



### 3. Two Christmas stories

#### TRANSCRIPT OF VIDEO

Christmas is a time of memories and as I look back there are many beautiful memories. In this final video on “Joy to the World” I want to share with two stories that impacted me and I have loved retelling for over two decades. One of them is probably a legend, but they both beautifully capture everything that Christmas is about and why it is a ‘joy to the world.’

The first one I encountered in the late 1990s and I have retold it countless times. It is called the **Story of the Three Trees**

Once upon a mountain top, three little trees stood and dreamed of what they wanted to become when they grew up.

The first one looked at the stars and said: “I want to be a treasure chest and hold the best treasures of the world!”

The second little tree looked out at a small stream trickling by, on its way to the ocean. “I want to travel the seven seas carrying powerful kings around the world!”

The third little tree looked down into the valley into a busy town. “I don’t want to leave this mountain and grow so tall that when people look at me, they’ll raise their eyes to heaven and think of God. I’d like to be that tall.”

Years passed. The rains came, the sun shone, and the little trees grew tall. One day three woodcutters came.

The first woodcutter saw the first tree and said, “This tree is perfect for my need.” As the first tree fell she thought, “I hope I’m made into a beautiful treasure chest!”

The second woodcutter looked at the second tree and said, “This tree is strong. It is perfect for me.” As the second tree fell, he thought, “Now I will sail the seas, carrying mighty kings!”

The third tree’s heart sink when the last woodcutter without even looking said, “Any kind of tree will do for me,” and the third tree fell.

The first tree’s joy was short-lived as the woodcutter told the carpenter to make a feedbox for animals. Soon instead of gold or treasures, she was coated with sawdust and filled with hay for hungry farm animals.

The second tree smiled when the woodcutter took him to a shipyard, but not for long. Instead, of a ship he was made into a simple fishing boat. Too small and too weak to sail on anything more than a lake.

The third tree was confused when the woodcutter cut her into strong beams and left her in a lumberyard. “What happened?” the once tall tree wondered. “How can I point people to God from here?” Many days and

many nights passed. The three trees almost forgot their dreams.

But, one-night, golden starlight poured over the first tree as a young woman placed her newborn baby in the feedbox. Her husband looked sad as he was not able to provide a better place for the child. But, the mother smiled at him and said. “This manger is beautiful.”

Suddenly the first tree knew she was holding the greatest treasure in the world.

One evening a tired traveler and his friends got into the old fishing boat. The traveler fell asleep as the second tree quietly sailed out into the lake.

Soon a fierce storm arose. The little tree shuddered. She was unsure if she was strong enough to carry the passengers in this wind and rain. The tired man was awakened. He stood up, and just said, “Peace be still.” The storm stopped immediately. As His friends worshipped the man was the second tree realized he was carrying the king of heaven and earth.

One Friday morning, the third tree was startled when her beams were yanked from the forgotten woodpile. She flinched as she was carried through an angry jeering crowd. She shuddered when soldiers nailed a man’s hands to her. She felt awful. But on Sunday morning, when the sun rose and the earth trembled with joy beneath her, the third tree knew that God’s love had changed everything.

And now every time people thought of her, the third tree, they would think of God. That was better than being the tallest tree in the world.

As we look back and think of all we didn’t get in 2020, let’s sit tight and be happy because God is thinking of something better to give us.

The next story, I would like to believe is true as our family has lived and loved living in Terre Haute, Indiana and Indianapolis, Indiana. I like to call it “**The History of the Candy Cane**” but others call it a legend. In either case, the value of the story remains unaffected!

A candy maker in Indiana wanted to make a candy that would be a witness of Christ’s life. So, he created the Christmas Candy Cane filled with symbols of Jesus Christ’s birth, ministry, and death. He started with a stick of pure white, hard candy. White to symbolize Jesus’ Virgin Birth and sinless life. Hard to symbolize the Solid Rock, the Church’s foundation, and firmness of God’s promises.

The candy maker made the candy in the form of a “J” to represent the precious name of Jesus, which means “Savior”. Turn it around and it is the staff of the “Good Shepherd” used to reach into the ditches of the world and rescue fallen lambs who, like all sheep, have gone astray.

Thinking that the candy was somewhat plain, the candy maker stained it with red stripes. He used three small stripes to show the stripes of the scourging Jesus received by which we are healed. The large red stripe was for the blood shed by Christ on the cross, through which we have the assurance of eternal life.

Unfortunately, the candy became known as ‘candy cane’ which to many is a meaningless decoration during Christmas time. But, for those who have eyes to see and ears to hear, the true meaning is still there.

## CONNECT WITH US

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