

## "O Come All You Unfaithful"

One of the classic Christmas carols is "O Come, All Ye Faithful". But not long ago I was introduced to a song titled "O Come All You *Unfaithful*". I love this song because it reminds me that God invites and welcomes not just those who are faithful and righteous, those who "have it together", so to speak, but God welcomes those who are sinful and struggling, broken, and sometimes weary. In other words – *you and me*.

Now this isn't in any way to knock being faithful! Loving God, obeying God, being faithful in our commitments to God, are incredibly important! But what about when we're not? When in one way or other we don't "have it together"?

Jesus was born into this world, and embodied a God who is with ordinary people in all of our joy and pain. That set Him apart from most of the religion of His day. Religious leaders in Jesus' time were so off track that they despised people who didn't measure up in their eyes. But Jesus welcomed prostitutes and despised tax collectors, and offered them forgiveness and a new way of life.

*"O Come, All You Unfaithful"*. I love the words of this song: ***O come, all you unfaithful***. Who of us always obeys God's laws and commands?

***Come, weak and unstable***. We're not always so strong and in control, are we? Not long ago I read a statistic that just blew my mind. It was from a recent study done on Generation Z age young people (roughly those between the ages of 12-25). This research indicated that 42% of GenZ'ers are struggling with mental health issues! 42%!

***Come, know you are not alone***. Jesus is "Emmanuel" – God with us.

***O come, barren and waiting ones, weary of praying, come***. Ever just get tired of praying? Like it really doesn't make much difference anyway?

***See, what your God has done***. Then the chorus: ***Christ is born Christ is born Christ is born for you***. *That's the message of Christmas!*

The song goes on: ***O come, bitter and broken***. Aren't there times when we're just broken by life's disappointments, hurts, sorrows? It's so easy to become bitter when that happens. Moscow, Idaho. Sunday, November 13<sup>th</sup>. Four students at the University of Idaho are found stabbed to death in their apartments. Maybe you've seen the haunting photos and videos of 2 of the girls in the wee hours of that morning partying, laughing, having a good time. A few hours later their young lives ended.

***Come with fears unspoken***. Life can be frightening at times. Over the last few years those fears have been amplified by COVID, hateful politics, inflation. Howard Stern, the brazen, raunchy "shock jock" radio personality, had such an irrational fear of COVID that he remained secluded in his home from March of 2020 until this past October. Sometimes our fears can overwhelm us! But for all who are bitter, broken, fearful: ***Come, taste of his perfect love***.

***O come, guilty and hiding ones, there is no need to run. See what your God has done. He's the lamb who was given, slain for our pardon. His promise is peace, for those who believe. So come, though you have nothing. Come, He is the offering. Come, see what your God has done. Those words are a sermon in themselves, aren't they!***

Once again this Christmas we're reminded that a God of love sent His Son Jesus into this weary, broken world so that we may have life, and have it abundantly. "O come, all you unfaithful". Jesus *came*...and invites us to *come* to Him.

I think it's significant who were the first ones to come to Jesus after He was born! It wasn't kings in elegant palaces. It wasn't the super religious elites in Jerusalem. It was *shepherds*, in the fields outside Bethlehem. Ordinary people! "And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord'" (Luke 2:8-11). These common-folk shepherds got the news of Jesus' birth first, then hurried off, and *came* to see the newborn baby, Jesus. Jesus *came*, so that we might *come* to Him, and have life and joy and hope!

*Jesus came to give us strength for life's challenges.* "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light" (Matthew 11:28-30). If we are pinning our hopes on this world getting better, and our life someday being free of problems and disappointments, it's not going to happen. But we have a Jesus who wants to be with us through all of life's ups and downs, and give us peace and rest in the midst of life's challenges!

*Jesus came to satisfy the deepest longings of the human heart and soul.* Jesus said, "If anyone is thirsty come to me and drink" (John 7:37). Another time Jesus said, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst" (John 6:35). He assured us, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever" (John 6:51). There's more to life than just the material things we see and touch. This "stuff" can't satisfy us in the long run. We were made for God. We were designed for eternity. And Jesus offers a life in relationship with God that will never end.

*Jesus came to save us.* Jesus said: "The Son of man came to seek and to save the lost" (Luke 19:10). 1 Timothy 1:15 says, "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners." And as the song says, "O come, guilty and hiding ones. There is no need to run. See what your God has done. He's the Lamb who was given, slain for our pardon. His promise is peace, for those who believe."

The Christmas carol, "O Come, All Ye Faithful" is a classic song with a great message. Let all of God's faithful people come and worship the newborn Jesus! Let those who love the Lord and

have found His peace and joy and strength and love within, come! But when we know in our heart that we're not that faithful, and we're not that good, and we don't have it all together, think of this other song: "O Come, All You Unfaithful".

And always remember: Christ was born, Christ was born. Christ was born for you.

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Christmas Eve, 2022*

