

Event of Christ's Birth and Our Response

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[0:00] May my mouth and the meditation of my heart be accepted to you, O Lord my God and Redeemer. Amen.! If you're visiting family and you decide to join us, welcome.

My name is Ypio Jatayo. I'm the pastor here at the Church of the Holy Trinity. And if this is your first time especially visiting us, we have a gift for you. Behind the end table in the back where you picked up your bulletin is a mug.

You're welcome to a mug. Take one. Enjoy it. And there's a little questionnaire there for newcomers. If you would, fill that out and leave it at the table or give it to one of the ushers or give it to me.

We would really appreciate that. Now, I don't know about you. A lot of things happened this week leading up to Christmas.

The weather being one of them, that made it seem like we would never be able to gather. There were things going on in my family. Sickness.

[1:29] And I'm sure many of you can attest to that. Children, especially if you have children. Flu and all those things have been going on around now. All of those things made it seem like will this ever happen?

Will we be able to celebrate Christmas? Will we have to cancel Christmas for this year? And as an adult, I always find it jarring and stressful the holiday season.

It often is. Whereas when I was a kid, it was not. It was a blissful time. It was with a joyous anticipation and excitement and longing for Christmas to get here.

There are many reasons why Christmas is a happy time for the young. Not the least being that there is a certain jolly fat man that comes around and brings presents.

Whether you believe in the jolly fat man or not. Don't worry. I'm not going to... But according to research, 88% of adults find the weeks leading to Christmas to be the most stressful time of the year.

[2:41] Do you all have knowing not? So many of us here can agree to being in that statistic. And we don't need to go into much detail, do we, to know why this is the case.

We have to be wondering around the time of the holiday about stressing about getting gifts for all our loved ones. We're planning travel for those who travel to meet... Or we're planning to host our loved ones who are traveling to see us.

And then added on to that is that around this time, there's often illness because there's a change of the season. It's getting really cold. And so you're battling colds and flus and all the other sorts of illness.

And then there's also, at the end of the year, financial worry. All of those things build up. You have to find the right decorations. Even the most mundane things can become stressful.

All of those things build up. And one thing is certain. For both the young and the old, the wrong things have come to take priority during Christmas.

[3:51] It's not that any of these things, getting gifts, hosting relatives, going to visit relatives, gathering together as family. It's not that they're bad things.

In fact, they are very good things. They're things that we... This is why what makes the holidays isn't very special. Time to gather and give and receive gifts.

To feast over good food and good wine. All these things are good. And God's good gifts to us. But all of them. And even the gifts that we get.

Kids, are you listening to me? Even the gifts that you get. That a jolly fat man will bring. Or your parents will give to you. All of those things are good, great things.

But all of them. Pale in comparison. They pale in comparison to the true reason for the season.

[4:49] And I want us to look this evening. In the brief time that we have. At what the reason for the season is. So if you're a child. If you're welcome to come up. Or you can sit with your parents.

But I invite you to listen. Because I'm going to be asking you some questions. I might even be pointing to you. So that you can answer me. So if you... Bendik, if you want to come up and sit up here.

Todd, if you want to come up and sit up here. You're welcome to do that. Anders, you can come up too. Any of the kids can come up. And... And...

What? Parents, you can bring your little, little, little kids. Bring them so that they don't run up and... So...

All right. So let's talk about Christmas. And why Christmas is a wonderful thing. Come on, Janet. Come on. So let's talk about Christmas.

[5:45] And why this is a wonderful time of the year. Todd, can you make room for Janet to sit? There you go. Thank you. Now, the story I'm about to tell you.

All of you, you know it. Your parents know it. It might become familiar. It's a very familiar story. You know the story of Christmas, right? And Jesus was born. And the shepherds and the angels who appeared.

And all of those things. This is for the... Maybe for the adults especially. One of the things that happens with familiarity is that it breeds contempt. Our apathy at the least.

It's easy for us to be... To think that we know the story so well that, you know, we just dismiss it. But I want us to pay close attention to this story.

It is a wonderful, wonderful story. It is a life-changing story. It is an epoch-changing story. Epoch means it changes the old trajectory of human history.

[6:46] It changes your history, my history, world's history. It is nothing less than the birth of light and hope into the darkness of the world.

So, Christmas, do you know this? Christmas is a story of an invasion. You always think of Christmas as a story of Jesus coming, a baby, in a manger.

That is true. But did you know that that is also a story of an invasion? But it's not the kind of invasion that you think. Right? You think of... When you think of alien invasions, what kind of invasions do you think?

Like from movies, right? Who are the kind of people that invade? Aliens. Aliens, exactly. So, this isn't an alien invasion. It's not a... Christmas isn't a story of an alien invasion.

It's an invasion of... But it is a sort of an invasion of God invading our time and space. God invading humanity. Invading our world.

[7:46] But he didn't invade to subjugate. Do you know what subjugate means? It means to conquer. To destroy and to take prisoners. That's usually what happens.

When aliens invade, we're afraid. Right? That's not what's happening here. This is an invasion of someone who came to rescue. This is an invasion of a rescuer. Now, think about the word rescue. Who are the kind of... A rescuer is someone who's a hero. And depending on what situation you're in, you need a particular kind of rescuer.

So, let's do a little experiment. If you are swimming and you're in trouble in the swimming pool or at the beach, who do you want to rescue you?

Ivan? Spider-Man. You want Spider-Man to rescue you. That's good.

[8:42] Spider-Man will probably be able to rescue you in water. Who else? If Spider-Man's not available. Bendik? A lifeguard. You don't want... You don't want your...

Firemen to rescue you at the beach? No. No. You want a lifeguard to rescue you at the beach. But what about... This is... What about if you are in danger at night?

And there's a... You need protection. Who do you need to rescue you? Do you want a lifeguard or a policeman? Todd? Policeman.

Right? You need a different kind of rescue depending on the kind of trouble you're in. Right? Right? And so... You want a lifeguard to rescue you if you're swimming in the ocean or in the swimming pool.

You want policemen to rescue you if you're in danger. Right? If you are in a fire, you want a fireman to rescue you. This...

[9:44] But... In this particular story that we're talking about, this is the story of a rescuer. God himself is the rescuer. We're going to talk more about what he comes to rescue us from.

But we already said that it's an invasion of a rescuer. Right? But it's also... Do you know that this Christmas story is also the story of a king's birth? Now, do you know any king... Do you know of any king today? Countries that have kings? Do you know countries that have kings, perhaps? Do we have a king in this country? Not really. Sometimes they do think they're kings. But no, we don't. We don't have kings. But there is a country that... Todd, do you know a country that has a king? No. Have you heard of England? They have a king. They actually have a new king. Right? The previous sovereign died and they have a king. Well, this Christmas story is the story of a king's birth. [10:45] Now, what you might not know is that when a royal child is born, it's announced, it's heralded by the palace to all the subjects of the kingdom.

That means everyone who lives in that kingdom, it's heralded to them. It's heralded because it is good news. But this is in the birth, this king's birth, is not the birth of a princelain, a royal child who may one day grow up to be the king.

This is the birth of someone who's already king. And you might say, wow, I was a baby, a king. There's a lot of questions that's coming up. We already said it's the story of an invasion of a rescuer.

It's the story of a king who was born as a baby. So you mean to tell me that the baby child in the manger is already king? How can that be?

But look at what the angel said to the shepherds. They said to the shepherds, Savior, Christ, the Lord.

[12:00] Savior, Christ, the Lord. All are clues to tell us that this person is a king. That this person is a king.

It was not said that a child will be born king, but rather the king himself has already been born. He was already the Lord and king in his person. And every heart here, and every heart that ever existed, every soul, every man and child and woman owes them worship.

The shepherds were left with no doubt by the angel who this incredible baby was. That he was already a king. But there's also something else that is wonderful about his birth.

It was announced, and it was meant to be announced, and it was good news. Not just for the shepherds, do you know that? It's not just even for his parents. When you were born, your parents were so happy that you were born, and they told everybody about it.

They told their family. They told your grandparents. They told your aunts and uncles. They announced it. We have a new baby boy or baby girl. But when this child was born, it wasn't just that his family was announced the good news to.

[13:21] It was meant to be announced to all the world. Look there that it says is good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Now, this is wonderful because it means that this birth of this baby is good news for all the people.

Are you a person? The good news is for you. It's for all of us here. The good news of this child's birth is for all of us.

We're not excluded from hearing the good news. From hearing it and taking heed of it. This is not regional news. It's not just for Israel, even. This is news for all the nations.

It was a fulfillment of God's promise to send a rescuer for the whole human race. And I want us to have in view, especially as we think of this announcement in Luke 2, have in view Isaiah 9 that was read for us in the Old Testament.

It is a birth of a king who is a savior, who is the Messiah, Christ, who is the Lord. Not a Lord.

[14:34] Not a particular. This isn't the birth of Caesar, Augustus, or Herod. This is the Lord. Look there in Isaiah.

It says, The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light. Those who dwell in a land of deep darkness, on them as light shined. The birth of this child is the birth of light in a darkened world.

And that is why, as we hear the birth of the child, parents, if you're welcome to step in the back, it is trying. You guys, if you want to stay, you can stay.

If you want to go back to your parents, you're welcome to do that. Whatever you want. So, the birth of this child is the birth of one who is king. Whose light shines in the darkness.

And it's wonderful, isn't it? Because I think it's especially wonderful, again, going back to us as adults, the stresses that we feel at this time of year. It's wonderful when we focus our eyes and our

attention on the birth of the Savior.

[15 : 48] In spite of all that is going on around us. In spite of the turmoil and the stresses of the world around us. In spite of the darkness that we see around us.

To know that this birth is the birth of light into the world. I think of C.S. Lewis' book, of the Danya books, the first book.

If you're familiar with that book, there's a description of winter in that book. Under the rule of the evil white witch.

Of always winter, but never what? Never Christmas. It's always winter and never Christmas. Well, before the birth of Jesus Christ.

Before his incarnation. I think we, all of humanity could have said that same thing. It was always winter. But never Christmas. It was always dark.

[16 : 45] Without any hope of light. There were shadows being cast promises of it. But it was never truly realized.

Until he invaded. Until he came into our world. And that's why this is good news.

There was no hope for all of humanity. There was no... Imagine being in winter and never Christmas. There's a reason why I love winter.

But I start to get... It starts to get old real quick. By mid-January. Because winter... Winter is beautiful now because you see all the lights and the Christmas lights and all of those things.

And what it portends. You know, this. Gathering at this time of year. But imagine having winter without Christmas. Imagine a darkness that is just forever and ever.

[17 : 42] And no hope. And no vision of hope. That was what the world was like before Jesus. And I have to say this. And I say it with great sadness. That is still the reality of many people in the world today.

Because they don't have Jesus. But here is in the news of great joy of what happens at the birth of this Jesus. And one of the things that I want to point out to us is that his birth, his taking on humanity, is a sign for us that Christ has come to change and to redeem.

This person, we said that he was king. We said it was an invasion. But who is he really? It's not just a baby, is he? If he's already king. No other baby is already coronated and given the title of king as an infant, as a newborn.

This child was. It's because he's an ancient of days. Look at the word. Again, look in Isaiah 9. This person will be born. This child that is born.

This son that is given. This son, this child, will have the government. Upon his shoulder. His name shall be called Wonderful Counselor.

[19 : 02] Mighty God. Everlasting Father. Prince of Peace. It's because he's the ancient of days. It's because he's not just a mere child.

He doesn't have the same sort of origin that you and I have. He was in existence even before the world began. He was the word before time.

Through whom all things were made and created. And in his mercy and love for us. He comes now. As one of us. He took on humanity.

He took on our frailty. Our weakened body. He took on a body like our own. Our body which is liable to corruption.

Because of the fall. And liable to death. He took that body on. And he surrendered that body. To death. In our place.

[19 : 59] So that he might offer us life. So. Here's the good news. Of Christmas. It's that it's a rescue. But it's a rescue unlike any rescue that we would have thought.

And it's a rescue. That we need. But that we were not expecting. And here's the other thing. It's a rescue. That. Might I say.

We might still not be expecting. For many. But it's a rescue that you need to hear of. And you need. Desperately. The supreme object.

Of his coming. Was to bring about the resurrection. Of the body. So as you think about sickness. And illness. And death. Death. And all of those things.

That are tens. And I know there are many. Even that I remember in the morning. The loss of a loved one. At this time of year. Here is the good news. That this child who comes.

[20 : 59] Comes. To fight. And to conquer death. And to conquer sin. For your. On your behalf. This is the good news. Of Christmas. The word of the manger.

Becomes the wood of the cross. Upon which he gave his life. As a ransom for many. This is the miracle of the incarnation. This is what St. Augustine says about it. He lies in a manger. But he holds the whole world in his hands. He sucks at his mother's breasts. But feeds the angels. He is swallowed in rags. But clothes us in immortality.

He is suckled. But also worshipped. He could find no room in the inn. But makes a temple for himself. In the hearts of believers. It was in order.

You see. That weakness might become strong. That strength. Became weak. Let us wonder then. And recognize the lowliness.

[21 : 58] On our behalf. Of such loftiness. So I wonder if you are. Taking time to meditate. On that good news. And if you are.

If you are meditating. On that good news. If you recognize. That the wood of the manger. Points to the tree of the cross. Then how are you living your life.

Even now. My challenges. Brothers and sisters in Christ. Those who understand. That this child is a savior. He is a messiah.

And he is lord. And you bend the knee to him. May I challenge you. To live. In light of that hope. That has dawned. In your world.

May I then also. Encourage you. To be like the shepherds. To proclaim. The dawning of that hope. To the rest of the world. Around you. Do not.

[22 : 54] I understand. The pressure. And the challenge. And I have. I will confess to you. I have failed. In many ways. This week. With all the stresses. That have befallen. Me. And my family.

Having a child. In the hospital. And having to sleep. Two nights in the hospital. I have failed. In many ways. To be so sucked. Into the problem. And the issues. And the present circumstances. That I lost sight. Of the hope. That has dawned. In the birth of Jesus Christ. The encouragement. For us. Is that we can never.

Lose sight of that hope. Because it's not. It's not the kind of hope. That is shaken. That I've been taken away. This is the hope. That Christ himself. Again. Remember that I said. It's an alien invasion.

So that means. It's not dependent. On you. Or me. This rescue. It is all together. God's. Initiation. Initiation. And it is him.

[23 : 49] That will accomplish it. He has come. To redeem all. He who created the world. Has come to redeem. His chosen. Hope has dawned.

Light. Has dawned. Look to the light. Brothers and sisters. In Christ. And if you're here. And you don't have. A picture of that. You don't have.

You don't know what it means. To have that hope. In your heart. Look to Jesus. Trust him. Bend the knee. Like the shepherds did.

Hear the words of the angels. Regarding him. Come to this Jesus Christ. Glory to God in the highest.

And on earth. Peace among those. With whom he is pleased. Come. And experience the peace. He has come. To offer. You. Let us pray.

[24 : 47] Lord God. We thank you. For your incarnation.

We thank you. Lord. That you took on. Our frail humanity. So that you might redeem us. And ransom us. Thank you. Lord.

That you came. As our. Defender. And our warrior. To fight the battle. That we could never hope to win. And you conquered sin and death. On our behalf. So that we may have life.

Abundantly. With you. And I thank you Lord. That we know. That you are coming again. To accomplish. And to finish the work you started.

At your first coming. So we say. Come Lord Jesus. And help us Lord. To be faithful. As we wait. And as we long. With joy.

[25 : 44] And anticipation. For that second coming. We pray this. In the name of. Our Lord and Savior. Jesus Christ. Amen. Amen. Amen.