

Don't Forget to 'Go Tell It on the Mountain' This Christmas

The African American spiritual is a uniquely soulful genre of music, born from the bondage of tormented slaves in America. As they went about their chores on plantations and elsewhere, they would sing songs to help them with their morale and with the rhythm of their work.

Since most slaves were illiterate, they converted Bible stories and themes into lyrics, which were passed orally from generation to generation. After the Civil War, the Fisk Jubilee Singers of Fisk University in Nashville began including these songs in their concerts.

John Wesley Work Jr., who was born just after the Civil War and became a professor at Fisk University, collected and published many of these songs. His 1907 book, *Folk Songs of the American Negro*, contained "Go Tell It on the Mountain." In one of its early versions, the words said:

When I was a seeker, I sought/ both night and day;

I asked the Lord to help me/ and He showed me the way.

Go tell it on the mountain/ over the hills and everywhere;

Go tell it on the mountain/ that Jesus Christ is born.

He made me a watchman/ upon a city wall,

And if I am a Christian/ I am the least of all.

Go tell it on the mountain.

The song is true to the story. Luke 2:17-18 (NKJV) says, "Now

when they [the shepherds] had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child. And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.”

They told it on the mountains of Judea, over the hills and everywhere. Their message: Jesus Christ is born! The tidings of Christmas spread quickly that night—from the heavenly Father to the angels, from the angels to the shepherds and from the shepherds to everyone they met.

Sometimes we become so wrapped up with celebrating Christmas that we forget to share the Christ of Christmas. Christmas is for celebrating, but Christ is for sharing. What can we do to proclaim the message of Jesus? How can we find our shepherd’s voice?

– **Share your story.** First, find a time to share your story with others. If you were to pass into heaven today, would your children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews and family members know the story of how you found Jesus Christ as your Savior? There is no better time than the holidays!

– **Share your gifts.** You can also share the message of Jesus in the gifts you give and the cards you send. There may be appropriate opportunities to give someone a Bible such as *The Jeremiah Study Bible* or a Christian devotional book or a book about Christian evidences and apologetics. If you give money to your loved ones at Christmas, consider making that money a “bookmark” in some small Christian volume that will accompany the gift. The money will be spent, but the book may change someone’s life.

– **Share your hope.** One of the most powerful ways to share Christ is by the hope that shines across your face. A Christian attitude is the world’s best cosmetic. While most of the world is frantic and frenzied during the holiday rush, we should pace ourselves wisely, rest some, worship well and

rejoice in the eternal life that shines from the Bethlehem manger. Peter wrote, "Worship Christ as Lord of your life. And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it" (1 Peter 3:15, NLT).

To keep Christ in Christmas, it's not enough just to know Him or even to rejoice in Him. We have to share Him. Be like the original shepherds. Worship the baby who became our Savior and make known abroad the things you've seen and heard—over the hills and everywhere! {eoa}

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