

I want to tell you about how I think it should have been, would have been, could have been. If only. *It's only. It's only people had believed.*

The angel Gabriel came to the young girl Mary, told her that she would bear the Son of God. And Mary told Joseph, and he believed. Mary told her parents the word spread. Soon everyone in Nazareth was saying, God's Son, the Messiah is to be born in our town. The whole village, then the surrounding villages too, soon the whole region of Galilee was watching, and waiting as the life grew within Mary.

Word spread to Herod, to Quirinius, from province to province. The news racing like a forest fire until even the emperor Augustus knew. And he made a great proclamation. All the world should go to Nazareth. To honor and worship Jesus, God's own Son who would be born.

A place was prepared. A clean place, a warm place, a private place for Mary. And as the time came she was attended by the most renowned doctors and midwives. No expense was spared, no effort too great to greet the Son of God.

When he was born he was placed on the finest silks, serenaded by skilled singers, players of wooden flutes. Everyone loved him, and waited.

Waited. For to have him born here, with us is the greatest moment that has ever been but to hear him speak, to hear what he would speak, all the world was a listening ear.

And when the years had passed and he spoke, the people heard and obeyed. All wars ceased and there was perfect peace. Children obeyed their parents, and parents loved and nurtured their children. ~~And~~

~~And~~ ~~the~~ ~~Lord~~ ~~had~~ ~~come~~ ~~and~~ ~~it~~ ~~was~~ ~~as~~ ~~if~~ ~~heaven~~ ~~and~~ ~~earth~~ ~~were~~ ~~one,~~ everywhere God's will was done in every way.

And there never was the cry, Crucify. For God was king over every heart and every life and every place.

If every one believed, it might have been that way. But since almost no one did, God improvised.

God started with Mary, she believed. But God had to send a dream to Joseph to get him to cooperate. Caesar was busy counting instead of listening for the word of God which meant a journey to Bethlehem, and no place but where animals were for God's Son to be born. So a manger became his bed.

Since no one had believed Mary, more angels were needed, sent to shepherds to tell that the Savior, the Messiah, the Lord was born. Instead of all the world, only those few shepherds came that night to see. Though they told what they had heard about the child, and though everyone was amazed, we never hear that anyone else came to see.

Then, instead of waiting, it seems that everyone forgot.

So the story goes until the cross, a few believe, most do not, God and Jesus hang in there. Even when instead of love, hate is poured out upon him, even when he is mocked and spit upon and flogged and crucified Jesus does not turn his back on us.

And when the story reached the climax, Jesus raised from the dead, even then another angel was sent to those who had not believed Jesus word that he would be raised.

There is hope for us. God does not give up. That is why there is hope for us. For you and I are no better than those people of Nazareth and Bethlehem who could have heard what God was doing but who were too busy with their own doings to take notice. We have God's word and we choose our own judgements and our own wisdom instead. Jesus says forgive, we hold grudges, Jesus says give, we try to accumulate. Jesus says listen, we keep on talking.

But there is hope for us. for God has not given up. He turns our rejection, our crucifying his son into our salvation. He does not hold our sin against us but forgives. And God rejoices in our praises this ^{night} ~~and~~, knowing full well that tomorrow we may slip once more.

So come to Bethelhem to meet your God who meets you exactly where you are, who knows you, and who is going to stick with you, forever. ~~Come to~~

Come to Bethlehem, see your Lord! ~~Believe in the name of the~~
~~Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.~~ Trust him, Hope in him, Listen to him, Lord of God, Lord of Glory.