

He Will Save Us From Our Sins

Galatians 4:3-5

⁴ . . . when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. (Galatians 4:4-5)

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us." ²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had

commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Luke 2:8-16

⁸And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. ¹⁰And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. ¹¹For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord. ¹²And this *shall be* a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. ¹³And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, ¹⁴Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men. ¹⁵And it came to pass, as the angels were gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds said one to another, Let us now go even unto Bethlehem, and see this thing which is come to pass, which the Lord hath made known unto us. ¹⁶And they came with haste, and found Mary, and Joseph, and the babe lying in a manger.

The Christmas Story that I have just read for us is a sweet and gentle account of the birth of a baby born to parents of humble means in the small town of Bethlehem, Israel, some 2000 years ago. And if left to stand on its own, as it is so often done, it remains only a sweet, gentle story, and not much more.

But folks, we must not, we dare not leave this story to remain as just a sweet, gentle story. It is so much, much more. Within this story is the answer to the deepest needs of humankind. And that answer is captured within the few words that the Angel Gabriel spoke to Joseph about this special little baby. Listen carefully to these words!

²⁰ . . . behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:20-21)

Without question folks, these words are the most profoundly important words that mankind has ever heard! And why would that be so? It's because as you and I, and all the other people around the world, relax in the comfort of

wherever we and they are right at this moment. And even as most all the people across our world go about the activities and festivities of this Christmas season, shopping and buying presents and spending time with family gatherings, there is a "silent reality" that is present all around us, a reality, that if we have ears to hear it, cries out mournfully to us.

It is the incomprehensible reality that "sin" has taken our world captive, captive to its ways, captive to its ideas, captive to its philosophies . . . so captive and so entangled within it's web of darkness that most all of the people on this earth are, right at this moment, unknowingly perishing, perishing for an eternity. And sadly, they don't even know that it's taking place.

That is one of the reasons why the verse John 3:16, has become so frequently spoken. It is part of that cry that is going out into the world as souls are daily perishing. Listen to those words again and notice the word "perish" given within it.

¹⁶For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.
(John 3:16)

Some people might think us to be prideful or hypocritical for saying such things about them, that they are perishing, thinking that in our saying those words that we are standing in judgment of them. But those who would say such things don't understand the simple truth that is given to us within these scriptures.

That simple truth is that those who have received Christ as their Savior are saved from that perishing, but those who have not received Him are not saved and will surely perish.

That plain and simple "truth" is given to us clearly in the words of 1 John 5.
Listen!

¹¹And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹²He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:11-12)

Can those words be any more plain and simple to understand?

¹²He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:12)

Such simple, simple words! But there are literally billions of people on this earth who do not hear and do not comprehend them, billions of people who walk through their daily lives, slowly perishing, but have no idea that it's taking place.

But some would ask, "but how can they not know? Why can they not see?" It's because their condition is carefully hidden from them by the "one" who blinds the eyes of the world, the evil one, satan and his demonic followers. The scriptures tell us that the eyes of the unbelieving world are veiled from the one thing that can save them from perishing, the gospel of Christ. Listen to these words given in 2 Corinthians 4,

³ . . . our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing, ⁴whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them. ⁵For we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord, and ourselves your bondservants for Jesus' sake. ⁶For it is the God who commanded light to shine out of darkness, who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. (2 Corinthians 4:3-6)

As we studied at length in a recent message, our world, by its very nature truly does live in darkness, a very special kind of darkness, a darkness that reaches deep into men and women's souls and captivates them with its nature and with its ways. Some of those words are given to us in John chapter 3 just after those precious words of John 3:16. Listen for a moment!

¹⁹ And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.

²⁰ For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. (John 3:19-20)

Folks, this world truly is a dark place. But because each of us is born into that darkness, the darkness seems very natural to us. Its reality is the only reality that we know. So, we accept its conditions, its ways, its behaviors, its habits almost without question.

How much more helpless can we be, born blind into a world of total darkness, and having no way within our own strength, abilities or intellect to find our way through it. It is no wonder that people perish.

But thanks be to God, He is loving, merciful and gracious towards us. He knows our condition and our weaknesses, and He does not desire for any of us to perish.

So, in His great mercy and love, God has sent us His Son, the Lord Jesus, to be born among us, to live and then to die, that we might have life, to reach into our dark and dying world and to open the eyes of the blind, to shine a great light so that those who are perishing might see.

Listen to those words given to us by the Prophet Isaiah over 700 years before Jesus was born.

² The people who walked in darkness Have seen a great light; Those who dwelt in the land of the shadow of death, Upon them a light has shined. (Isaiah 9:2)

And in John 8:12, we are told who that light is. There Jesus said,

¹² . . . "I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life." (John 8:12)

Folks, in the great love, mercy and grace of God, He knew that each of us is by nature poor, wretched, naked and blind, and He knew that on our own, we are powerless to save ourselves. So, as the words of Galatians 4 tell us,

⁴ . . . when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman. (Galatians 4:4)

That is why this time of year has been set apart in this way, a time to remember, a time to remind ourselves of God's great mercy towards us.

And the Christmas message is truly a simple one. It begins with words like these in Matthew chapter 1, where we read about the angel Gabriel telling Joseph,

²⁰ . . . "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. ²¹And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:20-21)

Those simple words are the full and complete answer for us as we navigate our way through this dark and dying and perishing world . . . verse 21 . . .

²¹And Mary will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

Folks, the birth of the Lord Jesus truly did take place for this very reason the angel Gabriel promised . . . to save us from our sins. The question for you and for me today is, "Has that work that Jesus came to do been fully accomplished within each of our souls, personally, because that is the way that it must be done." His salvation is not just some general act of atonement that covers everyone. No, His salvation is very personal, individual, and intimate, within each of our souls.

And as your pastor, I am compelled by the Spirit to ask you to personally examine your soul, especially as we share communion in a few moments, and to ask the question, "Have I truly been saved from my sins?"

And yes, you really can know for sure that you are saved. We are told that in 1 John 5:13. Listen!

13 These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, so that you may know that you have eternal life. (1 John 5:13)

And thanks be to God, Jesus has done all that it takes to accomplish the Salvation that the angel spoke about when he said . . .

²¹And Mary will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21)

And those words again from 1 John 5, as we close . . .

¹¹And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. ¹²He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life. (1 John 5:11-12)

May we pray and then we'll enjoy sharing communion together.

Let's pray.