

Jesus, Our Savior, Is Born

December 24, 2023

Merry Christmas CrossWinds! If you are a visitor, my name is Kurt. I am one of the Pastors. We are thankful to gather on Christmas Eve to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

This Christmas, we are in a series titled “What if Jesus had never been born?” We looked at different ways the birth of Jesus changed history. Jesus changed education. Public education came about because of Jesus. Jesus changed medicine. Hospitals came about because of Jesus. Jesus changed science. Modern science came about because of Jesus; some of the best scientists in history were Christians. Jesus civilized a barbaric culture. Everywhere the good news of Jesus went, civilization became a more civilized place. Jesus changed art and politics. Some of the greatest political movements in history, such as the ending of slavery in England and America, were spearheaded by men and women whose lives were changed by the Jesus whose birth we celebrate tonight.

If Jesus were never born, many positive things in our world would not have occurred. Greater than all the amazing ways the birth of Jesus changed the world is the way the birth of Jesus changed ordinary people like you and me.

Tonight, in our final message of this series, we will look at how Jesus changes people. Tonight, I don't know about your life. I don't know what relational brokenness you face. I don't know what addictions have a hook in your heart. I don't know what you have done or the guilt and shame you held in your heart when you walked in this door. What I do know is if Jesus came at Christmas to

save you. He came to rescue you. He came to forgive you and give you a new life.

The theme verse for tonight's message is 2 Corinthians 5:17, which tells us what Jesus came to do for us when we turn to him.

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. 2 Corinthians 5:17 (ESV)

How does someone become a new person who is completely forgiven and made new by Jesus? Tonight, we will find out.

Our outline for tonight is as follows: 1. We will look at the Christmas story, which repeatedly tells us that Jesus came to save us. 2. We will look at people Jesus saved in biblical history. 3. We will look at people Jesus saved in recent history. 4. How can Jesus save me tonight?

Jesus was born to save us from our sins.

When we look at the Christmas story, tightly woven into the story is the message of why Jesus came. He came to save sin-sick, broken people like you and me.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:18–21 (ESV)

The first part of these verses tells the story of Jesus' conception. The last part of these verses tells the significance of Jesus' birth. When the baby in Mary's womb was born, he was to be called Jesus. Jesus in Hebrew means "God is my

help” or “God is my savior.” Jesus was given a name that means “God is my helper or savior” because he came to save people from their sins. Every time we see the name of Jesus or speak the name of Jesus, it is a reminder of why he came. He came to save us.

We also learn what he came to save us from. He came to save us from our sins.

If we go to the Gospel of Luke, and look at the angel’s message to the shepherds, we see they were given the same message about the purpose of Jesus’ birth. Jesus came to save sin-sick, broken people.

And in the same region there were shepherds out in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And an angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were filled with great fear. And the angel said to them, “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. Luke 2:8–11 (ESV)

The angels told the shepherds that Jesus’ birth was good news for all people, not just Jewish people. Jesus was born as a Savior. He came to save us from our sins.

If we go a little past the Christmas story in Luke 2, when Mary and Joseph brought baby Jesus to the temple to dedicate him, an elderly man named Simeon said this about baby Jesus.

(Simeon) “Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; for my eyes have seen your salvation that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples,... Luke 2:29–31 (ESV)

This is the same theme. Jesus is the one who came to save us from our sins. He is not just the one who came to save Jewish people, but he is the one who came to save all people.

When we turn to the gospel of John, while John's Gospel does not tell us the birth narrative, we constantly see Jesus referred to as the one who came to save us.

They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world." John 4:42 (ESV)

Jesus came to save broken people. He came to save us from our sins. He came to offer a way to be saved for all people, not just some people. Jesus came to save us from our sins. That is why we celebrate his birth.

What does it look like for God to save lost people? What does it look like to have Jesus take someone, remove their sins from them, and make them a completely new creation? Let's find out.

Jesus saved sinful people in the Bible.

Zacchaeus

Luke 19 tells the story of a dishonest and greedy tax collector named Zacchaeus. He was dishonest because we know he overcharged people and pocketed the cash for himself. He was a rich man, but he was a lonely man because everyone knew he was a crook. He was a short man and looked like Danny DeVito. He wanted to see Jesus. Since he was vertically challenged, he climbed a tree to see Jesus when he passed by. Jesus looked up at him, and this is what he said.

And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today." So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." Luke 19:5–7 (ESV)

Most people would have ignored Zacchaeus. Jesus didn't ignore a broken man. He looked out for him. He sought him out. He asked to have lunch with him. That lunch meeting changed Zacchaeus' life. Look how it ended.

And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold."
Luke 19:8 (ESV)

Jesus radically changed Zacchaeus' life. He gave away half of his vast wealth to the poor and repaid everyone he ripped off by four times the amount he stole. Jesus forgave Zacchaeus' sin and made him a completely new person, like Scrooge at the end of the Christmas story. The story ends with these words.

For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. Luke 19:10 (ESV)

Jesus came to save lost people, broken people,... people like Zacchaeus. Jesus doesn't just save us from our sins but he makes us into completely new people.

Mary Magdalene

The Bible tells us of a woman named Mary Magdalene. It doesn't tell us much about her, but from what the Bible does say about her past, we know she was a complete basket case. Her sins ruined her life. Her sins left her sick. When Jesus met her, she was demon-possessed. She wasn't possessed by one demon. She was under the control of seven demons in her life. One demon is bad enough, but seven is crazy.

...and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,... Luke 8:2 (ESV)

Imagine what her life was like. Demons destroy people. Imagine the sexual promiscuity that was probably part of her life. Imagine the drugs and alcohol. Imagine how hopeless she felt before she met Jesus.

Remember why Jesus came. He came to save us from our sins. Jesus had the power to cast out those demons with just a word, which is what Jesus did for her. Jesus didn't just forgive her sins and take away her demons so she had a sane mind, but Jesus made her into a completely new person. Mary Magdalene and other women followed Jesus while he was alive, and they helped him and the apostles.

Then, after Jesus died on the cross for our sins and rose from the grave to new life, who do you think Jesus chose to be the first to find the grave open and Jesus alive on that first Easter Sunday? It was Mary Magdalene, the woman whose life he brought back from the dead by casting the demons out of her life.

Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons. She went and told those who had been with him, as they mourned and wept. Mark 16:9–10 (ESV)

Jesus came to save sinners. God chose a broken Mary to be the first woman to know that Jesus didn't just conquer her sins and demons, but he conquered death and rose to new life.

Jesus saves sinful people today.

Jesus is still in the business of saving lost sinners, just like you and me. Let me show you some of the lives he changes today.

John Newton

John Newton wrote the hymn Amazing Grace, which is still considered one of the most popular hymns in the world. The hymn was written as a

testimony of what Jesus did in his life. John Newton lived from 1725-1807. He was the son of a sea captain. His mother died when he was six. His father took him to sea at the age of 11. It wasn't long until he captained



his own ship. He worked as a slave trader sailing with a hull full of human souls stuffed into tight places.

In 1748, his ship experienced a violent storm. The boat was filling with water. The crew worked frantically to plug the leaks. He called out to God for mercy in the storm, asking God to spare his life. The storm began to subside. After he said those words, he couldn't believe he had spoken them. He didn't care about God before this. Even more amazing was that God listened to his prayer. Why would God have mercy on someone like him? He was a terrible person, a wicked slave trader who abused others and took human life. The next day he wrote in his journal that he was shocked that God could have mercy on such a wicked and sinful man as himself.

That was the beginning of his Christian conversion. Within a few years, at 39, he gave up the slave trade and became a pastor and hymn writer. His most famous hymn, Amazing Grace, is the autobiographical story of Jesus saving his life, forgiving his sin, and making him into a completely new creation. Jesus changed him from a murdering slave trader to a pastor.

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound, that saved a wretch like me! I once was lost, but now am found, was blind but now I see. 'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear, and grace my fears relieved. How precious did that grace appear the hour I first believed.

Jesus came to save sinners, like John Newton and like you and me. He came to save the worst of people and make them into completely new people.

Mel Trotter

If you look up Mel Trotter on the Internet, you will see a distinguished gentleman with sharp eyes behind often studious glasses. Mel wasn't always that way. He was about as no good as you can get. He was the scum of the scum. His father was a bartender, smoker, and gambler, and when Mel grew up, his father taught him how to drink, smoke, and gamble, just like he did. When he married, his drinking reduced his family to poverty. As a drunk, he abused his wife and children and couldn't hold a job. One day, he came home to find his son dead in his wife's arms. At the funeral, he swore off alcohol, but before the funeral was over, he grabbed another drink. Another day, he came home to find his daughter seriously ill. As she lay deathly sick in bed, he took her shoes, then went out and sold them for a drink. When he came home, she was dead. He was so disgusted with himself that he decided to commit suicide. As he walked down the streets of Chicago, intending to throw himself into the icy-cold water of Lake Michigan to drown, he overheard someone preaching on a loudspeaker. Still drunk, he stepped into the building to hear the rest of the sermon. It was the Pacific Garden Mission. At the end of the sermon, a drunk Mel



Trotter raised his hand, asking for the Jesus who loves sinners to forgive his sin and save his life. He asked Jesus to make him into a new person.

Mel Trotter had a dramatic conversion experience where God made him not just sober but a radically different person. He went on to become a sought-after preacher and speaker. He created Mel Trotter ministries in Grand Rapids, MI, that have introduced thousands of people on the streets to Jesus and helped them with housing and a job.

If it were not for Jesus forgiving Mel Trotter's sin and making him into a new person, he would just be another drunk who committed suicide. Remember how Jesus saved Mary Magdalene? She went from being possessed by seven demons to being the first one to see Jesus on resurrection morning. Jesus did the same thing for Mel Trotter. He radically changed his life and used him in ways he couldn't imagine. If you turn to Jesus, he can do the same for you.

Jacob DeShazer and Mitsubishi Fuchida

In World War II, after the attack on Pearl Harbor, the United States developed a plan to bomb Japan by launching bombers off of aircraft carriers. It was known as the Doolittle raid led by Captain Doolittle. A sergeant in Doolittle's small squadron was Jacob DeShazer. After he and his crew bombed Japan, his plane was crippled by anti-aircraft fire. He and his crew bailed out and were captured. The Japanese placed him in a 5-foot-wide cell and treated him and his fellow prisoners with horrible cruelty. He developed such an intense hatred for



the Japanese after they tortured him that the sole purpose of his life was to get revenge and kill them. He dreamed of getting his hands around the throats of Japanese men and squeezing until he took their lives.

One day, a Bible was smuggled into the prison. It was passed around and finally came to Jacob DeShazer. He read it and came across the words of Jesus, who was being named to the cross. There, Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do." In his biography, Jacob says in that moment, Jesus began melting the mountain of hatred he had for the Japanese in his heart. Even after the guards slam his bare feet in a prison door and kick him with studded boots, Jacob DeShazer kept thinking of Jesus' words in the Bible that said, "Love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you." Instead of hating his captors, he loved them and wanted them to know about Jesus, who could forgive them and change their hearts, too.

When the war was over, Jacob DeShazer returned to Japan and became a missionary to the Japanese. Only Jesus could take a man who was tortured by the Japanese, who hated the Japanese and dreamed of killing them, to forgive their sin, and give Jacob a heart of compassion for them, so he spent most of his life as a missionary in Japan telling them about the love, forgiveness, and new creation they could become only through Jesus.

The story doesn't end there. Jacob DeShazer's conversion to Jesus was written down in a small Japanese tract. One day, a despondent, depressed, sin-filled, and guilt-ridden Japanese man ran across the tract and read Jacob's story.

He asked Jesus to save him from his sin. Jesus did. He made him into a new person.

That man's name was Mitsuo Fuchida. He was the Japanese officer who led the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941. The man who led the attack to conquer America was conquered by the love of Jesus, who came to save sinners. He spent the rest



of his life traveling across Japan and America, telling people about the Jesus who saved him from his sin, forgave him for what he had done, and gave him a new life he didn't deserve.

I don't know what you have done, but if Jesus can forgive the man who led the attack on Pearl Harbor and make him into a new person, he can forgive you and make you into a new person, too.

Chief Tariri

When the World's Fair was celebrated in New York several years ago, one of the highlights of the World Fair was the lighting of the Tower of Lights. It was a Tower of Lights that concentrated more lights in a single source than ever. When lit, the light was seen for hundreds of miles. The switch for the tower of lights was thrown by a man from South America, a Peruvian headhunter named Chief Tariri. He was the chief of an entire tribe of headhunters. He had personally killed and decapitated ten other chiefs, and their heads were kept on poles outside his hut. Nobody knows how many other common jungle Indians he decapitated.

How did he go from a vicious headhunter to lighting the Tower of Lights in New York? Years before, two Bible translators met chief Tariri in the Peruvian jungle. They expected certain death, but the chief looked on them with favor and let them live. They learned his language and wrote it down. They told him of Jesus, the Son of God, who came to save him from his sins and could make him into a new person. Chief Tariri softened his heart and gave his life to Jesus. This led to another 200 in his tribe following Jesus, and their lives were radically changed. They became new creations. Instead of killing people and taking their heads as a trophy, they began to show love and kindness, not killing and death.

If Jesus can forgive the sins of a headhunter and radically change his life, he can do the same for you. I assume none of us have the heads of other people sitting on poles outside our homes. If Jesus could forgive, save, and radically change a person like him, he can forgive, save, and change you.

What Jesus did in all these different lives, he can do in your life — if you will let him. If Jesus had never come, a crooked tax collector wouldn't have been changed. A woman possessed by seven demons wouldn't have been set free. A slave trader wouldn't have become a pastor. A drunk would be dead in Lake Michigan instead of saving others' lives. The man who led the raid on Pearl Harbor wouldn't have traveled around America and Japan telling people about Jesus, who forgives sin and makes us into a new person.

Jesus was born to save me from my sins.

One thing we should still talk about is what happens when Jesus forgives our sins. The Bible tells us there is more to this than we might expect.

Jesus was born to save me from the consequences of my sins.

If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:9 (ESV)

When Jesus forgives our sins, God doesn't hold our sins against us. He washes away all of our guilt when God looks at us. Think of the choices you are ashamed of. Think of the things you have done we wish never took place. God knows everything there is to know about us. He knows us better than we know ourselves. Jesus takes all of that away, so when God looks at us, he doesn't see the filth of our sin; he sees the purity and holiness of his son given to us.

Jesus was born to take away the guilt and shame of my sins.

let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. Hebrews 10:22 (ESV)

When Jesus forgives us of our sins, he also takes away the shame and guilt we carry. As Hebrews tells us, Jesus' forgiveness of our sins gives us a clean conscience. He takes away our evil conscience. So many people live with shame and guilt for years. Jesus changes that. The forgiveness Jesus obtained is bigger than the sins done by us and greater than the sins done to us. As a result, our identity is no longer determined by the sins we have done but by the greatness of the forgiveness we were given by Jesus.

Jesus was born to set me free from the power of sin.

We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Romans 6:6-7 (ESV)

Jesus doesn't just forgive the debt of sins, but he also breaks sin's power in our lives. Mary Magdalene experienced this when Jesus cast seven demons

out of her and made her a new person. That is what Mel Trotter experienced when Jesus broke his addiction to alcohol and drugs. Jacob DeShazer experienced this when Jesus took away his hatred for the Japanese and enabled him to love his enemies.

I don't know what sin has woven its way into your life, so you find yourself controlled by it, addicted to it, and enslaved by it. I know Jesus came to break the power of sin and set the captive free. When sin is the problem, Jesus is always the answer. The answer to any sinful addiction you are struggling with today is Jesus.

Jesus was born to set us free from the presence of sin.

And this is the promise that he made to us—eternal life. 1 John 2:25 (ESV)

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live,..." John 11:25 (ESV)

"He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away." Revelation 21:4 (ESV)

Jesus died not just to forgive us, to remove our guilt and shame, and to break sin's power in our lives, but he was born so that we would be set free from the presence of sin forever. Jesus died to pay for our sins, so we will not spend eternity justly suffering for our sins in the Lake of Fire. Instead, at death, we are brought home to heaven to be with Jesus and God the Father, where sin no longer exists. Imagine an eternity filled with the joy of God's presence and the absence of sin and any of sin's corrosive effects on our life and this world. That is what Jesus came to do.

What about me?

Tonight, on Christmas Eve, I don't know what your life was like when you walked in this door. I don't know how you are broken. I don't know how you are filled with shame. I don't know how your life is falling apart. I don't know how much hatred you have toward someone who hurt you or the shame you have for what has been done to you or by you. The one thing I know is what we learned when Jesus was born. Jesus was born to be the savior of the world. He came to be the savior of all people. If anyone turns to him, confesses their sins to him, and asks him to forgive them and be in charge of their life, he will do that and make them a completely new person.

1. **Jesus' birth changed education, medicine, science, civilization, arts, and politics. The most important thing Jesus came to change was to save me from my sins.**

Some of us are here because we always come to church at Christmas. The Christmas story is nothing new. I know others of us are here because family invited us. The Christmas story is new. The significance of Jesus' birth and what Jesus came to do is something you did not know. In a moment, I am going to pray. If you don't know what it means to be forgiven by Jesus and made into a completely new person by Jesus, when I pray, I ask you to pray with me in your heart as I pray out loud. There is no better time to be forgiven by Jesus and made into a new creation by Jesus than today.

Jesus, I come to you right now. I ask you to take away my sins. Come into my heart to make me a new person right now. I ask you to be in charge of my life. Make me your own. Wash away my sins. Make me into a new person through you. Amen.

If you prayed that prayer sincerely, you have begun the greatest adventure of your life. Your sins are washed away. When you leave, I encourage you to attend a Bible-teaching church and regularly read your Bible.

What about those who already know Jesus? This evening's study was a refresher course, not new information. How should we respond?

2. This Christmas, as I open gifts and spend time with family, be filled with gratitude for Jesus. He is my savior and the savior of the world.

This Christmas, before you get involved in the good food, presents, and the family celebrations we love, take a few moments as a family to stop and pray to Jesus, thanking him for taking on human flesh in the womb of Mary so he could die in our place for our sins and make us into completely new people. Jesus is not just our savior, but he came to be the world's savior. That is worth remembering and celebrating on Christmas Day.



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