

December 24, 1936

[Christmas Tree Lighting - Washington, D.C.]

FDR Speech File

ADDRESS OF THE PRESIDENT  
CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

WASHINGTON, D. C.

December 24, 1936

I have been reading the Christmas Carol to my family in accordance with our old custom. On this eve of Christmas I want to quote to you the pledge of old Scrooge when, after many vicissitudes, he had come to understand in his heart the great lesson and the great opportunity of Christmastide.

"I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present and the Future. The spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach."

And at the end of the story is this glorious passage:

"Scrooge was better than his word. He did it all and infinitely more; and to Tiny Tim, who did NOT die, he was a second father. He became as good a friend, as good a master and as good a man as the good old city knew, or any other good old city, town or borough in the good old world. Some people laughed to see the alteration in him, but he let them laugh and little heeded them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughter in the outset. His own heart laughed; and that was good enough for him."

The reaching of the Sermon on the Mount is as adequate to the needs of men and of nations today as when it

Franklin D. Roosevelt Library

This is a transcript made by the White House stenographer from his shorthand notes taken at the time the speech was made. Underlining indicates words extemporaneously added to the previously prepared reading copy text. Words in parentheses are words that were omitted when the speech was delivered, though they appear in the previously prepared reading copy text.

I have been reading the Christmas Carol to my family in accordance with our old custom. On this eve of Christmas I want to quote to you the words of his George when, after many vicissitudes, he had come to understand in his heart the great lesson and the great opportunity of Christmas.

"I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the love, the peace and the future. The spirit of all these shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach." And at the end of the story in this glorious

parable  
"George was better than his word. He did it all and faithfully more; and so the little who did it, he was a second Christmas. He became as good a friend, as good a neighbor and as good a man as the good old city knew or any other good old city. Some people laughed to see the good old words. Some people laughed to see the situation in him, but he let them laugh and little needed them; for he was wise enough to know that nothing ever happened on this globe for good, at which some people did not have their fill of laughing in the corner. His own heart laughed; and that was good enough for him."

The meaning of the lesson on the Mount is to separate to the needs of men and of nations today as when it

was first proclaimed among the hills above the Sea of Galilee. In such measure as its spirit is accepted men and nations may lay claim to be seekers after peace on earth.

We of the Western Hemisphere have this year rendered special tribute to the spirit of Christmas, for we have pledged anew our faith in the arbitrament of reason and the practice of friendship. To that faith we bear witness tonight. May that faith make us happy today and tomorrow and through all the coming year.