

December 24

“Awesome”



Luke 2:10-14

10 But the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people.

11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.

12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.”

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

**14 “Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.”**

**“Journey to Bethlehem – The Nativity Song + The Three Wise Kings”
Lecrae, Fiona Palomo**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a_fAbjgh90o

FUTURE PAST

Donna felt the step ladder wiggle under her as she lifted down the last box from the attic. The dust made her sneeze, and she almost fell but caught herself. It was the morning of Christmas Eve, and she had not slept a wink. All she could think about was that tomorrow was Christmas, and she was so blessed with this house she was trying to move into. But there was nothing in the house to say “This is Christmas,” or “It’s a wonderful season,” or “Peace on Earth.” Not even a “Happy Birthday, Jesus!”

She didn’t have the resources to buy decorations, even at the thrift store, so she didn’t even try. But she remembered the letter from Natalie Strong and the PS saying that Natalie had left Christmas decorations in the attic. Donna thought it would be a great idea to use those decorations as a reminder of all the memories in this house. She had called Katie and the girls to see if they wanted to come to help decorate the house and the invitation generated a good deal of excitement. But Donna’s impatience got the best of her, and she started pulling the boxes down from the attic before the Callaways arrived.

She carried the last box to the living room and sat it with the others just as the Callaways pulled up at the curb. Jackie and Brenda jumped out of the car as soon as they came to a stop and rushed in to excitedly hug Donna. Katie had a big smile but took her time joining the others.

“So, Donna, what is in the boxes? What do we have to work with?” asked Katie.

“I don’t know,” Donna replied. “I just finished bringing down the last box.”

“You should have waited. You could have hurt yourself.”

“Well, I couldn’t wait. I guess all the anticipation got to me,” said Donna.

“So, let’s open up these boxes and see what we have! And girls, please be careful. I want to keep the boxes to put everything back into after Christmas.”

“We will,” replied Jackie and Brenda in unison.

Katie suggested that she and Donna sit on the couch while the girls unpacked the boxes. After all, Donna had already done a great deal of work by just bringing the boxes down from the attic.

“I won’t argue with that,” said Donna as she and Katie took a seat.

“Well girls,” said Donna, “What are you waiting for?”

The girl’s eyes lit up as each took a box to open. Jackie’s came open first and a quizzicle look came across her face. “What’s this, mama? Are you sure this is a box of Christmas stuff? And it’s pretty heavy!”

Katie looked at what Jackie was pulling out of the box and realized what it was. She laughed realizing that she was the only one in the room that would even know what it was. Donna looked confused as well. “What’s the matter, Donna?” Katie exclaimed. “Have you never seen one of these? It’s a color wheel! These decorations are from the 60’s and this was the big thing back then.”

“What’s it for?” asked Donna.

“I’ll show you when we get the rest of the boxes unpacked.”

Brenda opened her box and was even more confused. “This looks like a silver metal Christmas tree. I’ve never seen one of these.”

“I’ve never seen one either,” said Donna, “But it looks like it has to be put together!”

“It does,” said Katie, “and I will show you how. What about the other boxes, girls? What’s in those?”

The girls began opening the other boxes. There was a large number of red ornaments, red ribbons, a scattering of white ornaments, and a stand for the tree. “Where are the lights?” asked Jackie.

“You already unpacked them,” replied Katie. “Here, let me help you put this all together. I think I remember how.”

Katie got down on the floor with the girls and helped them to begin to assemble the aluminum Christmas tree. As it came together, it had this weirdly, otherworldly look about it, like something from a science-fiction movie. It was shiny all over and the branches were not very full. The tree did not look very much like the Christmas trees they were all used to.

“Okay, Katie, you are going to need to explain all this so we can understand,” said Donna who seemed very confused.

“Oh, Donna, this was the hottest thing when it came out in the 60’s. Here, let me set up the color wheel to show you!”

Katie positioned the color wheel so it would shine on the tree and then plugged it into the wall. A light came on and the wheel began to slowly turn, changing the color of the light from red to green, to yellow, to blue, and then back to red as the aluminum tree reflected the light back, filling the room with color. It was whimsical. It was magical. It was mesmerizing. It was like looking into the future but knowing it was in the past.

“Girls,” Katie said, “If you keep looking, I bet you will find a star to go on top of the tree. It was common to have either a white or colorful star for the top”

Sure enough, Brenda found the star. The girls began adding red and white ornaments, which made the tree even more magical. Donna brought the step ladder into the living room. Katie and the girls insisted that Donna be the one to put the star on top. It made the tree complete.

Donna removed the ladder and stepped back. In a way, the tree seemed timeless as they all stared at it. It was perfect in every way. Katie stepped out of the living room for a few minutes as Donna and the girls continued to stare at the tree. Donna had bought a small boom box at the thrift store when she and Katie had gone over to take Dan Pritchard’s clothes to Steve. She brought it into the living room, plugged it in, and tuned in to a station playing Christmas carols. Katie returned from the kitchen with hot cocoa for everyone.

That first Christmas Eve in her house was the best-ever for Donna as she and the Callaways stayed up late, watching the colors change on the tree, sipping hot cocoa as they listened and sang along to Christmas carols. Even without the

usual fanfare of the holidays, rushing around, shopping, exchanging presents, or preparing a great meal, the gift of Christmas came to the new home of Donna Krenshaw. She felt loved and at peace, sharing this moment with the people she cared most about in the world. It was beyond awesome!

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What do we do with awesome? We’ve all felt it, seen it, heard it, smelled it, or tasted it at some point. That moment when we are on a trip, and we take a scenic turnout leading to an area where we can view the majesty of a valley surrounded by mountains just as the sun is setting. That moment when we first hear a melody that is so inspiring, we can’t get it out of our heads for weeks. The smell of Aunt Julie’s Cinnamon Apple pie as it comes out of the oven. That feeling of warmth, joy, and peace we get when we are surrounded by our loved ones, as everyone coos over the latest addition to the gathering of family and friends. That feeling of awe when words fail us, leaving us wanting for more as we beg to never have to step out of the moment we are experiencing.

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What do we do with those moments? We need to do something with them because if we don't, we will live our lives doing everything we can just to get that sight, that sound, that taste, that feeling again. Those moments remind us of how great it is to be alive. How wonderful God must be to grant human beings the privilege of not only experiencing such moments but to also to be enthralled to the point that these momentous moments move our souls.

And at this moment the shepherd's experience, the sound, the lights, the angels, the message, the glory, aren't even the main show. The main show is in a small barn in Bethlehem. The birth of a child that causes the universe to pivot, bringing clarity to a confused and despairing world.

Of all the moments of awe we have experienced in our lives, nothing comes close to what those shepherds experienced. But it leaves us wishing we had been there to experience that wonder, to be able to step into that moment of ultimate truth, to embrace the most awesome event in the history of the world. God comes to earth to give himself up for his creation.

What do we do with that? Every year we attempt to recreate the awesome nature of that event, but everything we do falls so short of that color wheel moment. That is mostly because we get wrapped up in the season's logistics. We get so worried about what color of tie we want to buy for Uncle Frank, we forget the gift we are giving is Jesus. We get so preoccupied with getting all the lights to work, we forget God gives us the stars. We get so tied up with the cooking that we forget to feed our souls. And everything that we did to try and

make the season great falls short, because we focus on the world, rather than the baby.

But every year, we do get something right. We gather at this table on Christmas Eve to remember what this night is all about, as we focus on the Christ Child and what his coming means for each of us. No lights. No thunder. No flash. Just a baby lying in a feeding trough whose sole purpose is to make us right with our Creator. Remember:

It's not about the angel

It's not about the star

It's not about the wisemen

Who came from afar

It's not about the shepherds

Nor the virgin so mild

It's not about the carpenter

No, It's all about the child.

God bless you all,

AMEN

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