



I HEARD THE BELLS

The Christmas season doesn't always bring excitement and joy to all people. Often times, the Christmas season, and simply the holiday season, brings a sense of sorrow, grief, and loneliness rather than joy and cheer for some people.

It is the sorrow, grief, and despair that sits at the heart of one of my favorite Christmas carols, "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day."



Originally titled, "Christmas Bells," Henry Wadsworth Longfellow wrote this poem in 1863 from a heart and mind jaded by tragedy and remorse. This poem was inspired by several painful events in Longfellow's life that brought about more sorrow and grief than the joy of the season.

For one, his son Charles joined the Union army against Henry's wishes without telling him before he left. Eventually, Charles was severely wounded in battle. Around the same time, Longfellow's wife, Frances, tragically died from an accidental fire, which left Henry badly burned as well.

The third verse, which says,

*"And in despair, I bowed my head:
'There is no peace on earth,' I said,
'For hate is strong and mocks the song
of peace on earth, good will to men,'"*

shows the depth of despair Longfellow experienced.

So, having an injured son and a dead wife, Longfellow wrote his poem "Christmas Bells" on Christmas Day telling of the despair in his heart as he heard the Christmas bells play.

Fortunately, this poem ends
on an encouraging note.



The fourth verse reads,

*"Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
'God is not dead, nor doth He sleep.
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
with peace on earth, good will to men."*

This verse emphasizes hope and peace among men, despite the troubles of the world. It shows the faith and hope in God that Longfellow had in the face of despair.

Isn't this one of the things that we need to be reminded of this season?

Maybe your Christmas season is one that is riddled with sorrow because of the death and absence of a loved one. Maybe you are experiencing loneliness because you have to be away from family and friends this year. Maybe you are in despair as you've been given a bad doctor's report, or your family situation has dramatically changed.

Whatever your reason for not experiencing the joy of the season, be reminded that our Lord knows what you are experiencing.

He is the Great High Priest who can and will sympathize with our weaknesses (**Hebrews 4:15**).

He is the God of all comfort (**2 Corinthians 1:3-5**).

He is the Prince of Peace (**Isaiah 9:6**).

He is the source of all hope (**Psalms 39:7**).

He gives the peace that passes all understanding (**Philippians 4:7**).

In His presence is fullness of joy (**Psalms 16:11**).

There's a nice movie about Henry Longfellow and the story of his poem that I would encourage you to watch this season. Below is the trailer...

Derrick Marrs
Ministry Director

"I Heard the Bells" | Official Trailer



1 I heard the bells on Christmas day
Their old familiar carols play,
And wild and sweet the words repeat
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

2 I thought how, as the day had come,
The belfries of all Christendom
Had rolled along th'unbroken song
Of peace on earth, good will to men.

3 And in despair I bowed my head:
"There is no peace on earth," I said,
"For hate is strong, and mocks the song
Of peace on earth, good will to men."

4 Then pealed the bells more loud and deep:
"God is not dead, nor doth He sleep;
The wrong shall fail, the right prevail,
With peace on earth, good will to men."

5 Till, ringing, singing on its way,
The world revolved from night to day
A voice, a chime, a chant sublime,
Of peace on earth, good will to men.



NEW PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Help Bancroft Bible Camp
Raise Funds by Taking Your Vehicle to



For A Great Shine Every Time!

November 15th, 2025 - February 15th, 2026

Purchase any single car wash to help Bancroft Gospel Ministry raise funds for our Bible Camp to help with operational costs and support our efforts! We will receive 30% of the single wash sales earned using our fundraiser's wash code!

Visit any of the TruShine Car Wash Locations

203 Linden Square Drive Bristol, VA 24202	25017 Western Loop Abingdon, VA 24211
3033 Boones Creek Road Johnson City, TN 37615	2227 Fort Henry Drive Kingsport, TN 37664
116 Allensville Road Sevierville, TN 37876	
1912 Highway 394 Blountville, TN 37617	1541 W Jackson Blvd Jonesborough, TN 37659

Follow the Instructions Below

Pull up to one of the pay stations.

Follow the screen prompts to buy a single wash.

Push the "ENTER WASH CODE" button at the bottom left of the screen.

Enter Wash Code: **14140**

14140 is the unique number associated with this fundraiser.

You must enter this code to participate in the fundraiser.

Select the car wash of your choice.

Select your payment method. Insert Payment.

If preferred, print the receipt for your records.

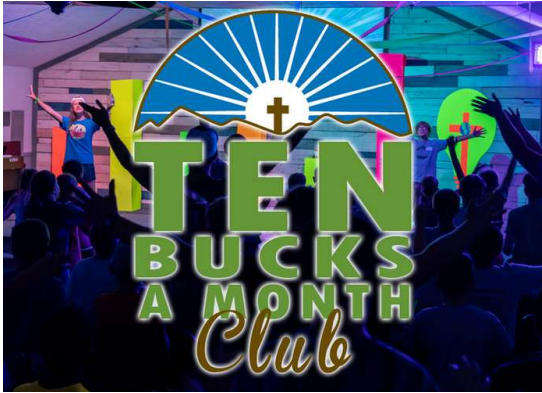
Thank you for participating in the
Bancroft Bible Camp Fundraiser!



You can now partner with Bancroft through donating stocks to help financially support the ministry!

By donating stock that has increased in value, you will avoid paying tax on the capital gains. Many donors have found this is an easy way to increase their donation while helping themselves at tax time.

Donate Stock to Bancroft!



For the price of a movie ticket or a fast-food meal, you can make a lasting impact for the kingdom of God by supporting a ministry who has served the Lord and our community for over 100 years!

Click the button below and become part of a team of people desiring to make an eternal difference by financially supporting Bancroft!

You can give **more** than \$10 if you choose and you can even make it a recurring donation for your convenience!

JOIN THE CLUB!

**EPIISODE 10 IS NOW
LIVE!**

Our next to last episode of Season 1 drops today,

"No Rest for the Weary (Part 2)!"

Head over to your podcast platform of choice and give it a listen!

If you aren't familiar with podcasts or how to listen to them, feel free to simply visit our website and listen from there. Here is the link for your convenience:

www.bancroftgospelministry.org/stopandconsider



If you are into the podcast world, below are the links to your favorite podcast platforms for easy access. Currently, the only podcast that has video is through Spotify, but videos to YouTube are coming in Season 2! Be sure to subscribe, like, and comment!

Apple Podcasts:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/stop-and-consider/id1843097127>

YouTube:

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Amazon Music:

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iHeartRadio:

<https://iheart.com/podcast/296982721/>

New episodes drop every two weeks, and as always, THANKS for listening!

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EPISODE!

We only have a few more episodes in Season 1, but don't let the end of Season 1 send you into a depressing holiday slump!

Christmas is coming early with a special **EXTRA** episode dropping the week before Christmas (Friday, December 19)! Here's a sneak peek...



Also, because you are all on Santa's Nice List, we will be bringing you a new weekly podcast called, "**Camp Tales!**"

Camp Tales will be a shorter, weekly podcast filled with stories about camp both past and present.

We will have special guests throughout the year and plenty of stories. So, in between seasons, there will still be plenty of content for you to consume!

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