

In The Presence Of The King . . . Behold Him! Christmas Eve 2019

(After the Special) Welcome to our **Christmas Eve** service. My name is Rob Willey, and on behalf of all those who call Coram Deo home, we're glad you're here.

What a special time to come together, reflect on the birth of Jesus, and worship him as Christ the Lord. It doesn't get much better than this.

So as we turn our attention to the screens, I trust your heart will be stirred, and that this will be a meaningful and memorable part of your Christmas. (**Silence and Fury**)

-----Worship-----

What a joy. And what a blessing. So many meaningful words and familiar tunes.

Speaking of words, social scientists say that the average adult knows about 25k. 25,000 different words. Though in the age of texting, I doubt it's going to remain that high. And while we use a bunch of them every day, we don't normally use the word "behold." It's just not a normal part of our vocabulary.

In fact, I can't remember the last time I said to Becky, "Behold, someone's at the door!"

Meaning, "Look, someone's here!"

Or, "Behold, you look stunning!" To say, "Wow, you're amazing!"

Or "Behold the truth (Bible)!" See it for what it is and pay attention.

And I certainly haven't said, "Behold the King!" recently. "Behold him!"

We just don't use that word.

But it sure is a *good* word. And a biblical word. Used no less than 1390 times in the Bible.

The vast majority, meant to draw our attention toward some-thing or some-one, and urge us to *pay* attention. Take it all in.

Which is why it's so fitting for nights like this.

Because when you get right down to it, that's why we come together, is it not? To behold him.

To direct our attention and affection to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

And do so with hope; hope full of anticipation like the faithful remnant when Jesus was born.

Can I encourage you to do that tonight?

Behold him with *hope* – like the faithful remnant

Women like Elizabeth, the relative of Mary. And her husband Zechariah; parents of John the Baptist. Mary herself. Anna the prophetess.

Simeon, the elderly man who patiently waited.

All part of the remnant God had preserved for centuries. Those who remained faithful to him *among the nations* [and] *in the midst of many peoples*. (Micah 5:8)

And still are. God is still preserving those who behold him with hope. Still protecting those who yearn for him *in the night*, and earnestly seek him in the morning. (Is 26:9)

Is that you? Do you behold Jesus with hope – great expectation?

Do you yearn to see him face to face someday, instead of dimly?

So you long to see him like Simeon in Jesus' day?

I hope so. He was waiting with such anticipation, that when he saw him, he basically said, "Now I can die." (Lk 2:29) That's hope.

On Christmas Eve and every eve, direct your attention and affection to him with hope. Take a look at this video. (**A Way In A Manger** – edited)

➤ "The only thing more powerful than *expectant* hope, is *fulfilled* hope." (video)
Behold him with hope like the faithful remnant.

Second, let me encourage you to . . .

Behold him with *wonder* – like the humble shepherds

For whom "the silence gave way to the sacred, and the simple to the supernatural." (video)

Did you catch that? I love that line. No wonder they beheld him with such wonder.

The contrast couldn't have been greater. From the sheep to the Shepherd. Heaven to earth. A throne to a manger.

Humble as they were, keeping watch over their flocks by night, low men on the totem pole, they beheld his majesty with wonder.

Listen for it as I read **Luke 2:15-20**.

[15] When the angels went away from them into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let us go over to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us." [16] And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. [17] And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. [18] And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. [19] But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. [20] And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.

All who heard what the shepherds said, *wondered*; marveled.

Why? Because the *shepherds* marveled. *They* wondered. And communicated it to everyone they saw.

It had to be that way. The hearers wondered because the speakers wondered.

Like hearing soldiers tell about a hair-raising battle they were in.

We marvel because they marvel. We feel the wonder because *they* felt it.

So too the shepherds. *They* felt it, *they* wondered, because in their humility, they beheld a king. They directed their attention and affection to him. (**Charlie**)

Kind of like we do with babies. Especially when they're your grandson.

➤ When's the last time you beheld Jesus like you behold a newborn? Gazing into his eyes. When was the last time you stood over the proverbial manger, and marveled? Like new parents stand over a crib. And grandparents. (**Band**)

When was the last time he took your breath away? The last time you felt his presence?

The last time you spoke about him to someone? Like you speak about your kids.

The last time you beheld him like a humble shepherd? Whispering the words, "shepherd me."

When was the last time you glorified and praised him for all he's done in your life?

Listen to this song. (*Come Thou Long Expected Jesus* with video)

Come, thou long expected Jesus. It's an expression of hope. Hope filled with wonder, even as we wait.

➤ And that requires faith.

Behold him with *faith* – like the saints of old

The book of Hebrews in the New Testament, contains a chapter commonly known as the Hall of Faith. Because of all the examples of faithful people listed there.

And in the midst of that list is v6. **(Heb 11:6)**

Without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

Must believe that he's real, by faith; and that he saves, rewards. It takes faith.

If you're going to draw near to God, if you're going to be in his presence, you must believe that Jesus is God in the flesh, by faith, and forgives your sins if you ask. You must believe that he loves you, and offers you life to the full and life forever.***** To get the rewards, you have to behold him with faith.

Just like the saints of old. From Abel and Enoch to Abraham and Sarah.

Isaac and Jacob. Joseph and Moses. Rahab and David. **(Heb 11:13,16)**

These all died in faith [it says in Heb 11:13], *not having received the things promised* [the rewards], *but having seen them and greeted them from afar* [beheld them with faith] . . . *Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God.*

You want God to behold *you*? To direct his attention and affection to *you*? Behold *him*. With faith.*****

And last . . .

Behold him with *worship* – like the angels above

Direct your attention and affection to him, with praise. Honor. Adoration.

Just like the angels above. In heaven. **(Rev 5:11-13)**

Numbering myriads of myriads and thousands of thousands, [12] saying with a loud voice, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain [referring to Jesus; who went from the cradle to the cross], *to receive power and wealth and wisdom and might and honor and glory and blessing!" [13] And I heard every creature* [the Apostle John says, recounting his vision] *in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all that is in them, saying, "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"*

That's worship. The expression of adoration and reverence to God.

Worship that we're going to join someday. In person if you're a follower of Christ.

Worship that ought to be on the tip of our tongue. Worship that ought to overflow from our heart. Worship that's loud, and unified, and glorious.

So how about we lift our voices and get a head start? **(Emphasis)**

Say it with me. Loudly like the angels.

"To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might forever and ever!"

Behold him with worship, behold him with faith, behold him with wonder, and behold him with hope. Especially on this silent and holy night.

Pray (Worship Team on stage; Becky on stage; Candle Lighters to the front)

Father, how grateful we are for the birth of Jesus. How thankful we are for the *hope* he brings, and the *light* he gives. We believe. And Jesus, we behold you *this* Christmas, as we remember that *first* Christmas. In your name we pray, amen. **(Is 60:1)**

Candle Lighting

In the words of the prophet Isaiah, 700 years *before* Christ . . .

[1] Arise, shine, for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you.

[2] For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and thick darkness the peoples; but the Lord will arise upon you, and his glory will be seen upon you. [3] And nations shall come to your light, and kings to the brightness of your rising. (Is 60:1-3)

What Isaiah prophesied, we behold, we know – the Light of the World.

So that we wouldn't have to remain in **darkness** (lights off), but have the light of *life*. (Light Candle, Pass the flame)

Let's stand and worship (Rob & Becky exit stage)

(O Holy Night / Silent Night)

Close – (On stage with Becky) From our family to yours, may you indeed sleep in heavenly peace, and have a **Merry Christmas**. (Blow out candles; Bring up lights) God bless you. You are loved.