

SERMON: God Keeps His Promises: To Redeem Us

Rev. Geoff Ross Sunday, January 31, 2021 St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church.

[Years ago:Christmas Eve service/Communion – comment: “Don't want to think about death/dying when we should be celebrating Jesus' birth!” Didn't want doom/gloom to ruin the “happy holiday” – Communion/too sullen/somber/sad for Christmas! Missed the point! Beside the fact that Communion:celebration/feast-commemorates our salvation/Jesus-Risen!/death-defeated! – Christmas is only the prelude/warm-up act to the final set/act and encore!]

And this is true, as Christians/people of faith, we don't celebrate Jesus' life/we give thanks/praise God for what He accomplished by His death! And, I know that this wouldn't make an upbeat Christmas card/but most of the hymns we sing do remind us that 'Good Christians all rejoice; “Jesus Christ was born to save”. Yes, the birth is to be celebrated: it was the fulfillment of centuries of God's promise to be-with countless generations of God's people – it was heaven/earth shattering! And, while it was promised/part of God's eternal plan to save/redeem you/me/us, we have to remember why He was born: God sent Jesus into the world – not just to be born; but to die for us. Without His death, His birth does not have the same significance.

[Still/not very merry! Years ago:read a Christmas card that said:If our greatest need was for information/technology, God would have sent an educator/scientist./If our greatest need was for pleasure/money, God would have sent an entertainer/reddit stocks./But since our greatest need was our sin/need for forgiveness..., God sent us a Savior...a Redeemer. “Jesus Christ was born for this.”How do we know?It's in His name!]

The name Jesus means "Saviour"/"God saves". Even though Jesus, Himself, uses the term/called Himself Saviour – we first hear it when the angel said to Joseph, Mary “will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”(Matthew 1:21) The name Jesus comes from the Greek form of the Hebrew name, 'Yeshua'/'Y'shua'/then 'Joshua':it was a name given to God's promised messenger – Emmanuel/God with us – to assert/declare His mission; that He came to save us – from ourselves/sin/death. Add to 'Jesus' the 'title' "Christ" and His identity/mission become clearer. "Christ" means 'anointed' – which is the Greek word for 'Messiah'; together Jesus the Christ is the 'anointed one' to 'deliverer'/to save God's people. *[And you thought you had to live up to your name!]*

[Coupons:40/50/75% off-but still a cost!Stain on sin deep/complete:sin remains-for redemption we would need to be washed/made clean:not something we can do/buy-only God can do this.]

Jesus is the promised/Saviour – the One chosen/sent to redeem us. This is His special role/purpose – what He was promised to do/sent to be. As the Christ, He was the One to save his people from the guilt of sin, by redeeming them with His own atoning/expiating/compensating blood. As Christ Jesus He redeems/brings about our redemption at the cost of His life/death that saves you/me/us/all lost to sin from the penalty/cost/consequences of sin/death: it was His role/purpose/plan-joy; “God did not

send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”(John 3:17)

For the Law to be fulfilled/ransom paid/penalty redressed; someone had to die; and only Jesus – the Son of God – could do it! To remedy/restore/redeem this, God in/through Jesus came to be the “Lamb of God”, who, through His death, could/would pay of debt/sin and set us free. To do this, Jesus died as a “ransom” to set us free/to deliver/save us – to pay a debt He didn’t owe for the debts that you/I/none of us cannot pay. He didn’t have to, but as prophesied through Isaiah, our Redeemer was “*pierced for OUR transgressions/was crushed for OUR iniquities...*” Jesus was, in essence ‘born crucified.’ In dying on the cross – “*even death on a cross.*” (Phil 2:5-8 – He set us free/won for us our salvation. But this was by design/all part of the plan/promise!

[Jesus/through His suffering/death ‘authored/lead/delivered us through suffering/death into God’s presence:He went ahead/was-is The Way/prepared a place/came back for us – all to return/restore/redeem us before God. Without Him we would have no ‘Way’ to God. Our sin too great/gulf too wide/bar too high:none of us can see/be-with God on our own-need help. Jesus came-said: "I am the way, and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through Me." (John 14:6) by His death/fulfilled God’s first promise:to redeem us!]

The promise of a coming Messiah/Divine redemption heard in Psalm 130 – and in the Isaiah prophecy retold in the Matthew account of Jesus’ birth prepare us for the reality of God’s promised/plan. The promises to be-with us/guide/love us were all because of God’s promise to redeem/redeeming us in God’s sight/presence. To do this our sin must be wiped out/paid for/Jesus came to be born/be-with us/live as one of us/in order to die for us. The full cost of God’s love/promise is/was the death of God’s Son – but by God’s love, God kept His promise! Thanks be to the God who keeps His promises – to redeem us/you/me/all who are in need of God’s saving grace. Amen