs to Elizabeth too!

I want you to watch what Luke is doing. See, the story behind the song is Gabriel appears to Zechariah and Zechariah goes to visit Elizabeth. Gabriel visits Mary, and Mary goes to visit Elizabeth too. Do you know what the name Elizabeth means? It means God keeps His promises. Do you know what the name Zechariah means? It means the Lord remembers. Is this cool? A mom and dad got together and when they gave birth to a baby boy, they said we're going to name him the Lord remembers. Somewhere

around the same time, there was another couple having a child, and they had a girl, and when they saw her, they said let's name her the Lord remembers His promises. Do you know what God did? God brought the Lord remembers and God keeps His promises together. Now, God keeps His promises carries a child who's going to be six months ahead of the child that's now in the womb of Mary.

Now, how many months pregnant is Elizabeth now? She is six months pregnant. Many of you ladies remember that feeling. Here is what the Bible says; this is the story behind the song: when she goes to visit and meets Elizabeth, she greeted Elizabeth and the Bible says the baby leaped in her womb, being filled with the Spirit. Mommas, this was not a baby kick. This was not a rollover. This was a leap! This was a gymnastic come up off the floor of the womb; a jump with hands up, legs apart, and shout to the glory of God, and it's an infant in the womb of a mother! Don't tell me this is not a child! Wow! What's going on here? Long before Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John ever know the secret and the truth of Christmas, God revealed Himself to an old man and a woman named Zechariah and Elizabeth, and a young woman named Mary. Both of those ladies could not bear a child without God doing what only God can do. Now, God brings those two ladies together and Mary stays with Elizabeth for three months. Elizabeth gets filled with the Spirit of God and she blesses Mary because Mary didn't doubt God. She's looking at her husband who still can't speak because he doubted God, and he was a priest of God. He knew better, and this young woman never doubted; she believed. Mary blesses them. Now, please stick with me. Can you imagine the conversation that took place over those three months as Elizabeth, Mary, and Zechariah talked about these two little babies that these two ladies are carrying in their womb?

The Bible says Mary finally goes home three months later. If you're Mary, you do not want to show the baby bump. Praise the Lord they were a little more modest in that culture than we are, so it would take a long, long time for the baby bump to show. But she's now going home and she's got to figure out how in the world she's going to tell the man she's betrothed to of what happened. Praise God she now fully understands because of what Zechariah and Elizabeth have shared with her about their son and what Gabriel said to them about their son. They know that their son is being

born because their son is going to prepare the way for her son. Are you with me? Now, she gets back home and guess what happens to Elizabeth. She gives birth. I don't know if you've noticed this or not, but when she gives birth, the community gets together eight days later because they're going to circumcise the baby, and at the circumcision is when they name the child. The Bible says the community came together and said let's name him Zechariah. That's kind of weird, isn't it? Naming the children in the biblical world wasn't just something moms and dads did; the whole community got in on it, so the community said let's name him Zechariah. That's a good thought. I wanted Celisa to name my son Ricky Wayne Junior; she wouldn't, so God showed her anyway; he looks just like me. Get this picture; it is eight days later, the community said let's name him Zechariah Jr; mom says no, let's call him John. They say, John, where did you get that name? You moms know how that feels. Somebody said there is no John in your family tree; no, let's stick with Zechariah. Elizabeth says no. finally they motion for dad and he can't say a word, but he gets a tablet and writes his name shall be John. As soon as he had written out those letters, all of a sudden, the Spirit came upon him and his tongue was loosed, his mouth was opened, and he praised God. Now imagine the community. They saw him come out of the temple, couldn't say a word because he had seen God, now he goes against the wishes of the community, names the son John just like Elizabeth said, and now his mouth is open. All of a sudden, everybody is going whoa, there must be something mighty different about this child.

Now dad is getting ready to sing. Are you ready? Tell me you're ready. Now I've got an advantage. I've been listening to this song all week. I don't know if you know this about me, but if you're new to Hardin; I don't sing. I can't sing. I have no musical ability in me at all. That's the honest truth; I can't even hum on key or in tune. But when it comes to worship and worship music and God, I love it. I just do. Sometimes, not often, but sometimes when a song really moves me, I kind of do this Baptist thing, raising my hands just a little bit. The last few years, I've kind of gotten a little higher, almost parallel. When it's just been me and the Lord listening to this song, I raise them all the way up! This song is absolutely amazing. I don't know the tune to it. I don't know the melody, but I want you to hear

the words. Listen to this song. "Blessed be the Lord God of Israel." This word, blessed, is where we get our English word, eulogy, from. When you go to a funeral, you know there's a part of the funeral that's called the eulogy. The person who's delivering the eulogy knows the person and they speak about the person. They praise the person because at any eulogy, we speak well of the person. That's what the eulogy is about. Here's how this song begins, "Praise be to the Lord God of Israel. Speak well of the Lord God of Israel." Immediately, he tells us why we should be speaking well of the Lord God of Israel. He lists three things. He has visited and redeemed His people, and He has raised up a horn of salvation. Are you with me?

Yes, we should praise God for who He is, but you can't know who someone is without seeing what they do. Behavior doesn't determine identity, but it reveals identity. Do you know how we know the Lord God of Israel is to be praised? It is because Zechariah said He made a personal visit to us. I don't know about you, but here's what I'm thinking. I'm thinking when he says the Lord God has visited us; he knows the Lord God visited him and his wife. When He visited them, it was just as if He was visiting the whole nation of Israel. He made a visit to a home that was broken. Oh, they looked good on the outside, but on the inside, they were hurting. On the inside, they were praying for the coming of the Messiah because they were tired of living in the culture they were living in. They wanted people to know God so they were claiming and calling for God to send the Messiah.

He says he has redeemed us. The word, redeemed, means to go into the market for the purpose specifically of buying something, paying full price for something so you can get it out of where it is and set it free. So here is why God is to be praised in this song. He didn't just make a visit; He came to visit so He could rescue us and set us free from what was holding us back down in. does that make sense?

He has raised up a horn of salvation. I know we don't get this, but we men get this. How many hunters do we have in here? We've got some lady hunters in here too. We're just finishing deer season with a gun. We go into the woods, we get the big deer, and we measure the deer by the horns. What do you do guys? You get him up into the truck. I know of no guy who drags the deer in the truck and leaves the head up at the cab.

Once we get it in the truck, we turn it around and drag the head back toward the tailgate. We can't close the tailgate, so we leave it down with the head on the tailgate. We take the longest way home we can possibly go! We go by every one of our buddy's houses. When we take the picture, we get those horns and that head up in our face. We can't even close our hands around those antlers because the size of those horns tells the size of the animal. Ultimately, it tells the size of the man! Imagine being in an agricultural society. You knew the strength of the male animal by the size of its horns.

So now, the Bible is saying that God is raising up a horn of salvation. He tells us that this horn is going to come through the house of His servant, David, just as the holy prophets spoke about in olden days. I wish we had time to take that messianic trail and go back through the Old Testament and show you all the times the prophets talked about the seed David who was coming, but we can't. Listen to this. Do you know why God has raised up a horn of David? See, Zechariah is not singing about what God is going to do. He's singing about what He has already done. Zechariah knows that the horn of salvation is already here and He is in the womb of Mary. Do you know why He's coming? To rescue us; to save us from our enemies and those who hate us. Now, let's be honest. There's a really good chance that Zechariah, like most Jews, wanted salvation and they wanted it in the sense that they wanted to be saved from their circumstances. Please hear me. If you're going to be part of Hardin Baptist Church, please get this concept. God did not send Jesus to save us from our circumstances. He sent Jesus to save us in our circumstances. Can I tell you who our enemy really is? It is Satan. Can I tell you who our enemy is? It is sin. Can I tell you who our enemy is? It is death. Scripture teaches God is sending, has already sent Jesus, into the womb of Mary with a forerunner who is now in the womb of Elizabeth, who has now been born, he's six months older, so that you and I could be saved from what holds us with a death grip. That is Satan, sin, and death.

Do you know why God did this? To show the mercy that He promised to the forefathers and to let us know He remembers His covenant that He made with Abraham when He swore by Himself that everything He said to Abraham would come true. You do remember when God swore by Himself.

Abraham had just taken Isaac up to a mountain and God said kill him. Abraham knew that from him was supposed to come the seed, the promise. Abraham must have thought if I'm going to kill the seed line, the only way You are going to be able to keep Your Word is if you raise him back from the dead after I kill him. So Abraham drew that knife back by faith to kill the seed line, and God stopped him. He provided a lamb in the bushes and tells Abraham again, I will keep My Word to you. He looked around and thought what can I swear by; what can I take an oath by? When you testify in court, they don't just trust you; you have to take an oath. You have to swear by somebody greater than you. Who is greater than us? God. Have you ever thought about if you're God what you swear by because there's no one greater than you? Let me just say this; sometimes people need an oath. They need a promise. This has happened to me a lot recently. I will say something to somebody that I think is the truth, and somebody in their brokenness struggles to believe it. They will say to me, "Bro Ricky, do you promise?" I don't take it they're doubting me. I'm just taking that they're so broken; they need assurance. They don't just need my word; they need my promise. So I have to appeal to something bigger than me, so I've been saying, "I promise. If this isn't true what I'm saying, I'll bet my farm on it." I've just got a little bitty small farm, but it's important to me. If you know me and I put my farm on the line, you know I believe it. Do you know what I found myself saying the other day to somebody who is really broken because they just couldn't really believe what I was saying? They said, "Do you promise?" I said, "I promise. I'll bet my ministry on it." You surely know how much I love you guys, but I was saying if what I'm saying is not true, I'll walk away from ministry.

Now imagine you're God. You can't swear by a ministry, by Heaven or by earth because there's nothing bigger than you! So God swears by Himself. Please hear this. To guarantee your salvation and mine that God will set us free from the grip of death, of Satan's sin and death; He says I swear by Myself. Meaning what? If God doesn't keep His Word, then God has to step down from being the sovereign God of the universe. Are you still with me? Can dog do that? No, God can't quit being God. What I'm trying to tell you is that He has guaranteed your salvation with the integrity of Himself. Do

you know why He did this? So that being delivered...see, there comes a point where deliverance becomes actionable...that you might serve Him without fear in holiness and righteousness, before Him all the days of your life. Guys, two different times I have been flat on my face this week when I realized that. God didn't save me to go to Heaven, and He didn't save me so I wouldn't go to Hell. God saved me in His Son Jesus on a cross so that I could serve Him without fear. What does this mean? I think this grips most of us. Most of us are afraid to fail. That's why most of us don't serve Him. He's holy, holy, holy. He's got a plan. He's got a purpose for our life, and we live in that perpetual fear of what if I let Him down. What if I fail...listen to me. God has guaranteed if you are saved, you can serve Him without fear of failing! There may be times you fail Him in a moment, but you will not fail Him in the longevity of your life if you fully understand and have actualized the salvation He has given you in Christ Jesus. He wants you to serve Him in holiness and righteousness.

I understand a lot of people believe that holiness refers to being made right with God and righteousness refers to the fact that we're now right with each other, and it forms a cross. I don't believe that's what this is talking about. It could, but I've just got to give you my opinion. I think John is singing a song that people who come from brokenness, just like Jesus, He came through it to heal it; holiness refers to us being set apart, being separated, being in a class all by ourselves, people who were broken and now being healed. Here's what I think it refers to; stick with me. It refers to that I now as a saved person have the ability not to do what God doesn't want me to do. There are some things God doesn't want me to do. Don't ever take being free in Christ to mean you can do what God doesn't want you to do. That's a lie. God put Jesus on a cross so that you could serve Him without fear because He's given us the ability to not do what He doesn't want us to do. This is coming to Zechariah, who is a man under the Law. He's a priest, and when he studied the Law as God gave the Law to Israel, the Law revealed God in His holiness. He is holy, holy, holy, and when you take the Law, all six hundred and thirteen of those laws and summarize them into the big ten, how many of them were negative. Eight. Eight times in the Ten Commandments, God says thou shalt not. Get this picture. The children of Israel are getting ready to go into a pagan land

and after being redeemed by God, He knew there were some things they were doing in the land that He didn't want His people doing. So eight of the commandments are couched in the negative terminology, thou shalt not. Listen to me. You have the ability to not do what your friends who are still living in sin are doing. Did you hear me? That's called holiness. That sets you apart. That shows you are different.

But God doesn't just want us to be holy; He wants us to be righteous. Righteousness refers to right action because we're right in relationship. How many of the Ten Commandments were positive? Two of them; remember the Sabbath day and honor your father and mother. I believe that salvation in Christ not only brings us the ability to not do what God tells us not to do; salvation in Christ also gives us the ability to do what God wants us to do.

Now let's summarize this. God put His Son first in the womb of Mary so that He would be born, so we would know He's the Messiah, so He would go to a tree and accomplish our salvation, freeing us from Satan, sin, and death, so that we could live a life right now in His presence and not do what He doesn't want us to do that others are doing, and have the ability to do what He wants us to do that others are not doing. So you have the ability not to enjoy sin. I would be scared to death if I claimed the name of Christ and been saved for any length of time and I still enjoyed sin, because my salvation in Christ set me free from that. But secondly, my salvation in Christ has given me the ability to not enjoy sin, but to enjoy God and people. Listen to this! God didn't come to save us from our circumstances; He came to save us in our circumstances. I believe with all of my heart, so don't call, don't write; you're not going to change my mind; God allows what's happening to me to ultimately reveal what's happening in me. You would never know what's really happening in you if God didn't allow some of the junk to happen that's happened to you. If you got your wish and He changed your circumstances, you would never be changed. Tell me you get this. This is what Christmas is about.

John ends the song by saying son you're going to be called the prophet of the most high and go before the Messiah. You're going to give knowledge of His salvation and forgiveness of sin, which means salvation internally.

It's forgiveness of sins; it's not external. Then he says and to give light. He talks about a sunrise. Now he's going back to Malachi 4. The Bible teaches that before the Messiah, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings, before He comes; Elijah is going to come first. God tells Zechariah through Gabriel that John is Elijah. Now the Messiah is coming. When the Messiah comes, the world is dark and everyone is sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death. Get this picture; no artificial lighting, you can't flip a light and it's dark outside. You get up two hours early and you can't go outside and do anything because it's pitch black. You are just sitting and waiting for light. All of a sudden, the sun starts to rise. Jesus is going to bring the sunrise! When He brings the sunrise to the nation of Israel and to me and you, as that sun rises higher and higher, we can see. When we can see, we have light, and here is what Zechariah closes with, He is going to give light to your feet so that you can see the way of healing, peace, holiness. Peace in the Bible is not absence of war. It's not absence of conflict. It's healing and wholeness in the midst of conflict. As the sun rises in your life, you no longer sit in darkness. You no longer sing the blues. You've now got light to your feet, so you get up and start walking in the path of healing. Malachi says when the sun of righteousness rises healing in its wings, it's going to be like taking a stall and opening the gate and letting the calf out. When the calf goes out, it goes leaping out of the stall. If you're not a farmer, you aren't going to get this, but watch this. Scott brought some heifers to my house this week in a little bitty trailer. He had eight of them and they were confined. We backed up to the gate and opened it, undid the doors of his trailer, and when those calves got out, they just went running across the field. It was the ugliest sight you've ever seen! Have you ever seen calves run? They don't come out of a tight area light a thoroughbred gracefully. They go this way and that way. They are just so happy; they are all over the place! When God saved you, He didn't make you a thoroughbred that's going to win the Kentucky Derby right out of the gate! You're like a calf. You're just happy, happy that you're no longer in the stall. You're no longer in the grip of Satan, sin, and death. Now, your life is a pure joy because we know it's not the nature of a cow to run. But when a cow has been set free, he will run and he may not be graceful about it, but you can't contain the enthusiasm that he has of now being free. We are free because of what God did in His Son Jesus Christ,

amen! Please tell me you get this! Can you imagine the eternal Son of God who holds the whole world in His hand confined to an embryo inside a womb? Do you know how much He loved you to be confined for nine months in a womb, to ultimately be born to go to a cross to die for us so that we might serve Him?