

The Feast of the Nativity of our Lord
St. Luke 2:1-14
December 25th, 2023
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

A Saviour, Who Is Christ the Lord

In Nomine Iesu!

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

Sermon Text:

“And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flock. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, ‘Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord. And this is the sign unto you: Ye shall find a babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger.’”

Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Today, my dear friends, we celebrate the event for which mankind waited for a long time. We waited for this event since just after creation when Adam and Eve first fell into sin. This event had been promised at that time. The promise was repeated throughout the centuries: to the Patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to Moses and Joshua, to King David, and many others. Everyone was promised this Baby Boy born in Bethlehem, Who is wrapped up in swaddling clothes, and lying in a manger. Mankind waited for this Child because He was the One Who would save them from the bondage of sin and death. This Infant was the Anointed One, the Christ, of the heavenly Father, Who would redeem mankind from their sins. This is the event that we celebrate today.

This Baby had been promised by the Angel Gabriel to the Blessed Virgin Mary nine months ago. We celebrated that event with the Festival of the Annunciation of our Lord way back in March. We were reminded of the coming of this event three months later, when at the Festival of the Visitation of the Blessed Virgin Mary, we heard about the promise of the forerunner—St. John the Baptist—being circumcised and named. For his birth only served to signal this birth that we celebrate today. For he would go before the Lord + Jesus to prepare His way, even as we have heard throughout the season of Advent. We have waited for this event for a long time.

For this is no ordinary birth. This is not just the birth of another Jewish Boy. We do not celebrate the birth of some Jewish kid. We celebrate a Savior. A Savior from sin and death. This is why it annoys me to no end when people bring out the birthday cake and sing “Happy Birthday” as if the Lord + Jesus is getting another year older. As if that is the reason that we celebrate today. We do not celebrate the Lord’s birthday; we celebrate His birth. For His birth means something more than the birth of any other human being. As we will sing in the hymn during the distribution, the Lord has come from Heaven above

to be with us who live on earth. God is with us! Immanuel is with us. It is Him we praise. For this is what was promised long ago to mankind, a Savior from sin and death which we earned by our daily sinning, and by the inborn sin that dwells in us.

It is this fact that causes the whole company of Heaven to break out in song. This is why we celebrate with much singing and music. For we have a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. Indeed, we join our voices to the song of the angels, for we sing the song that has been silent among us for the past four Sundays, the *Gloria in Excelsis*. This is the song of Heaven. It is the song that the angels sing at the birth of the Lord and Savior of the world. They cannot contain their excitement and wonder. God has been born as a man. What a wonder! What a cause for singing! They have to tell someone. They have to sing about this wonderful event that was promised so long ago.

And so, to shepherds abiding in the fields keeping watch over their flocks by night an angel appears beside them. And the glory of the Lord, the same glory that Sts. Peter, James, and John behold at the Lord's Transfiguration, shines around them. Heaven has broken into earth. God has come down from Heaven to dwell among us. The shepherds were sore afraid the Evangelist St. Luke tells us. Sinful mankind should be afraid that the perfect and righteous Lord God has come to them. That which is holy cannot exist with that which is unholy. The unholiness will be destroyed. Sin must always give way to righteousness, and those who cling to their sinful lives and behavior will be swept away into the eternal fires of Hell, because they refused to repent and be afraid of their sins, just like these shepherds were.

We should be afraid of our sins and the consequences of them like the shepherds, but the angel that stood by them has great comfort for both the shepherds and us. He says, "Be not afraid." For this is why this Baby Boy is born. This is why the Son of God has come down from Heaven to be with us poor, miserable sinners. This is why the Lord God deigns to dwell with us here on earth. He comes to take away the cause of our fear. He comes to defeat sin, to defeat death, to defeat the devil. And He desires to give us all an eternal life with Him in Heaven. He does this all for us by taking upon Himself our punishment. He goes to the tree of the holy cross and offers up His innocent life as a ransom for ours. We who cling to Him in faith are now freed from the bondage of sin and death and have been promised a life in Heaven with Him and all the saints and angels of Heaven.

This is the promise that was promised to us from since the beginning of creation; since Adam and Eve fell into sin. This is the event for which we have waited, and it is finally here. The whole host of the company of Heaven could not contain their excitement. They had to sing and tell the good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people.

Therefore, my dear friends, on this Feast of the Nativity of our Lord let us join our voices with the choirs of Heaven, and sing the great tidings that are for us on this day. For unto us is born this day in the city of David, a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord. The Lord God has come down from Heaven to humble Himself by being born a virgin, in order that He might redeem us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. This is a great cause for celebration! The wait for our Savior is over! Let the gift be unwrapped! For our Lord and Savior has come to take away from us all fear and trembling over our sins. He has come to sanctify us by His Spirit, so that we may stand before Him clothed in the white robes of His righteousness.

We bear these robes now through the washing and renewal of the Holy Ghost in the waters of Holy Baptism. We have been born out of water and the Word. Our Lord swaddles us in His blessed Word and Sacraments, so that we may feed upon the pure spiritual milk of His promises. His promise of a Savior is fulfilled for us today. We sing the praise of Immanuel; the Lord is with us. He is with us to redeem us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. May our celebration this day be filled with great joy. And may that joy be remembered and experienced throughout the twelve days of Christmas. For we have a Savior from our sins. Thanks be to the Lord God Almighty for giving us all a very Merry

Christmas! In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

Soli Deo Gloria!