

Fear not, I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. For unto you is born, a Savior. For you, for you who get caught up in all the wrong things, so easily doubt, fall into temptation, apathy, while the treasures of His kingdom are before you. **Fear not I bring you good news of great joy.**

For You who get swallowed up with fears of what may happen to you, your family, your health, fear of terrible news. For you control so little. **Fear not.**

For You who sad, depressed, alone even with screens filled with family and friends. **Fear not I bring you good news of great joy.**

For you who live with deep regrets, scars; not lived as a child God desires you to be, for you who've been betrayed; even you who've hurt love ones. **Fear not.**

For you who mourn, who long to be able to go to grandmas again. To have your dad, your mom, who long to see their loved one again for Christmas, just like the ones we used to know. **I bring you good news of great joy.**

For people -unworthy, undeserving, without any merit in us, He comes for sinners, here. For sinners: **Fear not I bring you good news of great joy.**

This very night, 110 years ago, amid the trench warfare, Germans, British sing Silent Night as we do this night, they lay down their arms, in a brief peace for Christmas. Young men enduring so much, have joy, sing as we sing this night. He comes to calm their fears, yours. For behold, a Savior born to give you a far greater peace, that you endure, entrenched in a greater warfare of a different realm.

This very night, 80 years ago, young men, just boys, sing hymns, the ones we sing this night, Christmas joy amidst artillery shelling. The US 101st airborne had arrived in Bastogne, one of the leaders, a Lutheran, war hero Major Winters, this band of brothers. When told they're surrounded, Winters famously quipped, "we're paratroopers, we're supposed to be surrounded." They're holding out against 5-1 odds, little gear, amidst one of the worse winters, low on ammo, pushed to their absolute limit, the 101st stood their ground, turned the tides of war. Endured the assault, the panzers, artillery until Patton's 3rd army arrived. The 101st became an inspiration for all soldiers as the war finished out. They teach us well words: duty, honor, courage. We too are to take a stand. Our Lord even more would have us learn what duty, honor, to stand firm, endure means, in our realm of warfare we surrounded by enemies.

This very night about 2025 years ago, the language of St. Luke indicates an invading army of angels appears before shepherds, proclaim a peace, peace that your warfare of sin against God is ended in this Child. We too join our song with angels. A joy in the midst of spiritual warfare that rages, you have peace with God. For the Lord is born to calm your fears amidst overwhelming odds.

Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy, born unto you a Savior. It never gets old, still new, enlightens. It's not just about foreign people in a strange land, a place far away, a long time ago. Realize you are a part of the story. This is about your people, you're not just a spectator but join the ranks in the Church militant, in spiritual warfare against enemies to destroy you and every

relationship with those you love, an enemy who never tires, never take a day off. But **Fear not. Fear not.** The hymns states it well, *the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight*. Your Nativity story begins, **Fear not, Do not be afraid Zechariah**, your barren wife will have a child to be the voice in the wilderness preparing the way of the Christ. Then, **Fear not Mary**, you have found favor with God, the child in you is God Himself, you will be the mother of God. Then, **Fear not, Joseph, to take Mary as your wife**, amid any scandal, she's been faithful. **Fear not, lowly shepherds**, the Christ has come for you.

Like Zechariah, **fear not** as the Lord will unfold His work and promise in your life and family. Like Mary, **do not be afraid**, whatever your situation, no matter how troubled you might be; even like her, confronted with things you cannot possibly understand or see working out. He bids you instead to believe. Not for answers you see, but in His goodness, in His promises, His faithfulness for you.

Fear not, like Joseph, even overwhelmed by doubts and fears, heartaches and worry -do not be anxious over anything, He will take care of things, it may not make sense to you, trust Him, hold God to His word for you. Like lowly shepherds insignificant to the world, **fear not**, in your ordinary, lives of toil, come to this Bethlehem, His dwelling for you here, no less than once for shepherd. Bethlehem, Hebrew for House of bread; manger a feeding trough. He says, **I AM the bread of heaven; my flesh is true food my blood true drink**, that the God who takes on our flesh, joins Himself to you here. Heaven, earth come together here for you as in not other way on earth; the Lord's Supper is what Jesus say it is; does what Jesus says it does; what you desperately need in this warfare, in the trenches, when surrounded, the Sacrament to bind-up your wounds, give strength, the Christ with you as battles rage.

Fear not, do not be afraid. Great joy, yours. Whoever you are, whatever you've done, know this: Jesus came into the world to save sinners. There on the cross is your peace. There is no other. His birth, life, passion, death, resurrection, He alone brings the only life, the only love, only truth in this world, the only cause for you to sing with joy. Born for you. He has done all things. He will not fail you. Whatever causes you to fear, worry, to be anxious, even death; He has overcome it. **Fear not, do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy.** Those words are for you, for your hearing, no less as for shepherds, Zechariah, Joseph, Mary. **Good news of great joy**, whatever may come against you in this life that the warfare, nothing of this world can take away from you -not rob you of the joy this Child brings; to rescue you from all that could truly ever harm you. You are safe. You are His. His name upon you in baptismal grace. You will not ever die. Eternal Christmas with your loved ones in Christ awaits. You will embrace them again.

Fear not. Your hopes and fears of all your years are met in thee. You've nothing to fear in all your days. **Born to you, a Savior.** Bask in His forgiveness and life. Great Christmas joy, the life that's yours in this Child now, everyday, for all eternity. Frohe Weihnachten, Merry Christmas.