

Christmas 2011 – UNTO US A SON IS BORN

Isaiah 9:6

**6 For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders;
And His name will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God,
Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.**

Beloved in the Lord,

The meaning and joy of Christmas is proclaimed in these words of the prophet Isaiah, which were written 700 years before Jesus was born:

A Child will be born to us, a Son will be given to us, And the government will be on His shoulders.

This is the best news that we can hear, Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given. This is not just any child, but the second person of the Holy Trinity, the eternal Son of God, The Lord Jesus Christ.

On the night when Jesus was born, Luke tells us that shepherds were attending to their flocks outside of Bethlehem. The night sky was illuminated and there appeared unto them angels who proclaimed the same message Isaiah had foretold 700 years earlier. The angel said unto them: ““Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. “

This is great news, good news. No longer does man have to live in fear and darkness – a Saviour has been born. The long awaited and much proclaimed Messiah has come. He is here.

What I would like to emphasise this Christmas is that He has come for each and every one of you. It is important that we receive Him in our hearts as our own personal Lord and Saviour.

It is one thing to know the Christmas story and a completely different thing altogether to know Jesus as your own personal Lord and Saviour. Unfortunately, as it was back then, so today many just pass by or are merely spectators and not participants. For many Christmas is just another nice tradition, when we have a few days off work, for a while we forget the daily grind and enjoy a little bit of a nice fuzzy feeling. When the food is consumed, the candles and lights are extinguished, the harsh and sobering realities of life with all its problems come flooding back.

But my friends it does not have to be that way. Jesus came into the world for you and for me. He came that night, not just so we could have a nice celebration once a year, no He came that we might live in faith, hope, love, and be victorious every day.

He came into the world for one reason and that was to be the sacrificial Lamb of God, who would shed His own Holy Blood, to pay our sin debt for all eternity.

All the problems that we face in this life, and they are numerous, find their root in sin. Adam rebelled against God. He disobeyed and ate of the forbidden tree. He did so because he was enticed with the desire to be like God. With his sin, he plunged not only himself but all mankind into sin. Now the world because of Adam lies under the curse of sin.

His rebellion, cut the ties with Almighty God. Anyone who is not reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, is a rebel and lives in rebellion against God.

With every day we are plunging further into darkness. The world is getting worse and humanity more depraved.

Countries that were once strong and stable are now wavering. There seems to be a lack of respect for anything. People are becoming more and more base and immoral.

Here in Australia, the government has lost the plot. They want us to accept that it is ok for a man to marry a man and a woman to marry a woman. May God be merciful. How much lower can we go?

The world is being ruled by the passions and evil desires of men.

But as it is Christmas, let us not stay too long with the negative. Let us not look at the illness so much as at the treatment or cure.

The answer is Jesus. The cure is Jesus.

In his letter to Titus Paul wrote:

¹¹ For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men, ¹² instructing us to deny ungodliness and worldly desires and to live sensibly, righteously and godly in the present age, ¹³ looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Saviour, Christ Jesus, ¹⁴ who gave Himself for us to redeem us from every lawless deed, and to purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds. (Titus 2:11-14)

The grace of God has appeared! It first appeared in that little town of Bethlehem, and then later via Calvary, it appeared at the empty tomb, when the resurrected Christ appeared to His own.

Knowing that we can neither improve or save ourselves from sin, God did it for us. He sent His Son to pay our sin debt.

Jesus didn't come into the world just to be a prophet, or a teacher, or a Rabbi. He was all of those things, but He came primarily to shed His blood as our Lord and Saviour, for our salvation.

God has some unchangeable laws. The first one states that without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness for sin. The second is that the wages of sin is death.

As we are all sinners, and have all sinned and fall short of the glory of God, we needed and need a Saviour.

Thanks and praise be to God, that above all else He is love. In His love He came to us and met our need.

“For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.¹⁷ For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.¹⁸ He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. “

God so loved us. Each one of us. I said earlier that there is a great difference between a spectator and a participant,

Have you accepted His gift of love? Have you humbled yourself before Him and prayed: “God be merciful to me a sinner?”

Do you understand that Jesus came into the world, was born in Bethlehem, died on the cross on Good Friday, rose again on Easter morning, returned to the Father 40 days later, poured out His Spirit on the Day of Pentecost and will one day return in the Second Coming to receive those who believed in Him. He did all this for you.

He loves you. He does not want you to spend eternity in outer darkness. He doesn't want you to live this life in loneliness and fear, bound by lust, addicted to substances, in fear and worry, in sickness and in the shadow of death.

Jesus once said: “The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have *it* abundantly. (John 10:10)

In Him and Him alone is life.

In Him is peace, joy, security, good counsel, righteousness, justice, truth, and eternal life.

He loves you. He came for you. Have you responded positively to His love and said yes to Jesus?

If not why not? What prevents you? Lack of faith? Come to Him and say: “Lord, I believe, help Thou my unbelief!

Is it pride? You know the Bible says he who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted.

Maybe you fear rejection. Jesus said: "Whoever comes to me I will never cast away."

Come to Him today. Come as you are. He is waiting for you with arms outstretched. In Him resides the fullness of God.

Paul wrote to the Philippians:

And my God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus.
(Phil.4:19)

It doesn't matter what your need is, He can meet it.

He came for you, He comes to you in love today and says: "Follow me!" Will you follow Him. We have that great Carol we sing: ***O Come Little Children***

O come, little children, O come one and all, To Bethlehem haste, to the manger so small, God's son for a gift has been sent you this night To be your redeemer, your joy and delight.

He's born in a stable for you and for me, Draw near by the bright gleaming starlight to see, In swaddling clothes lying so meek and so mild, And purer than angels the heavenly Child.

See Mary and Joseph, with love beaming eyes, Are gazing upon the rude bed where He lies, The shepherds are kneeling, with hearts full of love While angels sing loud hallelujahs above.

Kneel down and adore Him with shepherds today, Lift up little hands now and praise Him as they Rejoice that a Saviour from sin you can boast, And join in the song of the heavenly host.

Dear Christ-child, our hearts we now offer to Thee, O Keep them from sin and from wickedness free; Yes, let them be holy and blessed like Thine, Thou Son of the Highest, Thou infant divine.

Amen

Pastor Colvin S. MacPherson Latvian Evangelical Lutheran Church in Sydney.
All Bible quotations taken from New American Standard Bible.