

Sunday, December 22, 2013

Welcome – Greg Snow

Call to Worship – *Romans 13:11-12*

Hear the Word of the Lord, found in Romans, Chapter 13, Verses 11 & 12...

You know what time it is, how it is now the moment for you to wake from sleep. For salvation is nearer to us now than when we became believers; the night is far gone, the day is near. Let us then lay aside the works of darkness and put on the armor of light.

Come, let us worship the King!

Song of Worship – *O Worship the King*

Open Our Eyes, Lord Jesus

King of glory, your splendor shines from a manger in Bethlehem into the darkness of human night. Open our eyes to Christ's presence in the shadows of our world so that we, like him, may become beacons of your justice and defenders of all for whom there is no room.

Song of Praise – *O Little Town of Bethlehem*

Confession of Sin & Prayer

Glory be to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward those he favors. For unto us is born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord, who was made human to take away the sins of the world. Have mercy upon us, O God, and turn us from our iniquities. We ask you to end our divisions and turn our darkness into light, so that every creature in heaven and on earth will join in a chorus of praise, and shout with joy to you, our Lord.

Let us now silently confess our sin before the Living God. Let's pray.

Assurance of Salvation – *Isaiah 52:9-10; Luke 2:14*

Break forth together into singing, you ruins of Jerusalem; for the Lord has comforted his people, he has redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord has bared his holy arm before the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God. People of God, through the coming of Jesus Christ, whose birth we celebrate, the Lord has comforted and redeemed us too! In Christ we receive the salvation of our God.

[Glory to God in the highest!](#)

Song of Praise – *O Come, All Ye Faithful*

Prepare Us For Heaven

Be near us, Lord Jesus, we ask you to stay close by us forever and love us, we pray. Immanuel, we invite you to draw near and dwell with us. Surround us with your tender, caring presence, that what we say and do in worship might prepare us to live forever with you in heaven. In your powerful name we pray. Amen.

Song of Worship – *Away In A Manger*

Offering “Unless the significance of what Christ did at the first Christmas shakes us, we can scarcely be said to have understood much of what it means or of who He really is.” - Sinclair Ferguson

Do You Believe? – *Luke 2:7-14* (Source: *Ray Pritchard*)

Hear the words of God found in Luke 2, Verses 7-14

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. And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. 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. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger.” And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased!”

Our text contains truth for us to consider. Listen, again to the words of verse 11, “*For unto you is born this day in the city of David.*” Consider these two words: “unto you.” Pause for a moment and consider who was speaking and who was being addressed. When the shepherds heard these words from the angel, they must have been flabbergasted. We forget that shepherds were near the bottom of the social order of ancient Israel. They were often poor and uneducated and some were quite young. Not very many people would pick “shepherd” on their Career Preference Form. There were many easier ways to make a living in ancient Israel. So when the angel says, “To you is born,” he’s really saying, “Christ came for lowly shepherds.”

But what about those theologians in Jerusalem who knew but didn’t care? He came for them too, but they missed it altogether.

When Christ came, his birth was first announced to the outcasts of society. They were the first ones to hear the good news of Christmas. There is a great lesson in this for all of us. Our Lord came for the forgotten people of the earth and most of the time they are the ones who receive him with the greatest joy.

Let me now make a simple application. The angel said, “*For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior.*” “*Unto you.*” “*For you.*” He came for you. This is where Christmas becomes intensely personal. It’s not enough to say abstractly that you believe Christ came. Millions of people say that and are still lost in their sins. It’s not enough to say that Christ came for someone else.

You can never be saved until you believe in your heart and say, “Christ came for me. He died for me. He rose from the dead for me.”

He came for you. Do you believe that?

In three days Christmas will be here. Families will gather around the tree to open their presents. When you receive your gifts this Christmas, what will you do? Will you not open them? What use is a gift that is never opened?

Two thousand years ago God sent a gift wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger. But you will never experience Christmas joy until you personally receive God's gift—the Lord Jesus Christ. The human heart is like a prison where we are held captive by our own sin. Christ came to save us from our sin—but even his death on the cross cannot save us until we personally believe in him.

A man traveled a great distance for an interview with a distinguished scholar. He was ushered into the man's study, where he said, "Doctor, I notice that the walls of your study are lined with books from the ceiling to the floor. No doubt you have read them all. I know you have written many yourself. You have traveled extensively, and doubtless you've had the privilege of conversing with some of the world's wisest men. I've come a long way to ask you just one question. Tell, me, of all you've learned, what is the one thing most worth knowing?" Putting his hand on his guest's shoulder, the scholar replied with emotion in his voice, "My dear sir, of all the things I have learned, only two are really worth knowing. The first is, I am a great sinner, and the second is, Jesus Christ is a great Savior!"

In closing, there is good news for the worst of sinners. Though the whole world may turn away, you can open your heart and let this great Savior in. And if he comes in, the Word of God teaches us that he will never leave you. *"For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."*

Songs of Worship – *Wonderful, Merciful Savior/Jesus, The Son of God*

Message – *"As He Passed By"*

Scripture Reference: Matthew 20:29-34

Time of Prayer

Song of Worship – *Pass Me Not, O Gentle Savior*

Benediction