

Your Story with the Savior

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Preacher: Raymond Smith

[0 : 00] I hope you enjoyed that this morning. You know, as we enjoy singing with that. And then rising again the third day.

And, you know, it's a story that's been told and retold down through the ages. And as familiar as it is, and we know the facts, we enjoy the good feelings.

The memories that are entailed at Christmas. I mean, we gather here, you could probably think back many times to all the different Christmas programs that you were a part of. Or sang in or participated or sat through or, you know, and enjoyed.

And you hear the words and the terms that are there. You know, when we sing, we use words at Christmas time that we have no idea what they mean. Like Noel.

You know, you hear a lot of times people say, you know, sing Noel. The first Noel. You hear all these terms. And, you know, we sang together, you know, sing We Know Well. And you've heard it.

[1 : 23] But how many have ever gave thought to it? Have gave thought to what are you singing? It's part. It's familiar. It's what we see many times at Christmas.

We begin to participate in those well-known things. And we would almost think that, you know, singing Noel is just part of Christmas. And it wouldn't be Christmas without it.

But, you know, I want to help you this morning. You know, a little bit here. The modern word Noel, we find, is just a shout of joy or refers to a Christmas song. So, I mean, it's literally just saying you want to sing about Christ.

Sing about Christmas. Sing about the things that he's done. And it traces its back to a Latin word that means birth. And since Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Christ, it naturally has come to refer to the celebration itself and what we enjoy.

And, you know, even this morning here, just a little bit ago, we used another term in, you know, Emmanuel. You know, Emmanuel is another term of Christmas that, you know, we find it throughout the Bible.

[2 : 32] It's an Old Testament term from Isaiah chapter 7 or Emmanuel in Matthew chapter 1 and verse 23. And Matthew chapter 1 tells us what it is.

You know, Matthew chapter 21 and verse 23 tells us this. Behold, a virgin shall be with child and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us.

Very important things that we talk about at Christmas. You know, we talk about those things and we just think through what it is. But, you know, oftentimes the kids earlier had a story of the Savior.

You know, a story of the Savior, but really, we know the story of the Savior. The question is, what's your story with the Savior? Because everybody comes to a terms with the reality that your life intersects with the Savior.

Where you have to make a decision. Is it just about something that we sing or something that we do? Or is it something that impacts, something that has substance?

- [3 : 41] Is it just a cultural event or is it something that transforms lives? What's involved in it? Because as we think through the story of Jesus, we think about it's God with us.
- You know, we have to ask ourselves a question this morning. I think a very important question is that why would the God who created the world have a desire to be with us?
- You know, that's something to consider and contemplate. Why would God step out of His place in glory to come here for us? Or why would He leave His place of honor and glory to be born as a man?
- Why would He put on flesh and endure the things of this life? All those things that He did, the kids talked earlier over there in John chapter 1 and verse 14. And to help you out this morning, each of you should have got a verse sheet.
- That's the verses we're going to go down through. That'll kind of help you to follow along and you can take that home with you. I encourage you to read through them and think about them. And contemplate, you know, how does this intersect with my story?
- [4 : 55] Because the story of the Savior intersects with us. That's the reason He came. He came not just for us to have a celebration or to feel good or just to be able to rejoice.
- Jesus came and His story was purposeful to intersect with yours. To have that point of intersection in your life to say, this is what God has done for me.
- You know, John 1 verse 14 there says, The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us. And we beheld His glory and the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.
- You know, here we find the Savior this morning. He speaks very specifically about the reality that Jesus Christ, He put on flesh.
- And in doing so, He humbled Himself. He gave up His place in glory for a time. He put that away. In Philippians, it refers to it this way.
- [6 : 00] In Philippians 2 verses 5-7 tells us, Let this mind be in you, which also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but notice this, made Himself of no reputation, took on Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.
- You know, the story of Jesus is a story about one that had authority who came as a servant, that His story might connect with yours. He understood what it was, and a servant that would accomplish a task.
- You know, the one thing about a servant, servants are sent forth to accomplish something, to perform something, to do something of substance. And we find here that this is the case, because Jesus came specifically in the form of a servant to accomplish a specific task.
- He came with purpose. Because I want you to understand this morning, oftentimes at Christmas, we think of Jesus, we think of the babe in the manger, and we have all sorts of warm thoughts of family and the dynamics with it.
- And sometimes we'll think of Jesus, He came as an example of a good person for us to follow, or instructor in righteousness, or, you know, that He was a good teacher. But I want you to understand, those things may be true, but it wasn't His purpose.
- [7 : 28] Because a purpose entails more around it than just the item itself. And this purpose that Jesus came, was that He might have a connection with you.
- Because He loved you. And I want you to understand this morning, as we think about this story of the Savior, and how that story connects with you, because this purpose was very clear.

You know, Philippians chapter 2 and verse 8 tell us this, it says, Being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

You know, I want you to see here this morning, the story of Jesus, as we saw with the kids. It's a great reality that it began clear back in the Garden of Eden with Adam and Eve, and with Abraham.

But I want you to understand, it wasn't just there with Moses and the law. The story of Jesus began even before those things. The Bible makes it clear that God set forth a plan for us, and we understand it was set forth before.

[8 : 41] It's a story set from the foundation of the world. A plan that would provide all that was needed for a sinner to be rescued, a sinner to be secured forever.

You know, there in John 1 verse 17, the Bible says this, For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. You know, we read over that verse many times, but I want you to stop and consider for a moment.

Moses was given the law, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. Jesus preceded Moses.

He preceded Abraham. He preceded at the very foundation of the world. He is God himself. In other words, when it came from him, it came from what was before even the law.

To understand that God had a plan. The story of Jesus didn't begin in a manger in Bethlehem, and it didn't end when he died and rose again.

[9 : 42] I want you to understand, the story of Jesus continues. The story of Jesus continues, and that story intersects with you right even here this morning, because he was a Savior that came to redeem you so that he might be forgiven and live.

You know, I want you to understand, the story of the Savior isn't something we just celebrate. It's something that we have to have a connection with. That connection must be real.

It has to have some substance behind it, and we find here that the story of the Savior is just that. It's revealed to us. You know, 1 John chapter 4 and verse 9, the scripture reminds us of this.

It says, In this was manifest the love of God towards us. I want you to see, why did Jesus come? Because he loves you. I'm not talking that mushy love that the world talks about.

It isn't just a feeling he had. It was a sincere connection that he wanted to have with you. When the Bible says he loved you, he says he's willing to give.

[10 : 51] I want you to understand, love isn't a feeling. A love involves not just how you feel about something, but what you do about it. It involves something to invest. Because when you love, you invest, you care for, you're looking out for the best need of another.

But see, notice what it says here, because God sent his only begotten son into the world that we might live through him. How is his love manifest? Because he sent his son as a savior, as a, in the form of a servant.

He didn't come demanding, he came giving. He came to give unto us eternal life. Now notice in verse 10 here, this is important to understand, herein is love.

Not that we loved God, but what? That he loved us and sent his son to be the propitiation for our sins. Say, preacher, that's another one of those words.

You know, propitiation is another important word that you can read over and sometimes it doesn't even connect. The importance of what's being said. Because propitiation, you know, that's one of them, that's a big theological term, preacher, but I want you to, let me boil it down for you.

[12 : 10] It simply means this, the act of appeasing wrath are conciliating the favor of the offended person. In other words, I want you to understand, as we're going to look here in just a moment, that there was something that Jesus came to do.

He loved us enough that he came on purpose as a servant to give unto us eternal life. Why did he have to do that? Because of sin.

You cannot separate sin from the story of the Savior. He loved us enough to say, you are a sinner. You have separated yourself.

There's something that must be taken care of because I want you to understand that God hates sin. Sin separates us. Sin is that rejection and violation of God's authority.

I want you to understand the Bible makes it clear, very clear. Romans chapter 1 and verse 18 tells us this, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness.

[13 : 19] Now I want us to talk just a moment there because I think this is important to understand because we all have an innate nature to understand and desire justice. When something's been violated, we want justice.

It's an innate thing with us that as a human being it's part of the image that we have of God when God created us, that we have a sense that we want things to be made right. When somebody offends us, we need something to reconcile that, to take care of that.

It's innate within us. It's something that God put there that we might understand our need because that innate nature of needing to reconciliation, of dealing with offense because we've all offended God.

But the reality is this, I want you to keep in mind, you may have offended them, but you know what? Love said, I'm still going to provide. That's real love when somebody offends you and you say, I'm still willing to give what's needed to reconcile.

That's genuine, true love that God has for you. I want you to understand that God's wrath is revealed not because he's hateful, because he's just. Violation and offense have to be dealt with.

[14 : 38] You know, none of us look at it and say, well, there's a big offense against me. Well, I'll just brush it off and we can still be friends. I don't know of anybody that just brushes it off.

If we're going to be able to be reconciled together, there has to be something that deals with the offense. Takes care of that offense. I want you to understand it's natural and to understand the wrath of God.

We all understand that one day we're going to stand accountable before God. Your conscience speaks to you of the reality of accountability. that conscious reality of justice.

Verse 19 says, because that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has showed it unto them. You know, the reality is we're all sinners that need a Savior. But the problem is is oftentimes we look past how Jesus' story connects with ours.

To understand that connection, we fail to see our story connecting directly to the story of the Savior. You know, we come and we hear things at Christmas and oftentimes we love the feeling and the enjoyment of it.

[15 : 51] We love the family, but we miss what the story is. The theme of the story is that a Savior came for you and for me.

Jesus didn't come so there'd be a good story to write. He came that it might connect with you. Because there needs to be a point in time where it intersects with your life. You have to make a decision.

what are you going to do with Jesus? We're all sinners that need a Savior, yet when we fail to see our story connecting directly, we reject the truth that is before us.

And you know what we do when we reject the truth of the story of the Savior? We want to make up how we want to do it. Because we think salvation oftentimes is accomplished by information. You know, this morning there's many people who believe in God.

But I want you to understand, Jesus didn't come that you might just believe that there's a God. He didn't come that you just might know who He is. Many people believe that, you know, I believe in God.

[16 : 54] You know, that's basically it's called this. It's called theism. There's a lot of theistic people. They like the idea of God. They recognize God, but it's all the farther it goes.

They like the fact that God holds somebody else accountable. Have you ever noticed that people like that God might hold somebody else accountable, but we never equate it to us? When you stop and consider the reality of what's happening, you know, I want you to know that Bible tells us this in James.

It says, thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well. And then he goes on, the devils also believe and tremble. I want you to understand, just believing that there's a God is not enough to save you.

it's a good start because God sent forth his son to die upon the cross in the form of a servant with a purpose.

A purpose that we might know our need and what he's done for us. You know, sometimes we replace it because we believe a lie. You know, oftentimes one of the greatest lies I find people have is my goodness will outweigh my badness.

[18 : 05] They might, they express it many different ways. You know, one of the favorite one is, is I'm not as bad as. I'm not as bad as such and such so therefore I must not be that bad of a person. The problem is that's not the standard.

That's not the measurement. You know, I've built a lot of things. You know, if you get the wrong measurement, things don't fit together. If you don't have the proper measuring tool, things don't get assembled right.

The problem is, is that when we think we're good enough, we're not using the right measurement to get to the conclusion that we need to be to build upon the right things. When we understand the reality of what it is, because I want you to understand that salvation, oftentimes when they think I'm good, you know what it is?

I can do enough good things to purchase it. But I want you to understand what Jesus Christ offers is not a commodity to be purchased or merited. Matter of fact, it's an insult to him when somebody thinks they can purchase salvation.

You say, preacher, why is it an insult? Think about this for a moment. It's Christmas time and you go to give a gift to somebody and they say, let me buy that from you. What would be your response?

[19 : 11] Would that not be insulting? To say, I've worked, I've labored, I've provided. I want to give this to you and the person goes, well, let me buy that from you. I think I can get enough together.

The problem is, no matter what we do, we could never gather enough anyways. But we try to make it of how we can acquire it because I want you to stand. He's already acquired it for you.

He purchased it with His own blood, His life for yours. Jesus Christ is not a means to an end, but He is the means and the end. We must realize our part of the story.

We know what Christ has done, but our part is simply this. Romans 3.23 tells us, for all have sinned and comes short of the glory of God. You know, all of us miss the mark, come short of what is required to redeem ourselves.

This is why Jesus' story is before us today. It's why He came. It's a story where His story connects with yours. Because He came, as a propitiation, He came to put that wrath, that atoning dynamic that could reconcile us to God.

[20 : 26] He came and provided a means that we could not. And that connects with you because it wasn't for generic sin that He died. He died for your sin and my sin.

His story connects with you where you are. Because all of us miss the mark and come short of what's required. You know, Romans 6 tells us this, for the wages of sin is death.

But the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ, our Lord. I want you to understand this morning, the wages are results of sin as death. That's everlasting separation from God.

An eternal death, yet Christ, you can receive the gift of eternal life, real life. You know, sometimes we think life is all about just what we have here.

But you know what? The Bible makes it clear that the first day in heaven is going to exceed the best day here. It's going to exceed all those things. Why did He do that?

[21 : 31] It's His love for you that He died for you that you might enjoy new life in Him. Ephesians 2 tells us this, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace and His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

But He makes it very clear. Titus chapter 3 tells us, not by works of righteousness which we have done but according to His mercy He saved us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost.

We're washed by the shed blood of Jesus Christ and we are renewed in the Holy Ghost. We're made a new creature in Christ which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior.

Notice this, being justified by his grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life. You know, Jesus's story connects with our story because this life is brought about by faith in Christ. Not just that there is a Christ, but recognizing what Christ did for you and why he did it. It's not by rites or rituals. You know, sometimes people get caught up, you know, if I take this or do that, or I take a class or I get a certificate, or somebody tells me I'm okay, or if I, you know, just say the right words and, you know, go through all the right actions, I'll be okay. But I want you to understand all those things don't connect your story with Christ's story.

Some of those things may be peripheral things that may happen, but it's not the connecting point. To understand connection comes when we have faith in what Christ has done for us. The Bible says, for without faith, it is impossible to please him. This is where your story intersects with the story of the Savior because it's at this intersection that you have to make a choice.

[23 : 29] Because you either call upon him as the one recognizing that he paid the price for your sin, or you'll leave and continue on your way rejecting what Christ did for you. Many times your life may intersect with the story of the Savior, but you have to make a choice. Is that story going to continue with the Savior, or is it going to continue my own way? What are you going to do at that point of where they come together? You know, Romans chapter 10 tells us this, it says, I want you to understand what's involved here. Because the heart, that's the mind and the feelings and understanding what's going on inside. You need to recognize that you're a sinner that needs a Savior.

But you have to have a connection with that. That connection is to say, Christ, I know that you're my Savior. You're the one that died for me in my place. You're the one that went to the grave.

You're the one that paid my penalty, my wages of sin, that death. And he says, you're passed from death unto life. When we confess, that confession is very clear. It says, with the mouth, confession is made unto life. What's it about confessing? I want you to understand, it's not just about coming and crying or having emotion. Confessing Christ is to verbalize the reality to say, I can declare for sure I know who he is. I know how his story has connected with mine, and I know what I need to do.

Confession is a recognition of who Christ is. Not just applauding him for what he's done, but saying, I know that you did it for me. That he is the one that died for your sin and rose in victory on the third day. You know, when he rose, it's a promise that this promise of eternal life is true. He says that I can overcome death. It's at that point when you'll have peace with God and no longer under the wrath of God. You know, this morning, your story and the story of the Savior have come together.

The reality is, what are you going to do with it? What are you going to do? You know, this morning, when you came here, you came through many intersections. Each of those, you made a decision of what you were going to do. Do I make a decision to turn right or left or go straight or kitty corner or some of the weird ones here? But I want you to understand, this morning, you're at an intersection with the Savior. And the only choice, you have two, because it's a yes or no.

[26 : 32] There's no in between. The question is, what's that decision going to be? What's that decision going to be? Will this morning just be another Christmas to come and to sit and to hear, to sing about a Savior? Or will it be the one that celebrates knowing why He came for you?

You know, there's no better day than you're at the intersection to make the decision. This morning, you have a decision to make. I want to ask you for a moment to just, I want you to close your eyes and just think and consider to yourself for a moment with nobody looking around, because it's really an important connection, because it's not with what Christ is doing with your person sitting next to you. It's what has He done for you? What has Christ done for you today? Can you look back and know for sure that when you came with that intersection of where Christ is with your life, what was your answer?

Did you recognize and call upon Him as Savior, or did you reject and turn away? This morning, if you don't know Christ as your Savior, if there's not been a time and a moment when you said, I know that He's my Savior, and why He's my Savior, and why I need Him. Don't leave here today with a no.

I want to encourage you to leave here to say yes at this point where the Savior's story intersects with yours. Maybe you're here today and you say, preacher, I know this is where I'm at. I know this is a connection point with the Savior here today. I'd just like to pray for you. If that's you, just slip your hand up quick. I'm not going to call you by name. I'm not going to... I just want to be able to pray for you. Do you know for sure that Christ is your Savior? If not, what are you going to do with Him today?

I'm going to call you by name.