

Family Service - Our Great Saviour

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[0 : 0 0] Let's turn for a little to the chapter we read in Luke's Gospel, chapter 2, and reading at verse 11. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord.

And as we go through this, I want to just focus on the word Saviour. There have been many great announcements in this world, but there's never been a greater announcement than the one that was given here about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, because that birth, the coming of Jesus into the world, changes life for everybody, every single person.

Whether a person believes in Jesus or not, it changes their life. Because at the end of our life, we're all going to have to meet with Jesus and tell Jesus what we've done with him, what we've thought of him, whether we've loved him or not.

So that's why it's so important that we hear about Jesus and what Jesus actually is saying to us. Now, as you know, Jesus was born in Bethlehem, and the prophets in the Old Testament had prophesied that, that that's where he would be born.

Now, as we know, God is in control of everything, because Mary, Jesus' mother, was living up in Nazareth, which is at the opposite end of the country, way up north.

[1 : 3 7] Bethlehem is away down south. And so, Mary was expecting, and the time was coming soon, where she was going to give birth, as we know, giving birth to Jesus.

But she's away up north, and she, you would think, had no word of going to Bethlehem. But the great ruler of the time, Caesar Augustus, the great Roman ruler, decided to have a, like what we would call a census.

He wanted every single person to be registered. He wanted an account of everybody. It's like an electoral roll. It's that sort of thing. Those who are ruling want to know how many people there are, who everybody is, where everybody lives, all these things.

So there was this message sent everywhere that you had to go and register. But the thing is, you had to go to where your people were from.

And so, Mary and Joseph, although they were up in Nazareth, they actually belonged to the city of David, and that was Bethlehem.

[2 : 5 3] So they had to make their way down south. They had to go all the way down to Bethlehem. And you see how God is in control. Because he said that through the prophets, that when the Messiah would come, when the Son of God would come into this world, he would be born in Bethlehem.

So here's this Roman ruler who has no idea of this great prophecy. No idea at all. He sends out this decree, but God is using that so that Mary will make her way to Bethlehem.

Now, it must have been very difficult traveling all that distance from Nazareth up in the north way down to Bethlehem, particularly when you're expecting to have a baby.

Because there were no trains or buses or cars or planes, as we have today, they had to walk. Or at the very, very best, they would be able to maybe sit on a donkey.

So it was a long, long, long, difficult journey, making their way all the way down. But of course, as would happen, is that the population in all the different cities wouldn't just double or treble, because everybody would be coming.

[4 : 14] And that's why we're told by the time they got there, they would probably be about the last to get, because they would have to travel so slowly. When they got there, there was no room. Everywhere was taken.

It must be very difficult when you come to a place, and there's nowhere to stay. I was speaking to somebody on Friday, and he was saying in Sky, on the day of the Highland Games in August this year, there were 84,000 people in Sky.

There's normally a population of 10,000. 84,000. And that's why people were being advised, unless they have somewhere to stay, not to go to Sky.

It was, it's so busy. Well, in a sense, that was what it would be like when this was happening. Everybody was traveling back to where they originally came from.

So Bethlehem would be full, and there was nowhere to stay. So Mary and Joseph had to go to an outhouse. It's like, I suppose, almost like a wee barn.

[5 : 22] It was outside the actual inn. It was a place there. So there was no proper place for them. And you know, in a sense, when it tells us that there was no room, no room for Mary to give birth to Jesus.

You know, it's true, the same today. There's no room for Jesus. So many people today do not want anything to do with Jesus.

They don't know about him. They don't understand him. But more than that, they don't want to know about him. And they don't want to understand about him. They won't pick up their Bibles to read about him.

And they're missing out so, so much. So it's still the same today that there is no room for Jesus. Because Jesus interferes, so they think, with people's lives.

People say, I want to live my life. I don't want to live in some other way. I don't want to be bound by rules and regulations and things, the other thing. I want to live life my own way.

[6 : 26] But Jesus is saying, you've got it wrong. Because if you come to me, then I will set you free. I will give you life.

And although the world is saying there is no room for Jesus, Jesus turns it the other way around with his invitation because he says, go out and invite people to come in and tell them, yet there is room.

There is room for you. There's room for whoever you are, whatever you've been, whatever you've done. There is room for you. That is what the great invitation is. And so we find here that the announcement then, we find that when Jesus is born, it's amazing.

Jesus is born there. We're told that in verse 11. Because we find that angels come and they announce the birth of Jesus. And it's amazing that it's to shepherds.

You would expect that the birth of Jesus, who is the king, the great royal king, the greatest visitor this world has ever made, the one indeed who made this world, and who has taken human nature coming in our place into this world, you would expect the announcement to be made in the temple or to the palace or to the most important people in the land.

[7 : 51] But it's not. It's to shepherds who are out watching their sheep at night. These shepherds would be hardy men. They had to be. Because very often their bed was the ground and their blanket were the stars.

They slept out in the open. They were tough characters. Because they had to face wild beasts. They had to face sheep rustlers. And they were often tough, cynical men.

They were ceremonially unclean because they were away from the temple for so long. And so they were kind of, if you were to pick who would first hear the news of the birth of the Son of God, shepherds would probably be the last you'd expect.

And yet, God chooses to reveal this to shepherds. And it shows us that with God, there are no boundaries.

There are no, there's no higher class or lower class. The same message is for the palace as is for the prison. God doesn't put distinctions between rank and status and class and wealth and all these things.

[9 : 03] These things don't come into the equation with the Lord. Every man, every woman, every boy, every girl is an individual standing in the same place in the sight of God.

And so this message is given to these shepherds. And it's very interesting that it's a shepherd because we know the two of the greatest men ever in the Bible were shepherds.

Moses and David. And of course, Jesus himself was termed the good shepherd, the great shepherd, the chief shepherd. So it's very, very interesting that it's to the shepherds that the angels appeared.

And when this angel appeared, the glory of God was came, the glory of God shone all round about. And you notice the reaction of the shepherds that they were, you've got to remember, these are tough men, cynical men, hard men.

And it tells us that they were filled with fear. And you know something? If ever the glory of God is shown, people are filled with fear.

[10 : 15] And you know, the thing is going to happen that there will come a day, and it doesn't matter who the person is, there are people who call themselves atheists, agnostics, humanists, infidels.

They don't believe in God. They don't acknowledge God. They don't think about God. They say, I have no fear of God because God is not. And I'll tell you something, if the glory of God was to shine in front of them for a moment, just for a moment, they would crumble.

That is always the reaction. No one can stand before the glory and the presence of God. But the angel said to them not to fear.

And because bringing great news. And the news is unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord. And I want us to look at this word Savior. Now we've been going through Bible characters alphabetically, and today it should be R.

But I'm jumping one ahead. We'll go back to R next time. And I'm taking this as S. And I want to look at this word Savior and just break it down with a word for each letter.

[11 : 29] So that's something that we can carry with us about who the Savior is and what the Savior does. And the first thing we can say is, S. Save.

That's what a Savior does. He saves. That's why Jesus came into this world. So often you will find Jesus saying, I have come to seek and to save those who are lost.

Just as you see the search and rescue helicopter going around sometimes if somebody is missing. And sometimes when you see the helicopter going round and round and it swoops down and then it rises up and then goes over and swoops.

And you begin to think, I wonder, somebody must be missing. Because it's searching, searching, searching all over the place. Seeking and searching. Searching in order to rescue.

And you know that's who Jesus is. He has come on a search and rescue mission. That's what he came into the world to do. To seek. Seek out and to save.

[12 : 34] And you might say to yourself, oh, he won't be bothered with me. This is only little me. Jesus won't be bothered with me. Well, do you know what Jesus says? That he's like the shepherd who had 99, who had 100 sheep.

And he went out to count them and there were 99 there. And do you know what he did? He left the 99 that were there and he went out to search for the one that was lost.

And he didn't give up searching for the one that was lost until he found it. And then he took it with him and brought it back so that he had the whole lot together. And that's what Jesus is doing.

That's what he's doing today. That's what he's doing in here. He's searching. Is there somebody still outside the fold? Are you still outside?

Well, remember, this is the Savior who's come to seek and to save. Not just to seek, but to save. And the second letter we look at is A for able.

[13 : 37] He is able to save. There's a word, there's a version of the Bible which says that he's able to save to the uttermost. In other words, he can save to the furthest possible distance.

Do you know, Jesus is able to save anyone. Jesus is able to go anywhere to save a person apart from hell. Jesus will never go into hell to save anybody.

Anybody who ends in hell is lost. But in this world, Jesus will go anywhere. Jesus can go anywhere. Because he's able to save to the furthest.

And he's able to save the youngest. And he's able to save the oldest. He is able. Always remember that. And he's able to save you. You might be saying to yourself, you know, I don't know if he's able to save me.

Yes, he is. When you look around this church, there are loads and loads of people who have already been saved. And some of them sat where you, maybe where you're sitting, thinking the very same thing.

[14 : 43] I doubt he's able to save me. But he's saved. Because he is able. That's what he loves to do. That's why he came into this world.

That's what gives him the greatest joy. That's why he says, this is the joy that was set before him. Because he wanted to save. And he's able to save. And when it says he will save to the uttermost, it means that he is able always to save.

He won't be saved just a little bit. He'll be saved completely. And then the next letter is V. And that is, again, what we find in Jesus, is Jesus gives us victory.

Once we're saved, we now have victory. Because, you see, we have victory over sin, over death, over the grave, over hell.

These are awful things. These are words that we don't want to think about. Sin is a word that causes us so much pain. You know, all the problems in this world are because of sin.

[15 : 55] Every problem, every heartache, everything broken in this world, every hurt, everything from start to finish, is because of the sin that entered into this world.

Even the volcanoes, even the tsunamis, even the earthquakes, even all these things. Because sin affected the whole creation. Not just you and me. It affected everything.

But Jesus has come to give us victory over sin because he's taken our sin. That's what he does when he saves.

He pardons all our sins. He sets us free. He says, you know, it's as if you never sinned. Oh, yes, you're still sinning. But I've washed away all your sins by my death.

And death and the grave, you know, they're horrible ideas, horrible places. It's not something that we like to think about. But, you know, Jesus died and he went into the grave in order to give us victory because he rose again.

[17 : 03] And, you know, that's the way I look at the grave. I look in the grave like a bed. And the body is put into that bed and the earth is put over and that's like the blankets, the sheets in the blankets.

And the turf are like a duvet. Because you're only in the grave for a wee while. The body is in the grave just for a wee while. When we go to bed at night, we get up, if all is wet, in the morning.

There's going to be a morning for everybody that's in the grave. The resurrection morning. And that's what Jesus did. He won victory over death. There's going to be this resurrection morning where every single body will rise again.

And join with the soul. It's an amazing thought. And that's why the Christian faith is so absolutely wonderful. And Jesus says, I have come to save.

I am able to save. And I will give you victory in life over sin, over death, over the grave, over everything. It's not a wonderful thought.

[18 : 15] But not only do we go to V, now we go to I. And that is for individual. Individual. For you, for me, for each person, this salvation is individual.

The angel said, for unto you is born a saviour. That's like a private message. It's personal. Hey, this is for you. It's like today the angel is saying, here's the message from heaven.

And this is the message it's saying, unto you, for you, is born a saviour. Now stop and think about that. This saviour is for you.

Yeah? It's as if there's nobody else there but you and the messenger. This is personal. So what are you going to do? Are you going to say, no.

Do you know that? I cannot think of anything worse than to be given this wonderful invitation, to be told this beautiful, glorious message, and say, no, not understood.

[19 : 17] Not for me. And sadly, you know, that's what some people do. So this is what Jesus has done. He's come and he has given life.

All the doing has been done. You can't do anything. You can't say to yourself, you know, okay, you know, this is what I'm going to do. God says, forget it. You can't really do anything.

All the doing has been done. Jesus has done anything. You can't add to it. It's perfect what he's done. All you're asked to do is to trust, to accept, to believe.

And to you is born this day. Have we thought about that message? Imagine if the angel had come and said, you know, unto the people in London is born this day a saviour.

Or the people in Jerusalem. Unto all the people who reach the age of 70, a saviour has been born.

[20 : 22] Imagine if that's what the message was. That's not what the message is. The message is it's to you. Can you see how wide, how broad, how open it is?

It couldn't be wider. That is the great, the beauty, the wonder of this great and wonderful gospel invitation. Then we go to O for only.

Jesus as a saviour is the only way to be saved. He is the only saviour. Some people will say to you, no, it doesn't matter.

It doesn't matter how you come to God. It doesn't matter what God you believe in. As long as you're honest and sincere, genuine, then it's going to be all right.

God will accept you. God does not say that in his word. God tells us very clearly that there is no other name under heaven given amongst people whereby we might be saved, but the name of Jesus.

[21 : 33] Jesus himself. You know, sometimes people will say, in the day that we're living in, people say, oh, you're bigoted. You can't just be so exclusive.

You can't just say, there is only one way. Well, there is only one way. The person who came to make the way, Jesus said, I am the way.

I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except by me. There's no alternative way. If there was, Jesus needn't have come.

It's because he is the only way. And may I say to the young people here today, you know, you're living at an age when there are so many people who now don't believe in God.

And so much of what you're taught today has an emphasis, certainly in some of your teaching. And don't get me wrong, and of course we take on board what we're taught.

[22 : 34] It's so important in school to learn what we're taught. But when it comes to this, when people come and try and tell you, and you know, it's extraordinary when you think of the millions and millions and millions and millions and probably billions of pounds that have been spent with people trying to work out the origin of the universe.

All you have to do is pick up the Bible and open it. In the beginning, God. It's all there. But it's the refusal because people won't open that. And they say, we don't want, we've got to put God out of it.

Because you see, the moment you take God into the equation, then all of a sudden, you become accountable to God. So it's people trying to make themselves feel comfortable by removing God out of the equation.

You know, to do that, there's an awful lot of work required. Because the whole creation speaks to us about God. About the, looking at the, the Bible tells us, you go to Genesis 1.

The sun, the moon, the stars, planetary system, the whole thing. The, the, the earth. It's all there. The account is there. Yeah, people say, oh, it's too much for my mind.

[23 : 51] Yeah, it is. Of course it is. But you know, it's the only thing that stands up. And when you think of all that is spent trying to prove, or trying to show otherwise.

And people will say, ah, but the, the world is billions of years old. Nobody knows the age of the world. Think of it one moment. I believe, this is what I believe, that God made a mature world.

When he brought it into being. Because people say, you go back to the very, very beginning, as a first, this, and then it's growing, developing. Because when God created man and woman, he made them mature.

He didn't create them as little babies, that grew and grew, eventually grew. He created them fully grown as adults. Mature.

Adam and Eve, fully grown as adults. And I believe he did the same with his world. He set this world truly into operation. It was, it, absolutely amazing.

[24 : 54] So, the thing is, this is, the only living and through God. And he sent his son, Jesus Christ, who is the only way to God.

So please remember that. You is for urgent. This saviour, is urgent business. A lot of people have lists to do, to do lists.

My mother, I never knew anybody like my mother, that you should have seen the lists my mother had. It was almost to the extent, look at the other lists to see what I've written. There was just list upon list upon list, get up almost, go to bed.

It was, there were just lists everywhere. a lot of people, a lot of people make lists. Some people, just for the important things. Well, this is the most important.

If you have a to-do list, could I urge you to put at the very, very top of it? Seek Jesus today. There are hundreds of invitations in the Bible, about coming to Jesus.

[26 : 00] Not one of them will ever say, seek Jesus tomorrow. It's always today. Today, if you hear my voice, don't harden your heart.

Now, is the accepted time. Now, is the day of salvation. Not next week, not tomorrow, because we don't know if we'll have a tomorrow. It's always today.

Today, is the day of salvation. That is, that is the, as I say, the most important thing. You make sure that you seek Jesus.

Remember telling you this, before, about, there were two very famous ministers, back in the, in the 1800s, Boner brothers, Andrew and Horatius Boner.

And, Andrew, if you ever come, get a chance to read the diary, of Andrew Boner, get it. It's, it's, it's, it's, it is so heartwarming. It's one of the, one of these, that will really, touch your heart.

[27 : 02] You were someone who lived, really close to the Lord. And if you ever come across it, get it. But, there was this missionary, a doctor, he was going away. And, Andrew Boner went with him, to the, to the ship, that he was at the, the pier, that he was going on.

And the, the doctor had a sister, with him. And, Andrew had never met, the sister before. I think I've told you this, way back. And he said to her, oh, it's really nice, that you're going with your brother.

I've never met you. What's your name, so that I can pray for you? Well, she said, my name is Christine. Oh, he said, what a lovely name. I love that name, because he said, Christ, is in your name.

She had never thought about that. And then he said to her, I hope that Christ, is also in your heart. Anyway, they, they went away.

But that night, she could not, get that thought, out of her head. Christ is in your name, but he is, but is he in your heart?

[28 : 12] And he wasn't. She had gone to church, she had read her Bible, she had done all these things, but she had never, come into faith. And that night, she asked the Lord, and she said, please Lord, will you come into my heart as well?

And he did, because Jesus promises, that those who ask, call upon the name of the Lord, and you will be saved. And that brings us to the last one, R, Jesus, as a savior, is reliable.

Whatever he has promised, he will do. We make promises, we're going to do this, we're going to do that, we're going to go here, we're going to go there, sometimes we forget all about it, and that's one of the things, I'm so often aware of myself, the most atrocious memory, and maybe it's a week, or two weeks later, I say, oh, I was going to do this, I was going to do that, and I forgot.

That is never so with Jesus. Whatever he has said, he will do, because he is a reliable savior. And he says, whoever calls upon the name of the Lord, will be saved.

No doubts about it. Guaranteed, it'll happen. So today, I will ask you, please, ask Jesus, ask Christ, into your heart.

[29 : 38] Just like, Christine, Christ in the name, you make sure that Christ, is in your heart as well. the savior, saves, able to save.

He gives you victory. It is individual, it is for you. He is the only savior. It is urgent to find this savior.

And remember that he is, a reliable savior. Let us pray. Oh Lord, we pray to, help us today, to, lay hold upon, what you're saying to us.

may we not let these, opportunities pass, but that we may grasp them. Because you're here. You promise to be, where two or three, gather together in your name.

And we pray that you'll bless us. Bless us with your salvation. Because that is what you've come to bring. And we pray Lord, for any who, may still be outside the kingdom.

[30 : 38] Oh Lord, please, may, they seek you, with all their heart. may your kingdom come, into all our lives, this day.

Watch over us, bless the cup of tea, coffee in the hall, and bless the evening service, and the fellowship afterwards. And be with us, in all that we're about. Do us good, and take away sin, in Jesus name. Amen.

Psalm 72, in conclusion, from the middle of verse 16, and the tune is Effingham. This is in the Scottish Psalter. Psalm 72, it's on page 314.

The city shall be flourishing, her citizens abound, and number shall, like to the grass that grows upon the ground. His name forever shall endure, last like the sun it shall.

Men shall be blessed in him, and blessed all nations shall him call. Now blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel, for he alone doth wondrous works, in glory that excel.

[31 : 45] And blessed be his glorious name, to all eternity, the whole earth let his glory fill. Amen. So let it be. The city shall be flourishing. The city shall be flourishing, our citizens abound, then number shall, like to the grass, that grows upon the ground.

His name forever shall endure, last night the sun it shall.

Men shall be blessed in him and blessed, all nations shall shall come.

Now blessed be the Lord our God, the God of Israel, for he alone doth wondrous works, in glory that excel.

Amen. And blessed be his glorious name, to all eternity.

[33 : 50] The whole earth let his glory fill.

Amen. So let it be. Now may the grace, mercy and peace of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, rest and abide upon each one of you now and forevermore.

Amen.