

The grace, mercy, and peace, of Christ Jesus be yours this night. The title for tonight’s sermon is: ‘Christ for you’, and is adapted from a Chad Bird post on the Gospel reading for tonight, from Luke chapter 2. Let us pray.... Amen.

Tonight, again, we heard again about the birth of our Saviour—God as man—the God of all creation come as a newborn infant laying in a manger. We heard the good news the angels proclaimed to the shepherds; the long expected Christ had come for them and for all people. But if you think this is beneath God, as if by Jesus' birth He's slumming with humanity, you would be wrong. Jesus' Incarnation is not so much God-made-small as it is man-made-big. Here at Christmas we see how God, who made man in His own image, outdoes Himself: He makes Himself into His own image and thereby exalts us. Jesus becomes what you are—a woman’s child—that He might make you what He is—a son of God, the Father Almighty.

That’s what we celebrate tonight. One small step for God, one giant leap for all people. Christ Jesus becomes no less, but we become infinitely more in Him. Within the womb of Mary, something new and awesome happened, as if the gift of life is not awesome enough, in and of itself. Here at Christmas we remember a woman is pregnant with God, by God, for each and every one of us. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary, Jesus comes forth as the first man of a new race. This new race, conceived, born, lived, died, and resurrected in Christ Jesus, calls God Father, and means it. **“For in the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”***(Galatians 4:4-5)* **“For as in Adam all die, so also in Christ shall all be made alive.”***(1 Corinthians 15:22)*

This Christ, born in a stable in Bethlehem, brings you what you need, namely: redemption, adoption, and life. You don’t need a god who strokes your ego and applauds from on high when you “do good.” You don’t need a deadbeat god who’s so busy caring for his universe that he shows no concern when his children go astray. You need The God for whom nothing matters more than to save you: to adopt you as His own flesh and blood. You need the God who cares enough about you that He tells you the truth even if you don't want to hear it. Jesus clearly tells us: “Apart from Me, you are depraved, dead, and damned. But I love you. I want you. I desire you to be my child more than anything else. So I have done all and everything necessary for you to be mine.”

This is the God—the God-made-man—you need. He is also the Lord you have. He gives forgiveness to the sinner, life to the dead, salvation and deliverance to those in the jaws of the devil. Jesus did not come to save the planet, the whales, or the spotted owl. Jesus was not born to rid the world of hunger, to give us a better water management strategy, or stop the ravages of war. Jesus came to be for every man and every woman what none of us have been or could be for ourselves. Born under the law, Jesus perfectly fulfilled the law He Himself had

given. Jesus was the perfect infant, the perfect teenager, and the perfect adult. Jesus carried your flesh and blood along through every stage of life, carrying it in birth, carrying it to the cross, carrying it out of the grave. And all of it is credited to you. You—the perfect infant; you—the perfect teenager; you—the perfect adult, all in Jesus. For God so loved the world, He strapped the world to the back of His Son, so that where He went and what He did, you went with Him and were carried in Him.

Christmas is not about some guy who two millennia ago was born in a stable, rather it is about Christ, God who came down from heaven, entered into His creation in order to restore us back to Himself. God loves you so much He was willing to go to hell and back in order to pluck you out of the devil’s jaws, to breathe His life into you and give you life, and to deliver you from sin. Christ came to give you, me, and the whole world the true and lasting gifts only He can give: His love, His comfort, His peace, His forgiveness, and His salvation.

Are you bruised and battered by the cares of this world? The great physician of soul and body comes for you.

Are you betrayed and abused, divorced or lonely? The faithful Bridegroom of the Church, come to you with His comfort, His peace, and His promises to never leave you or forsake you.

Are you rich and happy, well-fed and comfortable? Yes, Christ also comes for you, to show you that true riches and true happiness are found only in Him.

The nails and a spear shall pierce Him; the cross He will be bear. That is why He came down from heaven, to let the earth have its way with Him that He might have His way with you. And His way is life. Jesus came to give life to the lifeless, love to the loveless, salvation to the damned, a Father to the fatherless, and a family to those orphaned by sin. So be not afraid, for I bring you good tiding of great joy. For unto you is born this day a Savior, God in the flesh, who fills you with life divine.

Rejoicing in that gift, I invite you to stand for our next hymn, Joy to the World.

* This sermon was adapted from a **Chad Bird** post titled: “*Christmas Isn’t God Slumming with Humanity*”, posted at: birdchadlouis.wordpress.com on December 22, 2014. I invite you to read his regular blog and to buy his books as they are beautiful meditations on the treasures of Gospel.