

For All the People

Children's Program 2017

Pastor Josh Frazee

Luke 2:8-15

Grace, peace, and mercy be to you from God our Father, and from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Faith is the means by which we receive what Jesus has done for us. That's what we learned in Catechism class just a week ago.

If you were here last year, you heard from Concordia Seminary President Dale Meyer that the church is not a museum—we don't just hear what happened in the past as though looking at an exhibit in a museum gallery. What we hear about in church has an effect on us today.

Tonight we heard from the Gospel of Luke the message of the angel: "Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." These words were a message for the shepherds tending their flocks by night. Yet what good would it have done them if they did not believe the angel? They would not have gone to see the Christ child who would be the Savior of the world. While this does not have any bearing on whether Jesus would have been born or not—He still would have—these men would not be remembered for their faith.

That's what we learn in the Church: that God would have still done all the things He has done whether we believe it or not. In fact, He has. Many today still don't believe that Jesus was born of a Virgin. Many don't believe that He was the Christ, the one promised of old to pay the price for their sins as the Suffering Servant. Many don't believe His Words "This is My body" and "in My blood"—that His own body and blood are in, with, and under the bread and wine of Holy Communion—and yet they are. God's Word doesn't depend on whether we believe it or not. It's His Word.

So Jesus was born and would have been born anyway; why does that matter? For whom does that matter? It matters for those shepherds. It matters for "all the people." It matters for the shepherds because without faith in the words of the angel, they would not have gotten to see the Christ child. It matters for "all the people" because faith is the means by which we receive what Jesus has done for us.

Now some may question: yeah, well who needs a Savior anyway? I don't need a Christ child. I'm pretty good on my own. I'm not Hitler or anything.

Yet that is another thing we learn in the Church: that we are all born sinful. None of us does right, no not one. Not by God's standards. God demands perfection; and we both know that you can't live perfectly. Neither can I. We need a Savior. Not only do we not live perfectly, we are born with original sin. That's right; even if you had never done one thing wrong, you still would have been doomed to condemnation for just being born. Adam and Eve's fall into sin guaranteed that.

But as we heard, the birth of the Christ child would be "good news of great joy." Jesus, the Son of God, was born of Mary two thousand years ago. He was born, He would live, and He would die on the cross to pay for the sins of all of humanity. For all of time.

So why do you need faith? If Jesus died for all, then why should you worry about it? Because faith is the means by which you receive what Jesus has done for us. Without faith in Him, you do not receive the good things that He earned by His birth, life, death, and resurrection. You don't receive Holy Communion. You don't receive Him. And you don't receive forgiveness.

In both the message for us tonight and in the Words of Institution, there are certain phrases that stand out for us who believe. Those phrases are "for all the people" and "for you." Yes, Jesus was born, He lived, He died, and He rose again for all the people of all time. But what is more, He did all of that for you, to save you, to give you forgiveness of your sins so that you might live with Him forever.

Just as we cannot live how God wants, we also cannot believe of our own. So God gives you the gift of faith. He has packaged it in His Word and the waters of Holy Baptism. Like any gift you might have received

tonight or will receive tonight or tomorrow morning, you didn't have to do anything to earn it. God has given you His Word and His Holy Spirit to believe it as Your Heavenly Father, giving you good gifts. All you and I do is receive. Tonight and always in the Church, we get to receive God's gifts, knowing that the tag says "for you" for the sake of Jesus, the babe whose birth we celebrate. In Jesus' Name. Amen.