

A New Birth
Stage Version

By

James E. Bogoniewski, Jr.

Theme:

This play tells the story of the rebirth of a couple's faith during the Christmas season. May the Lord use this story to give many a new faith in Him during the season we celebrate the birth of His Son, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

Biblical Reference:

The Christmas Story

Approximate Running Time:

45-60 minutes (depending on the music used)

Cast of Characters:

Bob: Bob is a man in his 30's. Bob used to be a believer, but has allowed the cares of the world to cut off his relationship with God.

Ted: Ted is a man in his 30's. Ted is someone who is able to rejoice in the blessings of the Lord through good times and through bad.

MC: Mrs. C. is an older woman who loves to dress to the hilt for Christmas. She is a bubbly, energetic, lovable older woman.

Beth: Beth is a woman in her 30's. She's married to Bob. She too used to be a believer but has allowed the cares of the world to cut off her relationship with Christ.

SL: Song Leader. This is the person who leads the congregations in a song or two - at the director's discretion.

Pastor: The pastor of the church. His primary job is to give the Christmas Eve sermon.

Mary: The Mary from the Bible.

Jesus: Do I need to say more?

Servant: A servant who is a doubter of Jesus Christ.

Master: An energetic person who tastes the best wine of his/her life at the wedding feast in Cana.

Martha: The Martha from the Bible.

Lazarus: The Lazarus from the Bible.

Scene I:

[Scene I takes place on a busy street corner or shopping mall or the entrance to a store such as Wal-Mart. Extras show the hustle and bustle of the holiday season. They are walking back and forth in a pre-Christmas shopping frenzy. There is a person ringing a Salvation Army bell. Bob enters and is approached by Ted.]

Ted: Hey Bob, is that you?

Bob: Ted, hey! It's been a while! What are you doing here?

Ted: Shopping like everyone else in the world, by the looks of it.

Bob: Yeah, I know what you mean. I don't really want to go in there, but I don't have much choice. The clock is ticking and I'm running out of time. The inevitable is fast approaching.

Ted: I'm with you there. We've got like 37 hours until Christmas morning and I haven't even started my shopping yet.

Bob: Same as you. Why bother shopping until the last minute, right? Let the early birds fight it out for the first worm on Black Friday - that's my philosophy. Then the better prepared can get the second round of deals. I'm more than happy coming a few weeks after them and picking out something from the scraps they've left behind.

Ted: Yeah, it gives them more of a surprise when we don't give them the latest and greatest things on the market like everyone else. There's nothing like waiting until the last minute. I can remember a bunch of times waiting until the last minute almost got us into a lot of trouble.

Bob: And a few times it did get us into trouble. Man, how did we ever graduate from college in four years?

Ted: I don't know. Hey, I guess much hasn't changed since we were in college together.

Bob: Well, I wish that was the case for me.

Ted: What do you mean by that?

Bob: Well, things have been tough for me lately.

Ted: Sorry to hear that. What's up?

Bob: Well, I got laid off from my job six months ago. I had been working there since college but they downsized and didn't think I was too important, so it was hit the road jack without as much as a "thanks."

Ted: No way.

Bob: Yes way. So, I think I did a pretty good job of recovering from that rejection. They gave me a decent severance package and some good leads on finding another job. It was the least they could do.

Ted: Well, that's good. So, have you found one?

Bob: Kinda. I found work, but it wasn't in my field, and it was only part time, and it didn't pay much. So I had to get another job that was kinda the same - you know, part time, didn't pay much, not in my field.

Ted: But it paid the bills, right? I mean, sometimes we have to do something like that just to get us through a tough period. Then we get through it and everything seems better.

Bob: Yeah, I guess you're right. Only I lost both of those jobs two weeks ago and I haven't found anything else yet.

Ted: Wow. Don't worry, though. You'll find something.

Bob: I guess so. But this is like the worst time to be looking for a job. Everyone tells me that they're not hiring until the new year. So, things are gonna be really tight until then. My severance is about to run out and we don't have anything in the bank. I don't have much to spend on Christmas this year. I just hope the kids understand.

Ted: It sounds like you're on the edge of getting desperate.

Bob: On the edge? Did you say I'm on the edge? I'm not on the edge. I'm way over the edge. I haven't seen the edge in - I don't know. I can't even remember the last time I've seen the edge. I'm holding on to a thin string and I'm afraid that string is gonna snap soon.

Ted: Then what happens?

Bob: I don't know. I haven't gotten there yet. I'm afraid I'll do something that I regret.

Ted: Like what?

Bob: Like, see that Salvation Army pot over there? Like I'm this far from running over there and knocking that guy over the head with that stupid little bell and running off with whatever's in that bucket.

Ted: Wow, I guess you are over the edge. Well, hang on. I know the Lord will get you through. One day at a time.

Bob: [*Sarcastically.*] Yeah, right.

Ted: What do you mean by that?

- Bob: I wish the Lord would do something to help us through this. He's been like totally non-existent through this whole thing. Talk about deserting us in our time of need.
- Ted: Sorry to hear that Bob. I thought you were still going to church and all.
- Bob: Church! What do I need to go to church for? You gotta be kidding me, right? Our church has been no help to us. They offered to pray for us, but what good is that gonna do when we need food to eat.
- Ted: Woah. I guess you have changed since the last time I saw you. I meant that your faith was strong the last time I saw you, I just assumed it was still strong now. But I guess that was a wrong assumption for me to make.
- Bob: Don't make the mistake I made - assumptions can only get you into trouble, or laid off, or with a low paying job with kids to feed and a mortgage payment to make. And don't expect God to be there in your time of need. As soon as you really need Him in your life you find out that He's on some kind of vacation or something.
- Ted: That's not true. God doesn't take vacations.
- Bob: You know what I mean. He just checks out or forgets we need Him or something. Anyway, you can't depend on Him wherever He is or whatever He's doing.
- Ted: Aw, come on Bob. I don't want to preach to you or nothing like that, but I gotta say that God never checks out of our lives. Sometimes we can't see Him working, and things might get really rough, but that doesn't mean that He's not there working in our life.
- Bob: Well, then what does it mean?
- Ted: It means we just can't see Him working right now.
- Bob: Yeah, that's what I thought you were gonna say. That's a lot of help to me when I got bills to pay and kids to feed and no help on the horizon. I don't mean to sound sacrilegious or anything like that, but I've got a hard time believing in God after He left us high and dry like this.
- Ted: I really feel for you Bob. Everyone goes through tough times in life. Nobody has it really easy. I've been through some tough times too.
- Bob: Anything like this? You lost your job? You don't have enough money to pay the bills? You sitting at home waiting for the phone to ring? You have no hope for tomorrow?
- Ted: No, it wasn't that.
- Bob: Then I don't think you can relate.

Ted: I wish that what I went through was as easy as what you're going through.

Bob: Come on Ted. I thought you were my friend. Now you're picking on me. I don't need to stand here and listen to this. What can be worse than a guy losing his job and not being able to take care of his family?

Ted: No, I never lost my job like you. I lost my wife to cancer.

Bob: [*Immediately changing his attitude.*] Oh, Ted I didn't know.

Ted: It was three years ago tomorrow.

Bob: Christmas Eve?

Ted: Yeah. She was fighting it for a while, and we thought she was going to beat it, but she lost her fight just before Christmas, last year.

Bob: I can't even imagine life without Beth or the kids.

Ted: I couldn't imagine life without Sue either. I think about her every day. I miss her so much. I know what it's like to ask God why He did what He did. I know what it's like to wonder what tomorrow is going to hold. I know what it's like to cry out to God and hear nothing in return. But I also know what it's like to look back on a situation a while after it's happened and see God working in ways I never saw while I was going through it.

Bob: You saw God working even though Sue died?

Ted: Yeah, big time. I don't know why everybody thinks that God's gotta heal people every time they get sick in order to prove that He exists and if He doesn't heal someone then he doesn't care about us. We're all gonna die sooner or later. Some get to live a long life. Some dies as babies. Some die in the middle of life. It's not our choice. Who are we to tell God what He should do? I saw God working in many ways through Sue's illness and even in her death. He gave me a new value for life. He made me appreciate the time I had with Sue and the kids far more than I did before she got sick. I don't think work's the most important part of my life anymore. But the most important thing He taught me through this experience is to trust in Him no matter what's happening around me.

Bob: Trust Him? After He took your wife? I don't get it.

Ted: I don't know what tomorrow holds - but He does. I don't know what He has planned for my life - but He does. I don't know how long I'm going to live - but He does. When I trust in my own understanding of life I keep finding out that I don't know as much as I thought I did. When I just give it over to God I have this peace that I just can't explain.

Bob: But peace doesn't pay the bills. Peace doesn't bring your wife back. What good can it possibly do?

Ted: It allows me to live each day of my life without worrying about what tomorrow is going to be like.

Bob: Come on Ted. That sounds like something out of a movie where everything comes out just great in the end and everyone lives happily ever after 'cause they won the lottery or something.

Ted: [*Smiling.*] Yeah, it does. But it's true. It's one of those things you don't get until you get it. I can't explain it to you.

Bob: I can tell.

Ted: But there's nothing like it Bob. I know that I'm right in the palm of the Lord's hand no matter what happens. I know that I'll never go wrong when I trust Him with my whole life.

Bob: That doesn't sound practical. So, you're telling me that I'm supposed to trust God even though I don't have a job and I don't have a bunch of money to spend on my wife and kids this Christmas?

Ted: Yeah. You used to trust Him, right?

Bob: Kinda.

Ted: Back when things were going well and you had a job and money to pay the bills and plenty of presents under the tree. It was easy for you to thank God then. It was easy for you to trust in God then. It was easy for you to have hope for the future then, right?

Bob: Yeah.

Ted: So, why does all that change just because you don't know what's gonna happen, tomorrow?

Bob: I don't know.

Ted: Look, it's getting late. We both have shopping to do. [*Reaching for his wallet and handing Bob some money.*] Why don't' you take this and get something for the kids, okay? And how about coming to church with us tomorrow night?

Bob: I can't take this.

Ted: Why not?

Bob: You've got kids to buy stuff for and anyway.

Ted: I'm your friend. You have a need. I want to help meet the need. Take it. It's all God's money anyway. Take it and come to church with us tomorrow night.

Bob: I don't know.

Ted: [*Shoving it in his hand and walking away.*] 7:00 at the [*name of the church*]. I'll see ya then!

[*Bob looks up towards heaven and looks down at his hand. He puts the money in his pocket and exits opposite Ted. Beth and Mrs. C. have been walking about or shopping or just spreading Christmas cheer up until now. They converge at center stage and bump into each other.*]

MC: I'm sorry, I didn't see you, dearie. You kinda caught me by surprise.

Beth: Sorry, my eyes were blinded by the lights, you know how... Mrs. C.?

MC: Beth, is that you?

Beth: Yeah. It's me. [*Giving her a hug.*] Oh, I haven't seen you in a few years. Hey, what are you doing here?

MC: Shopping. It is almost Christmas, you know. What are you doing here my dear?

Beth: [*Apologetically.*] Shopping, same as you. Hey, I haven't seen you in a long time. How have you been?

MC: I've been just great. Things are still going well for us. I've missed seeing you, though. I must say that I've really been enjoying this holiday season. You know how much I love Christmas - and I think I love it more and more each year that I'm alive. The lights, the shopping, the food, having our family together - it's hands down my favorite time of the year.

Beth: I wish I could share your enthusiasm.

MC: You used to love this time of the year - if I remember correctly.

Beth: Yeah, usually.

MC: We used to coordinate our outfits on Sunday mornings so we could show the rest of the church how fashionable ladies dressed during the Christmas season, right dearie?

Beth: [*Smiling.*] I remember that.

MC: So, what happened to those outfits?

Beth: I'm sure I still have them at home at the back of some closet somewhere.

MC: You don't wear them anymore?

Beth: No, I haven't worn those outfits in a while.

MC: Don't you want to show the rest of the world how a fashionable lady dresses during the Christmas season?

Beth: It's not that. It's just that...

MC: What's the matter? Don't they fit any more dearies?

Beth: No, I'm sure they do - at least I think they will. It's just that dressing up for Christmas isn't all that important to me anymore.

MC: Not that important to you? How can dressing for Christmas not be important to you?

Beth: Sorry. No offense. But it's not. I've got a family now and they're more important to me. I had a job and there's things to do and things to plan and things to shop for and I just don't have the time. You know.

MC: I can see that I have a bunch of work to do. When can you come over so we can try on your outfits and salvage this year?

Beth: Ummm. I'm not sure. I'm really busy. Isn't that what I just said to you? Weren't you listening?

MC: Don't hem and haw with me dear. Of course I was listening. This is Mrs. C. you're talking to. I know that you're busy, but the Beth I know would find time to get together with Mrs. C. to try on clothes, am I right?

Beth: I'm not coming over to your place to try on clothes, okay? Didn't you hear me? I'm not into Christmas anymore.

MC: [*Gasping.*] Not into Christmas? How can anyone not be into Christmas? Well, unless they were turning into a scrooge or something.

Beth: I'm not turning into a scrooge. Life gets busy. Things come up. Other things become more important as we mature.

MC: Honey, forgetting about Christmas has nothing to do with maturing. I'm mature and I sure haven't forgotten about Christmas. Come on, what else is it?

Beth: I'm not sure... I guess...

MC: Come on. I thought we already quit the hemming and the hawing and here you go again dearie.

Beth: Well, I guess it's the busy stuff I was talking about and because of other stuff that's going on right now.

MC: What other stuff?

Beth: This year has been a tough one for us and it's hard to be all festive when things aren't going well.

MC: Is it your marriage?

Beth: No, not really. We're stressed out right now, and that affects our marriage, but I'm not too worried about Ted.

MC: Is it the kids?

Beth: Kinda. They're not going to have the kind of Christmas we want to give them this year and I know they're going to be disappointed by it.

MC: Why can't you give them what you want to give them? Let me guess, they gave you a list as long as a football field, right?

Beth: No, it's not that. We just don't have the money to spend on them this year. Ted lost his job and then he got another one - two more actually - and then he lost them and we're almost out of money. I just don't know what we're going to do. If things don't change in the near future we could lose our home, our car, and who knows what else.

MC: Oh. I see. This is more than I could have imagined. Have you prayed about all this?

Beth: No. Why would I pray about this?

MC: Excuse me, dearie.

Beth: I said, why would I pray about this?

MC: I guess it's been a while since you've been in church - whether it was Christmas or not, huh?

Beth: Yeah, it's been a while.

MC: Prayer is our lifeline with God. Prayer is the way we share our concerns with the one who can really do something about it. Prayer is the most important thing we can do in our times of need. I can't believe you could forget that.

Beth: I haven't forgotten it, I guess. It's just that I tried praying back when this was a little problem and nothing happened. So I gave up.

MC: Never give up on God. You gotta get to our church tomorrow night.

Beth: What?

MC: You gotta bring your husband and those kids of yours and get yourself to our church tomorrow night. You gotta get right with God and bring your concerns to Him and I know He's gonna answer your prayers.

Beth: Uh, well, how can you say that?

MC: Because I know He does - and you did too. You just forgot it somewhere along the way. I don't know where you lost it or how you lost it but I do know that now's the time you gotta get it back.

Beth: Uh, well, I'm not sure.

MC: Dearie. This is the time. Don't wait another day. There's no better time to get right with God than Christmas. I don't care what you wear. You gotta be in church tomorrow and get right with God. You just gotta.

Beth: We'll see.

MC: Okay. Look, it's getting late. We both have shopping to do. *[Reaching inside her purse and handing Beth some money.]* Why don't you take this and get something for the kids, okay? And I'm planning on seeing you in church tomorrow night? I'm getting all dressed up for you to see my new outfit. All right?

Beth: I can't take this.

MC: Why not?

Beth: You don't have to give this to me.


MC: I know. I'm your friend dearie. You have a need. I want to help meet the need. Take it. It's all God's money anyway. Take it and come to church with us tomorrow night.

Beth: I don't know.

MC: *[Shoving it in her hand and walking away.]* 7:00 at the *[name of the church]*. I'll see ya then!

[Beth looks up towards heaven and looks down at her hand. She puts the money in her purse and exits opposite MC. MC Slowing and confidently strides across the stage, taking in all the sights she can as she exits. Lights fall as she exits.]

- CURTAIN -



Scene II:

[Scene II takes place in a church. The stage is the front platform of a church decorated for a Christmas eve service. The podium is on stage left and the scenes that are to be played out will be on stage right. Ted and his children enter and sit in the front pew of your church. Mrs. & Mr. C. do the same. There is to be a kneeler near the stage in view of the audience (or it can be on the stage to the extreme of stage right if the area in front of the stage isn't in view).]

As the lights rise we see those involved in the service on the platform. A choir is positioned (if you're using one), the song leader is standing ready to greet those present and open in a song, and the pastor is seated where your pastor usually sits.]

SL: Welcome to our Christmas Eve service. May the Lord bless you as you come to worship Him on the eve of the birthday of our Lord and Savior - Jesus Christ. Why don't you stand as you please join me as we sing Hark the Herald Angels sing. It's number XXXXX in your Hymnal.

[Congregation sings. Bob and his family enter and join Ted and Mrs. C..]

SL: You may be seated. Let's pray. Lord God, we thank you for this special season - this Christmas season. We thank you for the birth of your Son. May your blessing be on our service as we celebrate Jesus' birthday. Amen.

[Song leader steps down off the platform as Pasto comes to the podium.]

Pastor: Merry Christmas everyone. Well, at least Merry Christmas Eve. I'm sure this is a very special night for you, your family, and your friends. There are plenty of things you're probably planning on doing. They may include eating some great food - probably too much great food if you're like me. You're probably going to be seeing close family and friends. You're probably going to be unwrapping our quickly wrapping some presents soon. But before you put your mind to its next Christmas task - whatever it may be - I'd like you to let it drift a bit with me for a moment. I'd like you to let it drift to a quiet evening in a humble stable where a little boy was born long, long ago.

[Lights fade on pastor and rise on the empty nativity scene. Each of the characters enter from the back of the church, make their way to the platform, and take their positions as the pastor narrates the story.]

Pastor: You see, about 2,000 years ago there was a woman named Mary and a man named Joseph who were expecting their first child. Because of a census, they had to travel a great distance to Bethlehem, where they were to be counted and pay their tax. The trip wouldn't have been that big of a deal except for the fact that Mary was very pregnant. So pregnant, in fact, that she gave birth on the trip. As they entered the town they soon discovered that so many had come to Bethlehem that there was no more room for them at the inn. They looked all around but there was no place for them to stay. One innkeeper saw that Mary was very pregnant and took pity on them. Not having a room for them to stay in, he offered them the stable behind the inn. It was there that Mary gave birth to her firstborn child. It was a son and they named him Jesus.

There were also shepherds who were watching their flocks of sheep by night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and told them of the baby who was born in the manger. Suddenly, there were a ton of angels in the sky, proclaiming the birth of the new baby. They just had to check it out, so they left their flocks and headed to the manger to see the newborn King.

The Bible also tells us that Wise Men from the East saw a new star in the sky and knew something special was happening. They headed to Herod to ask him about the newborn King. His wise guys sent him to Bethlehem to see Jesus. On the way, some time later, they saw the star which led them to where he was. They too wanted to see the newborn King and pay Him his due respect. They gave him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

Now, this is a great story, and we hear it every year, but we can't just leave Jesus there in the manger. We can't allow ourselves to be all warm and fuzzy by what we've seen here and expect it to last until Easter when we can get all warm and fuzzy again until next Christmas. It won't last. Actually, it usually lasts until some time in January.

Jesus didn't stay there in the manger. Jesus grew up. He was born in the manger so that he could meet our physical needs. So that he could teach us. So that he could heal us. So that he could be an example to us. But most importantly - he was born in a manger so that he could die on a cross for our sins and rise again from the dead to prove that He was God.

Jesus' ministry began when he performed his first miracle at a wedding feast in the town of Cana in Galilee.

[The grown up version of Jesus enters as well as a few disciples and servants.]

Mary: Jesus, they have no more wine.

Jesus: Why do you bother me with the details of this wedding?

Mary: They are out of wine and I know you can do something about it.

Jesus: My time has not come yet. Is this the time or place for me to reveal my glory?

Mary: [*She smiles at Jesus as she puts a hand on his shoulder. To the servants.*] Do whatever He tells you to do.

[*Mary exits. The servants expectantly look to Jesus.*]

Jesus: All right. See those jars over there? Fill them to the brim with water.

[*They do that.*]

Servant: It's done. Now what?

Jesus: Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.

Servant: Okay? But we're not looking for water, we're looking for wine.

Jesus: Just do as I ask.

Servant: Okay, but this is pointless...

Jesus: Just draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet.

Servant: Okay, but don't hold me responsible for what he says. I just do what I'm told around here.

[*They exit. Master enters with servants close behind.*]

Master: [*Very excited.*] Who is responsible for this?

Servant: It wasn't me!

Master: Who made this, this, this wine?

Servant: Don't blame me. I had nothing to do with it. It was this man here. He told us to put water into those jars and draw it back out and then bring it to you. I only did what he asked.

Master: You put water into the jars and pulled it back out?

Servant: That's all I did.

Master: [*Very excited.*] Then it's a miracle! This wine is the best wine I have ever tasted. My highest compliments to you sir! Most people serve the best wine first and then bring out the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink, but you have saved the best wine for last. Come, bring this wine

to the guests. Let them enjoy the best wine I have ever tasted in my life!

[They exit with the wine. Master exits congratulating Jesus on the fine wine.]

Pastor: Was Jesus just a master at making great tasting wine? I don't think so. He created the universe from nothing by simply speaking it into existence. Of course, He could turn water into wine without words. He could do it without touching it. He could do it without anything but willing it to happen. He is God.

Jesus was born in a manger to show us what God is like. He lived with us, teaching us what the Kingdom of God is like. He revealed His power to us through the miracles that He did, turning water into wine, healing the sick, the lame, and the blind. He even brought some back from the dead. One was a man named Lazarus.

Lazarus and his two sisters, Mary and Martha, believed that Jesus was God's Son. When Lazarus became ill Mary and Martha sent for Jesus for they knew He would heal him. Lazarus died before Mary and Martha heard back from the servant they sent. Jesus didn't come to them in time. They had to bury their brother.

[Mary and Martha enter in tears. The grown up version of Jesus enters and they run to Him.]

Mary: Master. Where have you been? Did you not get our message? We sent it to you days ago! Have you come to help Lazarus? Ohh!!!

Martha: We sent for you as soon as we could. But you are too late. Lazarus is dead and we buried him and there is nothing you can do for him now.

Jesus: My dearest Mary and Martha. Don't cry. It's not too late. Lazarus is dead but I promise you - he will rise again.

Mary: What are you saying? We buried him ourselves. Don't you understand? We know that he was dead when we buried him. How can he be alive again?

Jesus: He is dead but he will rise again.

Martha: He is dead, but how can he become alive again? Do you think we would bury our brother if he was still alive?

Jesus: no, I know you wouldn't do that.

Martha: Then how can he be alive?

Jesus: You've seen and heard so much. Do you not believe in me yet?

Mary: Yes, we believe that you are the Messiah.

Martha: But how can he come back from the dead?

Jesus: Believe in me and trust me and you will see. Now take me to him and you will see. [*He moves to the edge of the stage.*]

Mary: But master, he's been in the grave for four days and we could not afford to have him embalmed.

Martha: You don't want to go into his grave!

Jesus: I'm not going into his grave. Watch and believe. [*Calling off stage.*] Lazarus, come forth!

[*They cry out and Lazarus slowly walks onto the stage. He still has grave wrapping on him. Mary and Martha quickly unravel them and begin to minister to his needs.*]

Martha: I can't believe it's really you. You're alive, just as Jesus said you would be. We thought we love you forever!

Mary: Are you thirsty? Are you hungry? Is there anything we can do for you? Anything at all?

Lazarus: [*He moves to Jesus.*] How can I possibly thank you, Lord!

Jesus: That will do. It is good to see you again, my friend.

[*Mary and Martha bow at Jesus' feet.*]

Mary: Lord, how could we have doubted you?

Martha: You are the Lord God almighty in the flesh.

Mary: You are the Messiah - the promised one!

Jesus: [*To the women.*] Rise and follow me. [*To Lazarus.*] Come, let's get to your home and get you out of those clothes.

[*They exit as they fan all over Lazarus.*]

Pastor: Jesus didn't bring Lazarus back from the dead because he missed him or because Mary or Martha missed him. He brought Lazarus back from the dead so that he could prove that He had power over death and the grave. He did it so that he could prove that He is our Lord God - the author and creator of the universe. He roved he was God 2,000 years ago and we know that he is still God today.

Jesus was born in a lowly stable, He performed great miracles - healing people, proving He had command over creation, and he died on a cross and rose again from the dead as a sacrifice for us all. Each one of us can spend all of eternity with God in Heaven because of Christ and because of Christ alone. It's not what you and I have done. It's not what we can give to Him. It's all about Jesus.

So, how about you? Have you admitted to God that you are a sinner? Have you asked God to forgive you of your sins and save a place in Heaven for you? Have you invited Christ into your heart to clean house and being a new friendship with the one who will never leave you or forsake you? Today could be the best day of your life.

Maybe you're here and you remember a time when you gave your life over to Christ but you haven't been living like it. Maybe you've let the cares and trials of the world get in the way of that special friendship with the creator of the universe. Maybe you've been through some tough times. Maybe you've lost your job. Maybe you've lost a close family member. Maybe you've just been too busy to give time to God. Today could be the day you get right with Him and Him work in your life again.

Christmas is the day we celebrate the birth of Christ. But Christmas can also be the day you celebrate a New Birth in your life. This altar is here for you my friends. It's here for you to come and meet with God - maybe for the first time in your entire life. It's here for you to pray to Him - maybe for the first time a long, long while. What's holding you back? Give it to God. He gave His life for you. Now you can give your life to Him. As we sing this last song, if you want to pray with someone, come on forward. Come on forward.

[There are a few options here. The Song leader can come forward and lead the congregation in a hymn, the choir can sing, or someone can do a special music number. Pastor stands by as the song begins. Bob and Beth rise and slowly make their way to the altar. Pastor moves over towards them and talks to them as the song continues. He prays with them and ends his time of prayer just as the song ends. Pastor exits. Mrs. C. and Ted make their way to Bob and Beth as they turn from the altar. They greet each other.]

Beth: I am so glad I saw you at the mall yesterday. I haven't prayed like that in a way too long!

Bob: And I was able to get a lot off my chest and into God's hands tonight.

Beth: Thank you for caring for us so much that you insisted that we come to church today - and thank you for that gift you gave us yesterday!

Bob: I'm so glad that Beth was able to talk me into coming today.

Beth: This is just what we both needed.

Bob: I'm sorry for the way I acted yesterday. We were so caught up in our own lives that we let ourselves fall away from the Lord. We blamed Him for all the stuff going on in our lives and it drove us farther from Him.

Beth: But all we had to do is turn to Him and He was there for us. Just like the Pastor said.

Bob: It was so good to get that burden off my shoulders.

Beth: That's great. So, how do you feel now?

Bob: At peace. For the first time in a long time I'm at peace - really at peace.

Beth: Me too. And we couldn't have done it without you. Thank you for caring about us.

MC: It's not about us dearie. It's all about God. He led you to us yesterday so that we could invite you to be here today. We're just a small part of His great big plan for you. Don't thank us - thank Him.

Ted: It was definitely God's plan for you to spend Christmas Eve here in church.

Bob: That's for sure. Hey, look. I've got to apologize for the way I went on and on at the mall yesterday. I did a lot of complaining and I know I sounded really selfish - especially with you losing your wife the way you did.

Beth: Me too. You've been like a mother to me. You've spent so much time with me over the past years and I was so rude to you. I treated you like you were less than a stranger. I'm so sorry. Will you forgive me?

MC: Of course I'll forgive you. It's Christmas. Isn't that what Christmas is all about? It's all about how God sent Christ to pay the price for our sins so that we can receive forgiveness and a place in heaven, right dearie?

Bob: That's what Pastor said.

MC: If God could do that for us then I can do it for you. Consider yourselves forgiven.

[*They hug.*]

Beth: Thank you so much!

Ted: We're just really glad that you let God work in your lives today. It's so cool to see someone meet God - or reconnect with God - here in church on Christmas Eve.

MC: That's the real reason I love Christmas so much. We celebrate Jesus' birthday and now we can celebrate your re-birthday, right, dearie?

Beth: Yeah, I do feel like a new person. So, is this a reason for us to go shopping?

MC: Do we need a reason? Come on dearie, I got plans for you!

Bob: Oh great! I don't know what they're up to, but I now we can't afford it - or I'll be getting another job just to cover it.
[Laughing.]

Ted: Don't worry. It's Christmas Eve. I doubt there are many places still open at this time of night. And if they are open I bet there isn't much left on the shelves for them to buy.

Bob: I sure hope you're right. We definitely can't afford a late night Christmas Eve shopping spree with Mrs. C. at the helm.


Ted: Ah, don't worry about it. Come on, let's go downstairs. Rumor has it there are plenty of cookies and candy and pies and cakes and other goodies for us to enjoy.

Bob: [*Just like Mrs. C.*] That's why I just love Christmas, Dearie!!!

[*They exit.*]

[*This would be a good time for your pastor to offer a few closing thoughts and invite those in attendance to experience a new birth in Christ this Christmas.*]

- CURTAIN -



Copyright © 2003 by James E. Bogoniewski, Jr.