

Carol Message: Luke 2:11: Jesus our Saviour

INTRODUCTION

In Luke 2:11, Jesus is called 'Saviour.' Luke 2:10-12, 'And the angel said to them, "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. 11 For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. 12 And this will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling cloths and lying in a manger."' I would like to share with you just one thought as we draw near to Christmas. Jesus is a saviour, but a saviour from what?

You only need saving if you are in some sort of trouble. When we say, 'save the rainforests,' we mean save them from the oil companies, lumber companies, exploitation and denuding the land. When we say, 'save our beaches,' we are mean save them from oil spills, overdevelopment and invasive species. When we say 'save the rhino,' we mean save them from poachers and extinction. When we mean 'save our assets,' we mean that the NZ government should not sell precious parts of NZ to China. But what do we mean when we say 'Jesus is our saviour?' What do we need saving from?

Saviour from sin

Primarily Jesus came to save us from our sins. The Angel that appeared to Joseph revealed this, in Matt. 1:21, 'She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'" Now sin in our modern world is something that is easily misunderstood. Some people think that sin is equal to crime and that if you don't have a criminal record you are not a sinner and don't need saving from sin. But the Bible reveals to us that sin is not defined by the laws of the state, but rather sinned is defined as anything that is contrary to God's perfect holiness. The law reflects God's perfect holiness so sin is also anything that is contrary to God's law. Well once again many think that this still does not apply to them for after all, people say, 'I haven't broken the 10 Commandments, I am not a murderer or adulterer.' Jesus not only came to save us from our sins but during His ministry He also helped people to see that every person who has ever been born is in fact a sinner and in need of saving. Every person has broken God's law and every person needs the salvation that Jesus is offering.

For example, in the sermon on the mount Jesus tells us that anyone who has hated his neighbour is equal to a murderer for God holds us accountable for our inner actions as well as our outer actions, our motives as well as our deeds, our desires as well as practices. Jesus also tells us that anyone who has lusted after someone else's husband or wife in their hearts has committed adultery even if they have never had the courage to do the deed outwardly. And if we see that the greatest commandment is love the Lord our God with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, and we have loved anything else in the place of Him giving

our loyalty and devotion to the creation instead of the Creator, we have broken the greatest commandment and have the greatest guilt. Jesus was very pointed in His teaching because we hate to admit to ourselves that we are sinners, we are needy and we are in trouble with God. This reminds me of a story I heard. In the African jungle two men were walking, Simba and Pumba, and suddenly they were attacked by a leopard. Simba was violently attacked and mauled, but Pumba only got a single scratch when he drove the leopard off with a stick. Simba was in a terrible condition and close to death, and Pumba managed to get him to a hospital where they treated his wounds. They tried to tend to Pumba's scratch but he refused. Soon however, Pumba got sepsis and died but Simba recovered. This is a good reminder of how sin affects all, though outwardly we do not all sin in the same way. Some have obvious sin in their lives and are nearly dead because of it, others are living more moral, and even religious lives. But all are sinful and all need Christ. We must not be deceived by our apparent external righteousness, we are all sinners who have fallen short of the glory of God.

Of course this is all bad news, but it gets worse before it gets better. What will God do with those who have broken His law? Will He just let us off because He is such a nice guy? The answer is no, God is Just and He will not do anything to deny Himself. Sin must be paid for, and the penalty is death, death in our bodies, death spiritually and eternal death in hell suffering as much punishment as God is holy. This means that every person is under the condemnation of God's law, they are on death row, and when they die and stand before God and He opens the books of their life, they will be condemned. You and I will be condemned.

However, there is good news, and this is why Jesus was born. Jesus was born to save us from our biggest problem, our sins. Jesus was born in order that He could die. The Bible teaches us that the wages of sin is death, Jesus was born in order that He could be a perfect sinless sacrifice who would offer an acceptable sacrifice to God by being our substitute. The typical picture that we use to tell this point is one of a law court scene. We are standing before God in a courtroom. He has just pronounced us guilty. It seems that all hope is lost. But then God says, 'And now I am going to pay for your sins myself, so that justice is done and you can be spared.' Jesus the most holy man who has ever lived, who is God in the flesh dies the death that our sins deserve in order to settle our sin debt and satisfy the requirements of God's court. This is how Jesus saves us from our sins.

So God sent Jesus on Christmas day to be born in order to offer Himself in death for our sins. He is the greatest gift that has ever been given. However, this is a gift that every person has to choose to receive. God is offering the gift of Jesus dying in our place. But like the alcoholic we first have to admit that we have a problem and come to God for help. Do not think you do not need Christ because like Pumba you thought you were not as bad as Simba. We need to turn away from other religions, self-help, or the numbing pursuit of happiness, we need to

turn away from trying to save ourselves. And we need to accept that Jesus is the only way that our sins can be properly dealt with. Have you seen your sin and come to God asking for the gift of Jesus Christ as your saviour. Have you seen that you are sinner that cannot save themselves, God now you see the love of God in providing Jesus to die for the many sins that you have done. If you want this forgiveness, the Bible tells us that it is free for any who will receive it. It is free for any who will humble themselves as sinners before God, repent of their sins and take Christ as their only hope for salvation from sin. Will you accept the most important gift this Christmas?