

It can be hard to have a good Christmas. Family. Money. Illness. Fears. National and international tensions. Hard to have a good Christmas. One reason that's true is that so much of our attention this time of year is on us: our situations, our families, our nation, our conflicts, our challenges. It's a natural outcome, but one that buckles us into a roller coaster car.

A better solution is to focus our attention on Jesus. That's what the shepherds did. They left their earthly pursuits to praise God

That's what the wise men did. They left their homes to follow the star. Notice they didn't go to ask Jesus for his help – they went to give Jesus their praise.

All is calm, not because Jesus had solved our economic woes, or brought police and communities of color together, but because Jesus is with those who fight for justice and peace and safety and better economic times.

The solution to our woes tonight is not to list them, but to drop the list and find the manger, then join the choirs.

Ever done that? Just decided I am going to praise God even though my heart is breaking right now? I have. Some of the most powerful worship experiences I have ever had because the only thing I could look at was God's saving grace, God's loving power. The only thing that had my attention was God's decision to love me, whatever the mess I was in.

That's **worship** that works for any of us in any circumstance, that's the worship I invite us to tonight.