

December 24, 2021  
Christmas Eve  
St. Timothy Lutheran Church – Huber Heights, OH  
Pastor Joel Sutton

Luke 2:1-16

A SAVIOR WHO IS CHRIST THE LORD.

In the ✠ Name of Jesus. Amen.

The Christmas song says: *“It’s the most wonderful time of the year.”* However, for those who are lonely or grieving the loss of a loved one, it a time of great sadness and despair. Some attempt to mask their pain in the sights, sounds, and smells that are associated with the season. Truthfully, we all attempt to recapture the childhood magic of Christmas. Those days of youthful innocence when you were unaware of the effects that sin has brought into the world: namely, the pain, suffering, and sorrow that voids you of even one drop of holiday cheer. Life seemed so simple when you were oblivious to the consequences of living in a darkened and dying world.

But Christmas is not about escaping into some fantasy world because illusions must always give way to reality. And regardless of how grand or pitiful your circumstances are today – the objective reality is – you have something far greater than any childhood fantasy could conceive. The Gospel message proclaimed by the Angel of the Lord some 2,000 years ago to shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night, is God’s message to you.

*“For unto you is born this day... a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”* (Luke 2:11)

The woman’s offspring which was promised in the Garden of Eden, whose coming was precisely foretold by the prophets, the virgin giving birth to a son in Bethlehem, whose name is Immanuel, which means *“God with us,”* the Creator has taken on human flesh and blood to save the very creatures that ruined His perfect world. To mere humans, it seems impossible for God to become human. We cannot explain all of God’s technical details of Jesus’ miraculous birth. But thankfully Holy Scripture records all facts, the good news of great joy that will be for all the people, so that the Holy Spirit can create lifesaving faith within you.

The firstborn Son of Mary is none other than the promised Messiah, God in human flesh and bone. Before the foundation of the world, God saw you and the whole world walking in darkness, alienated from God, dead in your trespasses and sins – and He had mercy upon you. God loved you and the whole world so much that He gave His only begotten Son as a gracious gift of salvation. Because of sin, you and me and the whole world could not go to God – so He came to us. *God with us*, Immanuel, wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.

The Son of God became man and was born among us to stand and shepherd His flock. God became our brother, your brother, for this very purpose: to die in the flesh in your place and to shed His blood to purchase you from the powers of darkness and the devil. He was made to be like you in every way, but without sin, so He could be your perfect substitute, taking your place

under the Law in order to free you from its damnation. He was made to be sin for you that He might remove the curse of sin and the sting of death forever:

**“... that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life.”** (John 3:16)

His lowly birth foreshadows the humble life He would live and the shameful death He would suffer on your behalf. God lying on the wood of the manger would thirty years later be nailed to the wood of a cross, giving Himself to deliver you from sin, death, and the grave. Just as He was wrapped in cloths and laid in a manger at His birth, He also would be wrapped in grave cloths and laid in a tomb in His death, which He would leave behind in His glorious resurrection, foreshadowing your resurrection from the grave on the last day.

As true man, He was your substitute in death. As true God, He paid the infinite price your sins required, which you could not even begin to pay. Therefore, only in this God-man Christ Jesus is there eternal life. Only in this child, who was laid in a manger and who is now bodily raised from the dead and seated at the right hand of the Father, is there salvation. Only He could accomplish it. Every other religion is an illusion, a false hope, and childhood fantasy.

While there is nothing wrong with celebrating and enjoying all the sights, sounds, and smells that are associated with this season, you and I would do well to follow the virgin mother’s lead on that silent night, holy night all those years ago.

**“... Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.”** (Luke 2:19)

She treasured and pondered in her heart all that that had been spoken by the angel of the Lord to shepherds concerning her baby boy:

**“For unto you is born this day... a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”** (Luke 2:11)

Do not let the celebrations, sights, sounds, and smells of the season become a distraction. Regardless of how grand or pitiful your circumstances are today – the objective reality is – you have something far greater than any childlike fantasy could conceive. You have a treasure. You have a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Because of sin, you could not go to God – so He comes to you: **God with us**, Immanuel, wrapped in the swaddling cloths of His proclaimed Gospel Word and in His body and blood, given and shed for you. He comes for all mankind: for the distressed, the lonely, and the grieving. He comes for every wounded heart and mind. He comes calling you out of the darkness into His marvelous light bringing you forgiveness, life, and salvation. Christ Jesus’ sacrificial blood shed on the cross has satisfied God’s wrath against all sin and for Jesus’ sake making peace between God and man. With the heavenly host we praise God and saying: *“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among all who believe.”*

Amen.

In the ✠ Name of Jesus. Amen.