

## Written Copy: John 1:9-14 “The Reason for the Season is...?”

Christmas Eve

Saturday, December 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022

### Text: John 1:9-14

<sup>9</sup> The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup> He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup> He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup> But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup> And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.

### The text's intent

In the beginning, stretching into eternity past, God the Son existed as a member of the Trinity. He was the Word that brought everything into existence, the expression of God's will and creative power. The Father sent the Son into the world joined intimately with human flesh, taking on a human nature, to be God Himself tabernacling with humankind. He came to be the clearest expression to our fallen race of who God is and His will and plan to restore us to Himself. He was the source of life from the beginning and is our source of renewed spiritual life. He is the light of God's truth and mercy shining into the sin darkened world and into our hearts to call us back into God's family as His dependent children. We could never accomplish this or choose this on our own but have been made His children by the superabundance of grace we have through faith in Jesus Christ. He is the fullness of God in human flesh, in intimate union with the Father, to show us the way back to Him. He continues to be the light, testifying to God's grace and truth through the Gospel Message.

### Focus Statement:

We are the reason for the Season because only God incarnate could restore our place as children of God. By taking on our flesh, being born under the law, He fulfilled the law for us. And in His human body, God Himself experienced death to save us from the eternal separation our sins earned for us. His body and His blood shed for you paid the price to redeem you from that eternal separation that your sins continue to earn for you. He is the Light from God that shines God's grace, mercy, and truth into our hearts. He is the Word that spoke all life into existence, And His Word of the Gospel, and through His Word joined to the bread and wine of the Sacrament, He renews in us the true life, life lived with His Spirit now and eternal life to come. That is the gift of God at Christmas, that came for you.

### Function Statement:

#### Why it's important to know:

What is the reason for the Season of Christmas? To exchange the perfect presents? To celebrate the birth of Baby Jesus? In our celebration of Christmas do we lose sight of the reason He had to come? Do we lose sight that the Reason for the Season is us, to restore us as children of the Heavenly Father.

#### What the hearer should do as a result:

That those who have not yet received this wonderful gift by faith would do so by the power of the Spirit. And those that do believe would be renewed in the joy that Christmas is about you, and the God who came save you.

### Subject Sentence: We are the reason that Jesus came this Season

## **Introduction: What Would You Say is “The Reason for Season?”**

If I was to ask you “What is the ‘Reason for the Season?’” what would you answer? I’m betting it would be “Jesus!”. After all that’s the good and safe Children’s Message answer. But what if we were to ask someone who is unchurched, out in the world, outside of your family of faith? You know, some of the people you will be mingling with tonight and tomorrow; what would they answer?

Even though they might give you the “Children’s Message” answer, knowing you as a believer in Jesus, what would be the true answer on their hearts? Would it be “So that big business and corporate greed can reign and rule?” Or, if they are someone who works in retail, would it be “So we can work extra-long hours, hear the griping and complaining about the empty shelves, the extra-long lines, and how we need to open up more registers, directed at those who actually did show up for work today? If you’re a business owner maybe the reason would be, “So I can make enough profit to carry me through the lean times of winter until spring rolls around”.

Then there is the reason that most secular movies put forth, such as we find in one of my favorite Christmas movies, “A Muppet Christmas Carol”. (*Show clip from “A Muppet Christmas Carol”*) It’s the hope that in this season of giving and getting gifts the world would be moved to show more kindness and love to one another, especially to those less fortunate than we are.

And all of these are correct, up to a point, I guess. But would you ever consider that the Reason for the Season” is you? Does that get your Lutheran hackles up? If Christmas is about Jesus, and it is, then Christmas is about the Gospel, and it is. And that means that Christmas should not be about us. But does it really? I would put forth that as much as Christmas is about Jesus, it is also about you, and me. Now granted, that statement does need some qualification, which I hope to provide for you.

## **How We Are the Reason for the Season**

First off, it can’t solely be about Jesus. Before He entered into Creation as a baby formed in Mary’s womb, He was eternally the God the Son, 2<sup>nd</sup> member of the Trinity. He coexisted with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit in perfect unity, lacking and needing nothing. For that matter, the Triune God didn’t need to create any universe, or this earth, or even us. He didn’t need us. But the Triune God desired to make us the pinnacle of His 6-day creation, those for whom everything else was made. He did this because He desired us to be His own special children with whom He would have a perfect and intimate relationship with that was to last for eternity. And He gave to those first human beings, Adam and Eve, His image and likeness so that they could have that intimate relationship with Him.

But Adam and Eve had to make it all about themselves. They desired the one thing that God had told them they could not have, believing they still lacked one thing in order to truly be like God and truly happy. The devil convinced them they needed the knowledge of good and evil. Well, they already knew good. They already had the best gift ever, Eternal Paradise, where they already lived in perfect and intimate union with their Creator. But when they ate of the forbidden fruit, they fell from grace. They fell from that perfect and intimate union with God. They fell into sin. And being sinful they were disqualified from living that perfect eternity in God's presence. The fate they now earned for themselves was eternal separation and suffering apart from God.

But the God who created them to have that eternal relationship was not about to give up on them so easily. He came to them right there in the Garden after the Fall. He cursed Satan, and gave to Adam and Eve, and all their children after them, the promise of One who would come. He would be a descendent of Eve, who would strike the deciding blow against Satan and be the reason and the means by which they and their children could be ransomed from eternal death and be restored as precious children of God.

And so, the waiting began for the fulfillment of this promise from God. Now we all have a hard time waiting, whether it be to open Christmas presents, or to discover any kind of secret. And so it was for the people of the Old Testament. They struggled as they waited for this promised one to be revealed. Adam and Eve thought they could make Him appear just through the act of procreation. Eve thought that her firstborn son, Cain, was the One promised by God. But instead, he was born in Adam and Eve's sinful likeness and only served to perpetuate and deepen the sinfulness of the fallen world by becoming the first murderer.

Abraham and Sarah knew that they were a part of the revealing of this Promised One. God came to Abraham and promised him that from him would come that Promised One who would bless the entire world. But Abraham was in his nineties and Sarah was in her eighties; certainly, too old to have any children; or so they thought. So, they took matters into their own hands as Sarah offered her Egyptian slave to Abraham to father his child. The child that was produced was Ishmael, who was not the one from whom the Promised One would descend. Instead, he became the father of the Arabic people who still fight and war against Abraham's descendants, the Jews, to this day.

David was told by God that from his descendants would come a King who would rule on a throne over a kingdom that would last forever. This King would be the Messiah, the Savior, the one promised to Adam and Eve, who would do what was necessary to restore people back into God's kingdom, His family. But David's son Absalom was not the one from whom the Promised One would come. Instead, he showed himself to be one of us, one who despite the gracious forgiveness offered by His father David, plotted to overthrow his reign and rule and establish himself on the throne. You and I do exactly the same thing to our Heavenly Father when we ignore His commands and stated will for us; when we sin against Him.

Christmas is all about us because try as hard as we might we cannot do enough to make ourselves right with God and restore that original gift of the eternity lived in His presence. No matter how unselfish we try to be at Christmas, how many acts of random kindness, how many wonderful presents we give to family and friends, or to the needy we do not know, none of that is enough to earn us forgiveness for all the sinful thoughts, words, and actions that are based on us reigning and ruling in God's place in our hearts and lives. No matter how hard we try, the "love that feels like Christmas" will never pour out from our sinful selfish hearts.

### **We Are the Reason God the Son Came to Earth: To Save Us**

You and I are the reason for the Season because God the Son came down to earth to share that true love of Christmas with us. God the Father sent God the Son in order to save us from the eternal death we deserve. Christmas happened in order to restore us back into the family of God. Clearly, as we've seen, no ordinary human being had the power to do this. But in order for us to be restored into the eternal presence of God someone had to pay the price of redemption. Someone, some human being, had to stand in our place and earn that right. And the only One who could do that is Jesus Christ.

He is God the Son, the Word of God, the very person and means by which all things were spoken into existence at the beginning. He is the source of all life. He is the Word of God that said, "Let us make man in Our own image and likeness". And He is the only One who could restore that image and likeness to fallen mankind.

He was sent by the Heavenly Father so that through the work of the Holy Spirit He was intimately joined to the human nature of the baby that was formed in the virgin Mary's womb. In this way God Himself could experience something that otherwise it would be impossible for Him to experience. By the Son of God becoming the Son of Man, God Himself could and did experience death.

That death was the ransom price that needed to be paid to redeem you from the eternal separation your sins earned for you. It could only be paid by the shedding of the blood of a perfect human being, by the sacrifice of the life lived out in your place. By giving His life on the cross Jesus Christ, the Word of God made flesh, did all that was necessary to make you right with God. With His perfect life and sacrificial death, He earned your place before God as His precious child.

And He gives that wonderful gift to you by the work of the Holy Spirit through the Gospel Message through which He enlightens and makes you to understand the grace, mercy, and love that God Himself has for you. It's His gift of faith that declares you to be what you could never be on your own, no matter how hard you tried at Christmas or any other time. Through the work of Christ given to you by faith through the Gospel Message and in your baptism, you are declared to be a precious child of the Heavenly Father right now. And you will be made so completely, body and soul, when Jesus returns as the King of Glory on the Last Day.

On that day all will see Him for who He truly is: the Son of Man from our Old Testament Lesson to whom the Ancient of Days (the Heavenly Father) has given an everlasting kingdom to. He is reigning and ruling now here amongst us, in your heart and mine. And He is even reigning in the world, although we can't always see it.

He is the One through whom all things came into being; by whom all things that were created. And He is also the One for whom everything in history has come about in order to fulfill God's promise to Adam and Eve. His is the One who fulfilled all the testimony of the Old Testament Prophets. And He is the One who has promised to return on the Last Day. And when He does, by the Word from His mouth, He will recreate all things, the new heaven and earth. By His powerful Word He will restore Paradise Lost. And by His Word of command, He will recreate us body and soul to be the perfect eternal people His resurrection promises we will be. He will make us good enough to live in His presence, the very presence of God, for the eternity to come.

## **Conclusion**

Christmas didn't happen to make people rich, to make people's lives harder through long hours of work, or to console guilty consciences by random acts of kindness that are more about the doer than the receiver. You are the reason that Christmas happened. You are the reason that God the Son was sent by the Father and placed into the womb of Mary, uniting with the human nature, to be born as Jesus, our Savior and Lord. You are the reason God sent His gift of love and grace on Christmas morning. You are the reason the Holy Spirit came down on Pentecost and continues to come through the Word and the Sacrament of Holy Baptism. You are the reason Jesus comes cloaked in bread and wine to unite Himself intimately with as you partake of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. You are the reason, out of His great sacrificial and unconditional love for you. And He gives you the gift of the Gospel to share the real 'Reason for the Season' with those who don't know. He wants you, through word and action, to share with them that they too are the 'Reason for the Season', the reason God the Son took on flesh to be their Christmas gift of salvation, forgiveness of sins, and eternal life. It is through the sharing of that gift of Jesus that we can truly make the world a better place. It's the way that all can find the true love of God that "makes if feel like Christmas". Amen.