**Good Shepherd Lutheran Church**

**Watertown, WI**

**“Fall on Your Knees”**

Rev. David K. Groth

Christmas Eve, 2023

**From the visit of the Wise Men some days after His birth.** “*And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him”* (Mt. 2:9-10).

 Every year, I listen to classical Christmas carols on Pandora, and every year, it seems, there’s one that really resonates. This year, it was “O Holy Night” sung by a chorus of over 150 men. They sing their hearts out on this carol; I’ve listened to it repeatedly. In fact, I borrowed the title of this sermon from that carol. “Fall on Your Knees and hear the angels singing.” Some of you are thinking if I fall on my knees, I might not get back up again! I get that. Only in here [heart] then, as a posture of your heart, fall on your knees before Jesus.

 In the Bible, sometimes people fall before Jesus in fear and awe. When Jesus was transfigured, Peter, James, and John “fell on their faces and were terrified” (Mt. 17).

Now it’s our turn. We too should fall before Him in awe. Don’t be deceived. This little one in the manger? “All things were made through Him, and without Him was not anything made that was made” (Jn.1:3). Fall on your knees in fear and awe because He is also holy and almighty and will come again to be your judge.

 In the Bible, sometimes, people fall on their knees before Jesus out of desperation. In Matthew 15, as Jesus was walking along with His disciples, a Canaanite woman came out and blocked His path by kneeling before Him, and she cried out, “Lord, help me!” (vv. 21-28).

 Your turn. Fall on your knees out of desperation, because for many things, He’s your only hope. Maybe it’s a cure for the disease that is wrecking your body or your mind. Maybe it’s for a child who has lost his way. All of us are desperate for forgiveness, because without it, there’s no pathway to heaven (Col. 1:13).

 In the Bible, sometimes people fall on their knees before Jesus to show humility. In Mark 10, a man knelt before Jesus and asked, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Your turn. Fall on your knees before Him in humility because He is humble. In the manger we see our God wrapped in human flesh, and that human flesh wrapped in a diaper. What could be more humble? Since our Creator is humble, it would not be right for His creatures to stand before Him all puffed up and arrogant. However, it is right to fall on our knees before Him in humility, for we are not saved by our own strength or wisdom or works, but only by His grace. Fall on your knees and humbly submit your will to His, because He’s good and trustworthy and wants what is best for you. A God who humbly accepts the cross on your behalf is a God you can trust. Fall on your knees before Him in humility because to all who receive Him, He gives “the right to become children of God” (Jn. 1:13).

In the Bible, some fall on their knees to confess their sins. In the parable, “the tax collector stood far off, would not even lift up his eyes, but beat His breast, saying, ‘God be merciful to me, a sinner’” (Lk. 18:13). Though he was standing, his heart was on its knees.

Your turn. Fall on your knees to confess your sin. Hold nothing back. Give all of it to Him, because He died for all of it, and because He loves you, and because He did not come into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world (Jn. 3:17). Fall on your knees and confess your sin, because if we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God, who is faithful and just, will forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (1 Jn. 1:8-9).

At least once in the Bible, people fell on their knees before Jesus to mock Him. Matthew 27, “Twisting together a crown of thorns they put it on His head and put a reed in His right hand. And kneeling before Him, they mocked Him saying, ‘Hail, King of the Jews!’” (v.29).

Don’t ever join in the mockery or hide your light as if you did not believe in Him. Jesus said, “Whoever denies Me before men, I also will deny before My Father in heaven” (Mt. 10:33).

 In the Bible, sometimes, people fall on their knees before Jesus to confess their faith. In Matthew 8, a man with leprosy knelt before Jesus and said, “Lord, if You are willing, You can make me clean.” He calls Him “Lord,” confessing faith in His power and authority.

Your turn. Fall on your knees and confess Him as Lord. If Jesus is Lord, it means no one else is: not yourself, nor anypolitician, celebrity, or demanding spouse. Fall on your knees because Jesus is Lord. It doesn’t matter what the cultural and academic elites are saying. They can’t tell right from wrong anymore. Listen instead to what Jesus said 2000 years ago, and what He’s still saying through His Word. Confess Jesus as Lord because all men are grass (including the elites). “The grass withers, the flower fades, but the Word of our God stands forever” (Is. 40). Confess Jesus as Lord, because Jesus also promised, “Everyone who acknowledges Me before men, I also will acknowledge before My Father who is in heaven” (Mt. 10).

 In the Bible, people also fall on their knees before Jesus to worship Him. “And going into the house they saw the child with Mary His mother, and they fell down and worshiped Him.” That’s why you are here. Not just from custom or obligation, but to worship Him. Psalm 95, “O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the LORD, our Maker.” Fall on your knees and worship Him with other Christians, the remnant you want to be part of, “all whose knees have not bowed to idols” (1 Kgs 19:18).

In the Bible, people fall on their knees before Jesus to thank Him. In Luke 17, one of the ten lepers, “when he saw he was healed, turned back, praising God with a loud voice, and he fell on his face at Jesus’ feet, giving Him thanks” (v. 16).

 Your turn. Thank Him because everything you have that is good is from Him: your memories, your health, your strength, your accomplishments, your family and friends, your salvation. Everything good is from Him because He is good. Fall on your knees and thank Him, because Almighty God took on human flesh and bone, and your sin, and your mortality, to be your Savior. Thank Him because the best gift ever given was the one wrapped in swaddling clothes. Clearly, coming as a baby He means us no harm. Only good. He comes to redeem us. Long before His head hit the straw in Bethlehem’s cradle, Christ was headed to Calvary’s cross. Fall on your knees and thank Him because by His death and bodily resurrection, He destroyed death, and through Baptism and faith, has brought life and immortality to you.

 In the Bible, many men and women fell on their knees before Jesus in fear and awe, in desperation, in humility, to confess their sin, to confess their faith, to worship Him, and thank Him. All good reasons today and every day, if only as a posture of your heart: fall on your knees and hear the angels’ voices: Jesus is your Lord and Savior. Amen.