**To Us a Child is Born**

Based on [Isaiah 9:2-7](http://biblia.com/books/esv/Is9.2-7)

Preached on December 24, 2015

Christmas Eve

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Literature textbooks say there are three elements needed to tell a story: there needs to be some conflict, there needs to be a climax, and there needs to be a resolution. Christmas Eve is a climactic night. **It is caught up between the conflict of Advent and the resolution of Christmas.** Christmas Eve is the climax, the point at which hope and fulfillment meet in the birth of the Savior into the world, of the light born into the darkness.

Conflict moving towards resolution, that’s the substance of any good story not just because English teachers say so, but because that is the story of our salvation. Romans 8:18 says, “**The sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing to the glory that will be revealed to us**.” The conflict is not worth comparing to the resolution. And it describing the transition, the climax, Jesus gives this illustration in John 16:21, “**When a woman is giving birth, she has sorrow because her hour has come, but when she has delivered the baby, she no longer remembers the anguish, for joy that a human being has been born into the world**.” I have been told that the moment the child is born--the moment the child comes into the world--is a climactic moment, the moment where pain meets joy. Because after that final push, the horrible pain is in the process of leaving—rapidly rushing out—and what’s more, in that instant she can see with her eyes the joyful result of her labour…pun intended.

The climax, it’s the moment you step out of the cold winter into the warmth of home and hearth; the warmth is so enjoyable, so powerful precisely because the cold is being overrun by it. The moment where pain gives way to joy, the moment of transition from one to the other, Christmas Eve is that moment.

Tonight we commemorate the birth of our Saviour, Jesus Christ. **His mother Mary suffered the birth pangs, not to mention the added hardship of being away from home, in a different city, in a stable, no midwife or physician…just her hapless husband having to help her through it.** But she got through it. And we don’t know the details, because all Luke says about the delivery is, “**the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth**.” And that's all we need, because **Luke doesn’t tell us this story for us to share Mary’s joy of motherhood. This is the story of our saviour, our child, our Jesus.**

700 years before Mary gave birth to her child Isaiah was given this messianic prophecy, “**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given**.” Notice the prophecy. The child isn’t for Mary; the child is for us. “**For to us a child is born, to us a son is given.**” John 3:16, “For God so loved the world, that he gave His only begotten son.” God gave this child not just to Mary, but to you.

**“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given**.” This Jesus is your child. Not as though you gave birth to him. Not as though you will raise him and he will have your eyes or your cheekbones. **This child is yours because he was born for you, to die for you; so that you can make use of him for your salvation.**  And this reveals the very heart of God; He did not send his son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved *through* him. This child belongs to each and every person in the world, this child belongs to you.

Think of it this way; do you realize that **if you were the only sinner on earth, God still would have given his son to die for you**. That might not seem like a good bargain, but love doesn’t weigh costs and benefits. God doesn’t deal that way. It’s not as if God look down upon the earth strokes his beard and say, “**Yes I suppose there’s enough people worth saving down there. 144,000 Saints sealed in exchange for my Son?…that’s a decent bargain. Those are some adequate numbers...I suppose it’s worth it**." That's expediency, and God doesn’t think that way. Love doesn’t think that way. In fact, **God describes himself in precisely the opposite way.** Jesus says the good shepherd leaves the ninety-nine for the sake of the one. He says that heaven rejoices over one sinner who repents.

Beloved in the Lord, this is the very heart of God, that he loves you and gives his son for you ***as if you were the only sinner on earth***. God promised Abraham who was worried for his nephew, "For the sake of ten, I will not destroy the city of Sodom" (Genesis 18:27-32). For the sake of one man, God forestalled the flood until the ark was finished and Noah was safe. God will patiently suffer all manner of evil, blasphemy and unrighteousness for the sake of saving even one person. "**Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? And not one of them is forgotten before God. Why, even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not; you are of more value than many sparrows**." (Luke 12:6-7).

I think Christians and especially pastors need to keep this message in mind. That according to God’s calculations, a church with one repentant sinner is a successful church, because we are to love as God loves us, and love appreciates what it has been given. It is lust that wants more. And so the church today is guilty of lust. We look around and count attendance…its up this week ("what did we do right? god must be happy with us")…its down the next week ("what did we do wrong? God must be angry?"). But Christ deems it worth his time to be present where two or three are gathered together, so should any Christian and any pastor. Sunday morning, the angels aren't nervously counting the sheep; if there is even one person, one repentant sinner in attendance seeking and finding God's forgiveness in Christ, heaven rejoices and the angels sing.

And they are rejoicing tonight, because Christ is brought into the world. Tonight Christ is brought into the world, though not from the womb of Mary wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger..that day has past Christ is brought into the world through the Word. The seed of God's Word is cast into our ear. We are pregnant with Christ Jesus as he abides in our hearts in the womb of faith. But he doesn't stay in the womb; filled with his Spirit he jumps and kicks until he is delivered through our lips into the world from faith to faith. And so we lift up our voices in songs and hymns and spiritual songs. We sing Christmas carols proclaiming the glorious news, rejoicing in our salvation. **For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."**