



### *First Greetings of Christmas Morning*

Growing up in Scranton Pennsylvania, Christmas Eve was celebrated at the Jackson Street Baptist Church with two evening services. The first service took place at 7:00pm and the last service took place at 11:00 pm.

I always attended the 11:00 pm service with my family. The service itself didn't differ from the 7:00 pm. The hymns and sermon were similar. The gathering of familiar friends was similar as well. The difference between the two was the time. When the 11:00 pm service ended, it was Christmas morning.

Hope always rests in anticipation of what is to come. Christmas is filled with hope because it is filled with expectation and anticipation. While it is true that children seem to have the lion's share of Christmas hope, there remains plenty for the faithful who gather. Christmas not only speaks of the Gift that was given but also references that fulfillment of all that which was given.

As the 11:00 pm Christmas Eve service reached its culmination, and the last hymn was sung. The first greeting of Christmas morning was given. Anticipation turned to hope and hope never disappoints us. So, in Christ, there is a day coming in which we will see our Savior face to face. We will greet and be greeted in celebration, awe and wonder. Until that day, Merry Christmas! The hope remains and deepens with each passing year.

Al Fletcher