

Christmas Eve Sermon: “Let us Give Glory!”

Christmas is the time that the church has marked as the birth of Christ and so onight we gather to celebrate the advent of our Lord and Savior. The birth of Christ was an event planned from the foundation of the world that ushered in a new era in the history of humankind and this planet. Things would literally never be the same.

In the backwater of the powerful Roman Empire a child was born to people who in the “world’s” view were nothing – the dregs of society. And yet now our very calendars are defined by an estimate of when this event occurred. Years are either B.C (Before Christ) or AD (Anno Domini Latin for Year of Our Lord).

In the beginning of the Gospel of Luke we learn of the birth of Christ. I think it is fitting on Christmas Eve that we read it. Turn with me to Luke chapter 2...

Luk 2:1 In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

Luk 2:2 This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria.

Luk 2:3 And all went to be registered, each to his own town.

Luk 2:4 And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,

Luk 2:5 to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Luk 2:6 And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.

Luk 2:7 And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

Luk 2:8 And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night.

Luk 2:9 And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with fear.

Luk 2:10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people.

Luk 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Luk 2:12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."

Luk 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

Luk 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

These words are so familiar to us, and yet continually so profound.... That the almighty God.... The very creator of the universe would come to dwell with us here on earth, condescending to human form. It is important to note that this little baby ... was both fully God and fully human. This was the birth of the ultimate Passover lamb that would be issued to atone for the death of his people – Those who are the adopted sons and daughters of God as we heard about this past Sunday.

The next 30 some years of Christ's life ushered in the advent of the Kingdom of God on this Earth and defined Christ as the perfect person able to live every aspect of the law that everyone of us have failed to do. He has come on his "Great Rescue" mission to save his people, from the curse of death and sin in which we live under. This was certainly news of "Great Joy" for the shepherds on a hill overlooking

Bethlehem to the ends of the world. The Great Shepherd had come to guide his flock.

Often times we take for granted some of the great truths of our faith. We are called to worship Christ and first I want to talk about who it is that we worship. There are hundreds of millions (if not billions) of others tonight gathering and celebrating with us. Yet, sadly many do not even realize or worse reject key truths of what they say they worship. So let me take this opportunity to review some of these.

1) Fully Human and God

First, as we read clearly in Luke 2, we celebrate the birth of Christ as a human infant to Mary and Joseph. He has all the properties of a human such as our flesh and emotions. He felt pain, he wept, he loved his friends and us, and he was tempted just as we are. Even, with these human properties he was also fully God. As our confession states *“two whole, perfect, and distinct natures inseparably joined in one person.”*

However, Christ never sinned he unlike us was able to live every iota of the law. He had no corruption in him.

2) The Virgin Birth

A second major truth we have is the miraculous conception of Christ. He was born to Mary, a Virgin, betrothed to Joseph just as the prophecies had foretold as we read in Isaiah 7:4

Isa 7:14 Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.

3) It was according to all of the other Prophecies

In addition to the Virgin birth Jesus fulfilled numerous other prophecies and the foreshadowings of the law in the Old Testament. Even in Genesis 3 immediately after the Fall we see references to his coming such as **Gen 3:15 were God spoke to Satan** “ I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.” Christ has come to crush the head of Satan.

We read in Luke 2 of some of these fulfillments of prophecy occurring in the very birth event such as Christ being born in Bethlehem, being a descendant of David, and being born of a virgin.

4) This was God’s Plan

Another major point is that this was God’s Plan. This was not designed as plan B or plan C. This was the plan from the foundation of the earth. God chose the exact time, place and people.

He orchestrated all of the events for his purposes. From the census that brought Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem to the very Manger he was born in and to the Shepherds who came and worshipped him.

Worshipping Christ Today and Everyday.....

Now while continuing to talk about some of these truths of Christ I wanted to also examine a key and simple aspect that Luke tells us of. In Luke 2:10 we read:

Luk 2:10 And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you **good news of great joy that will be for all the people.**

Luke mentions that this Birth is news of “great joy” . Christ’s birth is certainly a great joy for the world. But why? Certainly there is joy when a baby is born. I have been able myself to experience that personally three times. However, the birth of my children was not something for all peoples and something that 2,000 years later hundreds of millions would be celebrating.

In verse 11. The Angel God’s very Messenger... further proclaims....

Luk 2:11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David **a Savior**, who is Christ the Lord.

Luke states that Christ is our Savior. Christ is not simply another cute baby, good teacher, or prophet, or generally nice guy. He is the Savior. He is the ultimate, once and forever sacrifice so that his chosen people may be forgiven of their sins. Just as the Angel of Death saw the blood of the lamb on the doorposts and passed over God’s people in Egypt. Christ’s blood covers the sins of those who have believed in him. He has taken the punishment that we deserve and makes us to live as new creations and guarantees us the promise of eternity in heaven.

There are many people who celebrate the Birth of Christ who have no knowledge of him. They do not recognize him as their Savior. They may acknowledge his birth as a historical event but they simply pick and chose or ignore the parts they don’t want or like– even the Muslims do this.

The advent of Christ on this Earth in the form of an infant as fully human and fully God is inextricably linked to his death, resurrection and every other event and teaching. Let me say that again the birth of

Christ is not some disjoint event but is a link in a continuous chain stretched across time.

In Luke 2: 13-14 we read:

Luk 2:13 And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

Luk 2:14 "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!"

When we understand the true nature of the state of humans and what Christ has come to accomplish we are driven to worship him and give him Glory. Humans in our natural state are totally depraved, and are spiritually dead sinners. Christ has come to rescue his chosen people from their helpless state. He has come to raise us from our spiritual death.

Without Christ we are all living on death row because we are guilty of capital crimes (sins). Christ, has ransomed us with his very life. However, if we don't realize this truth how can we really give glory to Christ. If we think - incorrectly - that people are generally good or there are multiple ways/religions to heaven, in addition to being flat wrong, this robs God of the glory he deserves.

When we understand our right state we can properly give God the Glory in the highest and praise that he deserves just as the Angels in Luke 2. Without a proper perspective it is nearly impossible to truly praise God and celebrate the birth of Christ.

As the Angels gave Glory to God over 2000 years ago so should we. Let us worship and celebrate tonight and everyday the birth, death, and resurrection of our Savior Christ the Lord and the new life we may have in him. The birth, life, and offer of Christ is as amazing today as it was to ages past.

We are privileged to live in the time of eager anticipation of Christ's second coming yet also in joyful knowledge that he has already come and accomplished his will, he has won the battle and emerged victorious over death. Just as there was a miraculous birth of Christ to a Virgin we are also offered a miraculous spiritual birth and life in him. Let us all live a life worthy of the calling and give Glory, Laud, and Honor onto Christ the King, the infant born to us and the Lord of all!

It was for the Good of those who Believe

At the end of Luke 2:14 we also read the statement "and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased". We certainly do not know why everything happens the way it does. We do know though that God is in Control of it. And as Romans 8:28 says "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

The birth of Christ and his death and sacrifice were done for the good of his chosen people. In the beginning of John we read how Christ was the "true light" that came into the world and in John 1:12 "But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God," Christ did not come to save everyone in the world he came for a specific purpose to save those whom he has graciously chosen as his own.

It Brings God the Most Glory

Not only was the birth of Christ for the good of those who believe, it was above all to bring God the most Glory. Through the entire sequence of events in history from the creation of the earth to the birth of Christ to his final second coming, everything is being laid out in the most glorious plan possible. When we are in heaven we will be able to see and marvel at the full scope of the perfect nature of God's plan. He has ordained everything to bring himself the glory that he deserves.

Christ is Eternal

Finally, tonight I want to close with the words from John 1:1-3 and then v 14 “**Joh 1:1** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Joh 1:2 He was in the beginning with God.

Joh 1:3 All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.”

Joh 1:14 And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

While Christ was born in Bethlehem 2,000 years ago this was simply his incarnation in human form. As we read in John... Christ was always present he is an integral part of the Trinity of God the Father, God the Son, and the Holy Spirit. He was not created... in fact “all things were made through him”. He is also the very Word of God and the light of the world. So let us worship Christ for all that he is from the Alpha to the Omega. From little baby to creator of all. Tonight let us give glory to God for all his amazing works and amazing grace toward us!

So let me wish everyone a Joyous Christmas....and it is joyous because
Our Lord and Savior Reigns and he has rescued us from death to be
with him in Glory forever.