

# 175 All Is Calm, All Is Bright - Carols of Encouragement

[00:00:00] Welcome to the Encouragement for Real Life podcast. I'm Julie Lefebure, your host. Life is remarkable, sometimes raw and always real. And some days we could use a little extra encouragement for our real lives. Here, you'll find that, along with personal life impacting stories, helpful life hacks, timely inspiration, biblical insight, and a fresh perspective.

The Encouragement for Real Life podcast equips you to be a light in this world and to shine bright wherever God has you. I'm glad you're here today.

**Julie Lefebure:** Last week, we kicked off a month long series here on the podcast titled Carols of Encouragement, inspired by the timeless lyrics of biblically based Christmas carols. Yeah, we're having so much fun with this already. Through Christmas Eve, we are reflecting on the profound truths hidden in these [00:01:00] songs, discovering how they speak to our everyday struggles, and embracing, through them, the hope, peace, and joy that Christ brings.

Especially in this season as we prepare for Christmas, whether you're feeling weary, searching for stillness, or simply longing to connect with God this holiday season, these episodes will encourage your heart and point you back to Him. Today, we're peering into the Christmas carol that will invite us to what's calm and bright.

That sounds pretty good, doesn't it? It's perfect for this full and sometimes hectic season. So let's get right into this episode to find help and hope for our real lives today.

**Julie Lefebure:** Calm. Could you use a [00:02:00] little bit of it today? Calm can be defined as stillness, peaceful, serene or tranquil. And if you're anything like me, I am not living in an abundance of stillness, peace, serenity, or tranquility today. But I'd sure like to be. I have a long list to accomplish and I feel like I'm behind. And the reminder that Christmas is just 15 days away invites stress to replace my peace. Yeah. But I'm reminding myself, this is not what Christmas is about. No, Jesus's birth wasn't stressful. Well, unless we

consider maybe how Mary and Joseph couldn't find a place to stay and they ended up giving birth to Jesus in a manger that night.

That might've been stressful. But our Carol of Encouragement this week reminds us of another perspective of that night, one of calm and [00:03:00] brightness. Silent Night is one of my all time favorite Christmas carols. Yeah, some say it's the most famous Christmas song. I don't know about that, but it could be true.

And interestingly, it was written as a poem on Christmas Eve in 1818 by Pastor Joseph Franz Mohr in Austria. Now I may be pronouncing his name wrong, but he needed a carol for the hours away Christmas Eve Midnight Mass. So, he took the poem to his friend and the church's choir master and organist, Franz Savor Gruber. Again, I could be pronouncing those wrong. Almost miraculously, in a matter of hours, Franz composed the German Stille Nacht melody, which translated in English is Silent Night.

We might sing it each year at Christmastime, but do we ever pay attention to [00:04:00] the words? It actually tells us the Christmas story. And the first stanza captures the scene beautifully. Silent night, holy night, all is calm, all is bright, round yon virgin, mother and child, holy infant, so tender and mild, sleep in heavenly peace, sleep in heavenly peace.

I really want to sing that, but I won't. But there it is. All is calm, all is bright. Can you picture it all? Brand new parents who are likely weary from their long journey to Bethlehem, holding their newborn son in a likely less than clean manger filled with animal stench and sounds. But in that moment, none of that mattered.

This baby wasn't just any son. He was the son of God, the Savior of the [00:05:00] world. And I imagine the hush throughout the surroundings and the indescribable peace felt in those moments. Can't you just imagine? God couldn't have been closer. He couldn't have been nearer. And thinking about it all just gives me goosebumps.

All was calm. And that's what happens when Jesus is present. Back then in the manger, through Bible times, and for us still today.

But this first stanza reminds us that it wasn't just calm. It was also bright. We don't know the cause of the brightness for sure. I mean, we can guess. But maybe it was from the guiding star above the manger or the radiance of Jesus's face mentioned in the third stanza of this song. We can gather, however, that

Jesus's presence penetrated the darkness, the darkness of the night and the darkness of the world [00:06:00] He was just born into. This is also still true today. After all, Jesus is the light of the world. John chapter eight, verse 12, then the New International Version says, when Jesus spoke again to the people, He said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but we'll have the light of life." John chapter 1 verses 2 through 4 also in the New International Version states that "He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made. Without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness. And the darkness has not overcome it." And one more second Corinthians chapter four, verse six, also in the New International Version reads, "for God who said, let light shine out of darkness, made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of [00:07:00] the knowledge of God's glory displayed in the face of Christ."

I think there is our answer. It was bright because of Jesus. All is calm. All is bright. Jesus brought peace in the manger and to the entire world. And that includes into your life and in mine. You know, our lives might feel anything but calm or bright in this moment. It might seem as if they are full of chaos and gloom. But Jesus offers his peace amidst our situations and circumstances.

And this peace that He offers is a gift that we can accept not just at Christmas time, but all year through. Jesus tells us in John chapter 14, verse 27, in the Contemporary English Version about this peace, He says that, "I give you peace. The kind of peace only I can give. It [00:08:00] isn't like the peace this world can give. So don't be worried or afraid." That's perfect timing, isn't it, for that, that verse? His peace is not dependent on what we see or experience or what the headlines tell us. It's not based on what we do or what we own. And it doesn't have anything to do with how peaceful we feel.

When Jesus is present, His peace is present. And if we have Jesus in our lives. We have His peace in our lives. But some days we just need a reminder of this truth, don't we? At least I know I do. I've mentioned before in previous episodes, the issues that I've had with my heart, my physical heart. In the past, it has had a mind of its own, or I guess you could say a beat of its own. And I'm assuming that I inherited this from my mom because she had similar issues. And not long ago, my [00:09:00] heart felt like it was acting up again, and I became extremely agitated about it. I've undergone two cardiac ablations in the past. And my mind went to all sorts of places this time, including thinking that I was going to need another one. And I certainly did not want to go through that again. I had worked myself into such a frenzy. I was a mess. And of course, that did nothing to help my heart in those moments. So my cardiologist suggested

that I wear a heart monitor for two weeks. And that was fun. No, it's not. If you've ever done that, you know, it's not a treat.

But during those two weeks, I drew close to God. Even closer than if I wouldn't have had , these issues. And I asked Him to heal or reveal whatever was going on in my heart, I clung to Him and I asked Jesus to calm my mind, calm my [00:10:00] heart and to give me His peace. And when my mind would start to worry again, I would intentionally choose to believe Jesus was with me, healing me and guiding me. I intentionally chose His peace when my mind wanted to worry. In fact, there would be days that I would just say a simple breath prayer as often as I thought of it. I would take a deep breath in and say something like, Jesus, I breathe in your peace. And then I would exhale and say, I let go of any tension and worry. And I repeated this over and over and over. And I can't tell you how much that helped me to just simply rest in Jesus's peace, even when I didn't feel peaceful. After the two weeks were up, my cardiologist confirmed my heart was healthy and that my last ablation did what it was supposed to do. The different beats [00:11:00] that I was feeling were sporadic, early beats, she called them. And she said many people experience them, including her. So it was nothing that I needed to worry about.

Thank you, Jesus. You know, Jesus's peace will always sustain us. Friend, no matter what you're walking through today. I invite you to choose to live in His peace today and tomorrow and the day after that, and the day after that. Philippians chapter four, verse seven in the New Living Translation says this, and it just encourages my heart so. It says, "Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus." Amen. May we seek His peace this season and beyond. When the world around us is appearing to be mixed up, it's a [00:12:00] mixed up mess of all sorts of trouble, let's choose the peace of Jesus. When internally we're worried and we're distraught about many things, let's choose the peace of Jesus. When money is tight and we're running out of time to prepare for the quote, "perfect Christmas", let's choose the peace of Jesus.

And some ways that we can do that are to pray for His peace. Simply pray for it. For His peace to fill us and to sustain us. To read our Bibles and allow God's promises to encourage us in our circumstances. To notice and be grateful for God's many blessings in our lives, both big and small ones. And to step outdoors some evening under the starlit sky and shift your gaze upward. Soak in a few moments of calm and brightness. Take a few deep breaths and enjoy the peace and hope that fills your soul. Yeah, I kind of want to [00:13:00] do that tonight.

And the last one is listen to the carol Silent Night and sing it at the top of your lungs for all the world to hear. But seriously, I do invite you to join me in pausing in quiet moments throughout the day and in the days ahead to breathe in God's peace. Feel free to use the breath prayer that I mentioned a few minutes ago. Play Silent Night on repeat for the next 10 days, 15 days or longer. And allow God to sink its words and truth into your very heart. Take a few minutes to read the Christmas story found in Luke two. Yeah, there's so many things we can do to soak up the peace of Jesus. Would you pray with me?

God, we praise you and thank you for sending Your Son to be our hope and promise.

We [00:14:00] imagine the scene in the manger and we just can't quite fathom it all. But as Luke tells us how this good news of Jesus's birth will cause great joy for all people, we rejoice in the celebration of His birth. Yet, Lord, we can get caught up in other things. We make Christmas more about the tinsel and the gifts than in the real meaning of the holiday.

We can get snagged in our own troubles and worries. And we can forget about the calm and the bright of this season, the brightness of the season, which is Jesus Christ. Lord, help us to not forget this, this season. Help us to embrace the peace of Jesus as a light of the world and equip us to share it with others.

Lord. We love you. And in Jesus name, we pray these things. Amen.[00:15:00]

Friend, if you found some hope and encouragement in this episode, would you consider leaving a rating and or review from wherever you're listening or watching today? Share this with a friend who could use this encouragement too.

And if you live local to me, well, I invite you to begin the new year with a purpose and a heart ready to follow God's calling on your life. Join me for coffee and calling. This is fun. A special gathering where women come together over a warm cup of coffee or tea or hot chocolate to reflect, connect, and prayerfully choose a guiding word for 2025. It's on Saturday, January 4th from 830 to 10 and it's in Cedar Rapids, Iowa. The details and the tickets, they can be found in the show notes. I can't wait to begin the new year with you.

All is calm. All is bright. The peace of Jesus is always with us. Let's live in it and share it [00:16:00] with others today. May we shine His light wherever God has us. Thanks for tuning in today. God bless you.

Thank you so much for joining me here today. You can find more at [JulieLefebure.com](http://JulieLefebure.com). And until next time, stay encouraged.