

Advent 2018 Part 2

Give Him The Name Jesus

Welcome to Carbondale as we celebrate the second Sunday of Advent. We are preparing our hearts in anticipation of the arrival, the Advent of Jesus and his birth in Bethlehem as well as preparing for his second coming, his soon return. The back story to Jesus' birth is found in the opening chapter of the gospels of Matthew and Luke. Let's look first at the gospel of St. Luke.

Luke was not one of the twelve apostles. He was a Physician, a researcher and historian, a traveling companion of St. Paul. Luke was the author of the gospel that bears his name and also the author of the book of the Acts of the Apostles. Luke addressed both his gospel and the book of Acts to a person named Theophilus. We don't know who he is. Possibly a Roman official since Luke refers to him in the gospel as "most excellent Theophilus." He may have been a benefactor of Luke. It's all speculation. His name means "friend of God" or "loved by God." Regardless, Luke tells Theophilus, **"Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses... Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."** Luke 1:1-4

Notice he says his sources were eyewitnesses of the events that had happened (referring to the birth, life, miracles, teaching, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus). He also says he carefully investigated everything from the beginning. Luke made certain of his sources and their accounts. Then notice the last line, "so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught." The Greek word translated as "certainty" is only used three times in the New Testament. Luke uses it twice. Once here and once in Acts 5 when he tells of the apostles being arrested and locked in jail. In that passage Luke said the guards "found the jail securely locked." "Securely locked" is the same Greek word translated here as "certainty". What he was telling Theophilus was he could trust the facts, including the facts surrounding Jesus' miraculous conception and birth. Luke had locked down these facts securely. There was an unchanging, unshakeable, certainty about the testimony concerning Jesus. We can trust the certainty of the gospel story. We can trust the certainty of what we believe. I want us to recite the Apostle's Creed today as we affirm again the certainty of what we believe as followers of Christ.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus

Christ His only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died and was buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; He will come again to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy, apostolic church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

For Theophilus and for all of us, we know the certainty of the gospel message. It's locked down and secure. What I'm about to tell you this morning is locked down and certain. Luke said so. The church fathers said so. The eyewitnesses said so.

With that said, look at Luke 1. The good doctor Luke tells of the visit of the angel Gabriel to a little town in the Galilee called Nazareth. Luke says, **“God sent the angel Gabriel...to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary...the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus.’” Luke 1:26-31**

Notice who initiated this. “God sent the angel.” God took the initiative when the time was right, announcing his plan of redemption. We know Mary asked the angel how this could be because she was a virgin and had never been with a man. Gabriel told her the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of the Most High would overshadow her, explaining the child she would bear would be conceived of the Holy Spirit. “The holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” Fully God and fully man we say. A miraculous conception. A miraculous child. But I want to focus on the instruction from Gabriel that the baby was to be called Jesus. Why Jesus?

Matthew’s backstory includes the visitation of an angel of the Lord to Joseph, the man engaged to Mary. The angel told Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife because she had not been unfaithful to him. Instead, the child conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. The angel said, **“She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21**

“Name him Jesus because...” What does that mean? Jesus is the English translation of the Hebrew name Jeshua or Jehoshua. It essentially means “the Lord saves” or “the Lord is salvation.” The word combines the name of God with a prime root that means to be free or to

cause to be free. It can mean to defend, deliver, help, preserve, rescue. Give him the name Jesus because it speaks of his mission and purpose. He will be Savior, Deliverer, Rescuer.

We spent November answering Jesus' question "who do you say I am?" We can say Jesus is our savior, deliverer, rescuer. But what is it exactly he is saving us from? The name Jesus or actually the Hebrew version of Joshua or Jehoshua was quite common in Jesus' time. It revealed the hope of the Jewish people that the Messiah would come, that God would keep his promise to save them, to liberate them from their oppressors. They were expecting Messiah to come to save their nation. But the Psalmist had spoken prophetically of a different kind of savior. **"O Israel, put your hope in the Lord, for with the Lord is unfailing love and with him is full redemption. He himself will redeem Israel from all their sins."** Psalm 130: 7-8 This is the salvation to which the angel Gabriel is referring. Call him Jesus because he will save and deliver and rescue and free his people and all who will trust in him from their sin!

Here is the reality. Here is the truth that Luke is locking down for Theophilus and for us: we are all sinners, we all need a Savior and Jesus has come to save us from our sin. The angels announced to the shepherds outside of Bethlehem, **"Unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, Christ the Lord."** Luke 2:11 This is the good news. He has come to save us from our sins. He has come to rescue us, deliver us, and secure forgiveness for us. Jesus said, **"For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. John 3:16-17** He has come to save us but how? How will he do that? Is it just by being born that he saves us? By coming into this world? Of course we know the answer. It is not simply by being born, but by being born to die for us as the atoning sacrifice for our sin. That's how he saves us.

Jesus said, **"The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."** Luke 9:22 This was the mission, the plan. Jesus was born to die in order to save us from sin. But why? How does this save us from sin?

His death, the shedding of his blood on the cross, is the means by which a new covenant is established. A covenant is a solemn agreement that binds parties together in permanently defined relationship. God made a covenant with Abraham in Genesis, with the nation of Israel in Exodus, but through Jesus' sacrifice, he makes a new covenant with all who will come to God through faith in Christ and his atoning death on the cross. Through the blood of Jesus a new

covenant is established by which our sins are forgiven! God spoke through his prophet Jeremiah, **“The time is coming when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers...For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”** Jeremiah 31:31-34

God promised a time was coming when he would make a new covenant and would provide forgiveness for their sins. A new covenant, no longer based on their works or their ability to keep perfectly the commandments of the law. A new covenant not based on the old sacrificial system of offering the blood of bulls and goats but instead, it was a covenant based on the merit of God’s own sacrifice, Jesus, the perfect, sinless lamb of God and Savior of the world! On the night Jesus was betrayed, at the Last Supper, Jesus took the cup at the Passover meal and said, **“This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”** Luke 22:20 Matthew’s gospel includes the phrase, “for the forgiveness of sins.” This is how he provides forgiveness for our sins. By the pouring out of his own blood, the giving of his perfect and sinless life for us.

Call his name Jesus because he will be the forgiver of sins. Call his name Jesus because he will deliver from the penalty of sin, the wrath and judgement that was meant for us as sinners and violators of God’s law. The bible says the soul that sins must die. We have all sinned and missed the mark. We’ve come short of the glory of God, the righteousness and holiness of God. We fall short of God’s standard and as a result, we are condemned. But Jesus comes to rescue us and deliver us. The Apostle Paul writes, **“Jesus, who rescues us from the coming wrath.”** 1 Thessalonians 1:10 Jesus, the Savior and the rescuer.

In Galatians Paul writes, **“Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from the present evil age...”** Galatians 1:3-4 Jesus is the Savior and deliverer, the rescuer from this present evil age. That means we don’t have to live subject to the forces of sin and the devil and hell. We don’t have to submit to Satan’s authority or dominion or control any longer. Through Jesus, the Savior and deliverer and rescuer, we are free from Satan’s domination!

The angel said to the shepherds, **“I bring you good news of great joy...a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord.”** Luke 2:10-11 It’s good news, but it’s only good news if we recognize we need saving. If you don’t see your need of salvation, if you think you can handle life without a savior, if you think you can stand before God at the judgment and convince him you are good enough and that his Son dying on the cross was unnecessary for you

because of your innate goodness and your unfailing perfection, then you don't need a savior. But if you recognize you've sinned and broken God's commandments like everyone else on the planet and that you need a Savior, then there is good news for you! A child is born and Mary and Joseph have called his name Jesus because he is the one and only Son of God and he has come to save you from your sin!

Notice again what he has come to save you from. If you think you need him only to save you from the financial mess you've gotten yourself in or save you from the bad relationship you're in or save you from the illness you're struggling with but you don't need him to save you from your sins, then you've missed the point and He's not your Savior. Jesus can save you from all those things, but he came to save us from sin. That's where it starts, where it begins for us! We need him to save us from our sin.

Let me explain something. When we say he saves us from sin, sometimes what we are thinking or what we're desiring is to be saved from the consequences of sin. We just want to be saved from the penalty of our sins. We don't want to die and go to hell. John Piper said, “[We] want to be saved from the consequences of sin but not from the corruption of sin.” ... **John Piper** Listen, Jesus didn't just come to save us from the penalty of sin, the consequence of sin, he came to save us and rescue us from the dominion and corruption of sin in our life. He wants to live in us and rule and reign in our life so we are no longer controlled by sin and its damaging influence. It's more than Jesus saving us from having to bear the penalty of our sin. His salvation means to impart life to us, to make us partakers of his divine nature, partakers of his life. He died for us and now he wants to live in us by His Holy Spirit. He lives in us and we live in him. Our pleasure is now found in him rather than in the pleasures of sin or the pleasures of our flesh. Do you hear me? There is a greater pleasure in knowing Christ, in finding life in him, than in anything this world can offer! I want to be saved from sin, from its consequence and its penalty, but I also want to be saved from sin's corrupting power and influence. I want to be saved to a new kind of life in Christ!

John said, “**The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.**” **1 John 3:8** Jesus came to destroy the work of the devil and the devil's work is to keep us in bondage to sin so that sin will destroy us. Jesus came to save and rescue us. Not just from the penalty of our sin, but from the control of sin! “Call his name Jesus” the angel said because he will save his people from their sins. Jesus has come to be not only the sin-forgiver but the sin-destroyer, the sin-buster in your life! That's what it means for Jesus to save us from our sin!

Jesus said it was not the well but the sick that had need of a physician. We are all sick with sin. He alone can save us from the deadly disease of sin that contaminates us. I quoted John Piper earlier. He made the analogy of our sinful condition being like dying of pneumonia and the doctor prescribes a life-saving antibiotic. Instead of swallowing it, taking it internally as it was meant to be taken, we begin to rub it on our skin. “The doctor says, ‘You’re supposed to swallow it! It goes inside of you!’ But you say, ‘I don’t care for the taste. Besides it feels good on the outside. I think it helps.’ ‘But the medicine is made to fight your disease. You’re going to die if you don’t take it!’ But you say, ‘I think it will work this way. I feel better already.’” It doesn’t work that way! It’s more than saying a sinner’s prayer, it’s a new birth. A new life! It’s not about feeling better, it’s about life or death.

He has come to save us from our sin but we have to believe him and receive him. He has come to save us, to rescue, deliver, change us and free us from sin. He has come not just to save us from the penalty of our sin, not just from the consequences of our sin but from the corruption of our sin. He has come to be the sin-forgiver and the sin-destroyer as well. He has come to dwell in us and us in him. He has come so we might have life, abundant life, everlasting life. He has come to set us free! But we have to avail ourselves of his saving power and grace. We have to have his life in us (like the antibiotic) and by his grace we live into his life. It’s not just saying a sinner’s prayer, it’s receiving a Savior that forgives and imparts to us his new life.

“Give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sin.” Matthew 1:21 Are you ready for Jesus to be your Savior? Are you ready for him to not only be your sin-forgiver but your sin-destroyer? Are you ready for Jesus to bring life and freedom to you? They were to call him Jesus because he would save his people from their sin. He is the Savior and Paul said, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” Romans 10:13 It’s time for you to call on his name and be saved.