

Can you believe it? Even with all that has happened to make this year unforgettable, and not in a good way, there are still some calling out, "Let's make this Christmas the best Christmas ever!"

But how? How, when family gatherings are limited? How, when many are not able to gather in church with fellow Christians? How, when loved ones sit alone in nursing homes? How can this possibly be the best Christmas ever? It is more likely to be the worst Christmas ever.

They were surely thinking this in 1914 in the midst of World War I. It was Christmas Eve, and no soldier sitting in a trench would have thought, "This is the best Christmas ever!" But then it happened. A German soldier began singing, "*Stille nacht, heilige nacht...*" And then he sang in English, "*Silent night, holy night...*" And across the way, soldiers from Great Britain joined in. They came out of their trenches, joined each other in "no man's land," and together sang of the Savior's birth. No Christmas is the worst Christmas ever when the glad tidings of great joy are proclaimed to the glory of God.

Even on the first Christmas, life was far from normal. It was pure chaos in fact. Instead of people staying home like today, everyone was on the move. Everyone. To be registered according to Caesar's decree.

Life for Mary and Joseph, too, was complete and utter turmoil. Traveling from Nazareth to Bethlehem, there was no place for them to stay. Great with child she was, and they had to seek shelter out in a stable.

But that night, that very night, after thousands of years of waiting, "*God sent forth His Son, born of woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law.*"

You see, Jesus did not come into a perfect world for perfect people. He came into all the chaos that was taking place for people who needed Him, who needed a Savior.

And isn't that our world today? Is it not you and me? We need a Savior, for we are not perfect people. We were born under the Law, condemned because we are sinful people.

But we have a gracious God. He sent His Son, Christ Jesus the Lord, into our battlefield. He, who is perfect, came into our imperfect world to end the war, the war between God and us. He was nailed to a cross, and the last words He said were that the war is now over. "*It is finished!*" He cried. Your God is at peace with you. He forgives you. Each and every one of you is forgiven of all your sins.

In a few minutes, as we sing Silent Night, think of the person in your life with whom you have been at war. It is time to lay down our weapons, come out of our trenches, and be at peace with one another. Because God is at peace with you and me, you and I can forgive each other.

And when that happens, Scripture tells us that the angels in heaven rejoice. They sing just as they did on the first Christmas.

So, no, this is not the best Christmas ever. But tonight, we celebrate the best Christmas ever; that holy night when Jesus, your Savior and mine, was born. Amen.