

## *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*

**J**esus always speaks about hope. And this hope is different from optimism. Jesus is not the optimist. He is not a pessimist. Optimism arranges reality in a way that enables us to say things will get better. Pessimism arranges the same reality so that we can say things will probably get worse. When it rains, the optimist says, "How wonderful! Things will grow." Seeing the same rain, the pessimist says, "Everything will drown."

Being neither an optimist nor a pessimist, Jesus speaks about the hope that is not based on chances that things will get better or worse. His hope is built upon the promise that, whatever happens, God will stay with us at all times, in all places.

God is the God of life. As His followers, we are called to be people of hope and to build communities of hope in a world where the options are usually confined to a limited optimism or an unlimited pessimism. To do that we must enter the tomb from which Jesus speaks to us about hope.

We need to enter into that tomb. This means honestly facing the despair we are dealing with in the world today. We cannot go around despair to hope. We have to go right through despair. We will never know what hope is until we have tasted real despair of this world in order to have an inkling of the hope that Jesus offers to us.

~ Benjamin Bristow  
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*Dear Lord,  
Amid my turmoil, my mind is not able to concentrate on You, my heart is not able to remain centered, and it seems as if You're absent and have left me alone. But in faith and Hope I cling to You. I believe that Your Spirit reaches deeper and further than my mind or heart, and that profound movements are not the first to be noticed. I promise I will not run away, not give up, not stop praying, even when it all seems useless. I love You even though I don't always feel loved by You, and I HOPE in You even though I may sometimes feel despair. Let this be a little dying I can do with You and for you, as a way of experiencing togetherness with millions in this world who suffer far more than I do. Amen.*



### *God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen*

*God rest ye merry, gentlemen  
Let nothing you dismay  
Remember, Christ, our Saviour  
Was born on Christmas day  
To save us all from Satan's power  
When we were gone astray  
(Refrain:)  
O tidings of comfort and joy,  
Comfort and joy  
O tidings of comfort and joy*

*More ...*

## God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen

Continued



*In Bethlehem, in Israel,  
This blessed Babe was born  
And laid within a manger  
Upon this blessed morn  
The which His Mother Mary  
Did nothing take in scorn  
(Refrain:)*

*From God our Heavenly Father  
A blessed Angel came;  
And unto certain Shepherds  
Brought tidings of the same:  
How that in Bethlehem was born  
The Son of God by Name.  
(Refrain:)*

*"Fear not then," said the Angel,  
"Let nothing you affright,  
This day is born a Saviour  
Of a pure Virgin bright,  
To free all those who trust in Him  
From Satan's power and might."  
(Refrain:)*

*The shepherds at those tidings  
Rejoiced much in mind,  
And left their flocks a-feeding  
In tempest, storm and wind:  
And went to Bethlehem straightway  
The Son of God to find.  
(Refrain:)*

*And when they came to Bethlehem  
Where our dear Saviour lay,  
They found Him in a manger,  
Where oxen feed on hay;  
His Mother Mary kneeling down,  
Unto the Lord did pray.  
(Refrain:)*



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Unto the Lord did pray.  
(Refrain:)*

*Now to the Lord sing praises,  
All you within this place,  
And with true love and brotherhood  
Each other now embrace;  
This holy tide of Christmas  
All other doth deface.  
(Refrain:)*