

December 6th

## IN THE BLEAK MIDWINTER


When I was a young adult, I first heard the poem “In the Bleak Midwinter” sung by a popular Christian band on a Christmas album. However, very recently, the words have come to life in my mind as I’ve pondered its magnificence and meaning.

The first verse paints a picture that is very familiar to us as Coloradans: “bleak midwinter, frosty, earth stood hard as iron, water like a stone, snow on snow, snow on snow.” I love the scene: layers and layers of beautiful white; but the fact is, it covers a harsh reality: the land is actually barren, cold, dreary, miserable, icy...and there is no hope of change.

Then, the subsequent verses describe the only Hope. Our Creator God, who is all-powerful, all-knowing, eternal—there is no one like Him, He cannot be contained by anything, anyone, anywhere. The Most High King comes as promised. The Lord God Almighty, Jesus Christ, comes humbly to a stable. Warm milk & a manger of hay & His mother’s kisses were sufficient for Him as angels and animals gather and recognize the greatness of this moment.

The scene is remarkable, for the holy God has arrived as fully man. The Messiah has come. He is the One who breaks us free from sin’s icy, hard, miserable grip. So, what is our response?

The impactful last verse helps us. The poem switches from describing the scene to one of personal reflection:



“What can I give Him,  
Poor as I am?  
If I were a shepherd  
I would bring a lamb;  
If I were a wise man  
I would do my part;  
Yet what I can, I give Him -  
Give my heart.”

During this time of year, it is a common challenge to have just the right gift idea for at least one person in our lives. That person might just have “everything”. Or, you want to come up with something that is not from the wish list—something that shows how much thought you’ve put into the gift. Or, you know what would be a thrill but you simply can’t afford it (there’s Dave Ramsey’s voice ringing in your head again!).

With Jesus—the One who indeed owns everything—it is easy. How should we respond to the truth that Hope came to us as promised? We already have the gift that He desires from us; there is no need to go shopping for it. All He wants is your heart and my heart.

So, what does it mean to give your heart to Jesus? I think it first means to realize the sin problem that blocks us from having a relationship with God the Father and what Jesus did to remove that barrier. It means coming to Him in faith and repentance. But it also means obeying Him, remaining committed to Him even when you don’t understand everything, and being loyal to Him in the face of opposition.

In these few moments of reflection, prayerfully consider your response to the Baby King’s arrival and how you will give Him your heart today and every day. It’s the only gift you can give Him.

May this Christmas have more meaning for you than ever.

Contributed by May Stevens

