

Christmas Eve 5pm

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Preacher: Rev. Chris Ley

[0 : 00] Well, for many of us, Christmas is the most wonderful time of the year. It's the season of family, of songs and carols, of movies and celebration and lights and snow.

It's the season of presents. It's the season of pageants. It's the season of peace, or prancing, or dashing, or blitzing, as we rush from thing to thing.

It's the season of decorations and delicious delicacies of deepening relationships and deep, meaningful memories. Christmas is also exhausting.

It's loud. It's bright. It's busy. It's restless. It can be really stressful. For many people, Christmas is really hard.

It's dark. It's lonely. We miss the ones we love, but no longer see. Or we lament the relationships we longed for or dreamed of, but have not enjoyed.

[1 : 09] So, whoever you are, and whatever jubilation or desperation you are feeling tonight, we come together now to escape the frantic busyness of Christmas out there, to now be still and listen to God himself, through the voice of his angel, announce to us what Christmas is and why it matters.

And boys and girls, this is where I need your help. So, if you have the two coloring sheets, you'll notice there's ornaments on them. These coloring sheets are going to help the adults in your life remember what Christmas is about in the busyness of the next few days.

So, I want you to color in the ornaments in order. I'll tell you when to do each one. And after the service, you can cut them out and hang them on your tree or at your house to remind you and your family what Christmas is all about.

The angel in Luke 2 verse 10 says three things about Christmas. This is why Christmas matters. This is the answer. If anybody ever asks you what Christmas is all about, do not be afraid.

For look, I bring you good news of great joy that is for all people. Christmas is good news. Christmas brings great joy.

[2 : 31] Christmas is for all people. So, kids, here's the first ornament. Christmas is good news. It's news.

It's not a myth. It's not a legend. This isn't a fairy tale or a fantasy. Christmas is history. This incredible story actually happened.

And it's not just news. It's good news. It's God's good news. That's the first ornament. Good news. Second ornament.

Christmas brings great joy. The good news of Christmas is given to bring you great joy. joy. This announcement, this baby, comes to bring joy to the world.

He comes to people who are living in the deepest darkness. And on them, his light has come to shine. So, if you're sad, you feel like you're in a dark place, this good news of God has the ability to bring you great joy tonight.

[3 : 39] And now the third thing you must know about Christmas. This is the third ornament. The good news that brings great joy is for all people. It's joy for the whole world.

Christmas isn't just good news for Christians. It doesn't just bring great joy for Canadians or for Anglicans. Christmas isn't just for people who look like me.

It's meant for the whole world. It's meant for all people. Every kind of person. That's why the angels went to a bunch of shepherds. Back then, shepherds were looked down upon by everyone else.

They weren't important. They weren't popular. They were not very religious. One of our pageant performers in contract negotiations didn't want to be a shepherd tonight.

They felt a shepherd was below them. They told their parents, I don't want to be a shepherd. Shepherds are stinky and no one likes them. And they're right.

[4 : 46] Shepherds back then were stinky. And generally, no one liked them. Now, our shepherds tonight were fantastic. And they didn't seem too stinky.

But back then, nobody liked shepherds. No one would invite a shepherd to anything. They were excluded from society. Even from worshiping God. They lived alone, away from everyone else. With stinky, foolish sheep. But they're who God sent his angels to tell. Because this good news brings great joy. And it's for all people.

It's for people who are close to God. And it's for people who've run far away from him. It's for people who believe in Jesus. And it's for people who don't.

Many people feel the Christian message is not for them. They feel it doesn't fit in with their lifestyle. Or it doesn't align with their belief system.

[5 : 44] They aren't comfortable coming to a church and worshiping God. They feel like they wouldn't be welcome. But Christmas shows us that isn't right. This gospel, this announcement, this good news is for all people.

And it has the power to give every kind of person great joy. We're a very diverse community tonight. Different countries.

Different ages. Different financial situations. Different lifestyles. All of them represented in this room right now. This message is meant for all of us.

This gospel unites us. It overcomes all of our divisions. Because it's good news that will bring us all great joy. Okay, but what is the good news?

What actually happened? Well, the good news is that God gave a present. God gave the world a gift.

[6 : 48] A physical, visible, tangible, real, observable thing. And this gift is the good news. That upon receiving it will bring great joy to all types of people.

Do you know what the gift is? The gift is God himself. That's what God gives us. God comes to be with us at Christmas.

That is the good news. That is the gospel. See, Christianity is not some man-made myth or religion. It exists purely because God did something.

God did something. He started it. Something happened. And that event was so unbelievable. It was such good news that it transformed human history.

Our faith is not about us being good and earning friendship with God. Christianity isn't about us working our way up to heaven. It's about the goodness of God, who so loved the world that he came to it to save it.

[7 : 57] To save us. He came to give us a gift. He gives us himself. God comes down into our darkness. He enters our mess.

He comes into a world that does not know him and does not want him. And the good news is he comes anyway. He comes in the humblest possible way.

Born as a baby in a barn to an unmarried teenage girl. Totally unknown. Homeless. Poor. A baby named Jesus. Jesus is the gift of Christmas.

He's the good news. Given to bring great joy for all people. And to finish, there are three things about Jesus you must know. So if you ever asked, who is Jesus?

Here's the three things from the lips of an angel you must know. And children, this is now your second coloring sheet. Listen again to what the angel says. Do not be afraid. For look, I bring you good news that will bring great joy for all people.

[9 : 00] For unto you is born this day a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. So the next ornament. God comes to be with us.

To be our Savior. God comes to save us. He's come to rescue us. The angel is announcing that to us is born a rescuer.

Our hero. The one who will save us from death and darkness and sin and sadness. The one who's coming to be with us so that we can be with God. See, the Bible tells us that we've separated ourselves from God by our sin.

We're living as if we are God and choosing for ourselves how we want to live as if God doesn't matter. And this sin that's in every human heart is the source of all of our sickness and sadness and evil.

But now God comes to be with us to save us from our sin. To forgive us our wrongs. To take away the punishment that we deserve by dying in our place. And this amazing grace is offered to us

freely by the God who loves us.

[10:09] And has come to be with us in order to save us. All that's required is for us to trust Jesus and believe in him. God comes to be with us to save us.

Second thing you must know about Jesus. Unto us is born a Savior who is Christ. Christ is a fancy old word for king.

It means God's chosen king. The Christ is the promised king of God's kingdom. The baby born can save us because that baby is God's chosen king.

The king of the kingdom of heaven. And he will bring his kingdom with him to earth. Jesus is extending the borders of heaven to include the whole world.

And in his kingdom we're told there will be no more death. No more sickness. Nor sadness. Nor mourning. Nor crying. Nor even darkness. But only light and life.

[11:10] Because God himself will be on earth with us forever. This baby is our Savior. And this baby is God's king. The Christ. And here's the last thing.

The biggest thing. The most important thing of all. This is the final ornament. Look again at the angel's words. For unto you is born a Savior who is Christ the Lord.

This baby is no normal baby. He's not only our rescuer. Not only is he the Christ. He's also God himself.

This baby is the Lord. This baby is Emmanuel. God with us. And this is why this is such good news that brings great joy and is meant for all people.

Because God himself has come to us as a baby. To be with us. To rescue us. And extend heaven's kingdom to include us. And our entire world.

[12:11] And you are invited. God sends his birth announcement specially to you tonight. His gospel gift is for you.

You are invited. By God himself. So do not be afraid. Whatever your darkness. Whatever your fear. Whatever your hesitation. I bring you good news. Of great joy. That is for all people. For unto you is born a Savior.

Who is Christ. The Lord. Come and see God. Come and behold him. Born the King of angels. Come tonight. And receive. And believe. In Christ. And if you do. You will receive your Savior.

[13:09] He comes to save you. And to make you a child of God. Joy to the world. The Lord has come. Let earth receive her King.

Let every heart. Prepare him room. May this good news of Christmas. Fill you with great joy. Forever. And ever.

And ever. For unto you is born a Savior. Who is Christ. The Lord. Amen. Amen.