

SERMON FOR CHRISTMAS EVE 2020

TEXT: 1 JOHN 4 :10

THEME: A VACCINE FOR CHRISTMAS

In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

In the name of Jesus:

So what do you want for Christmas? For millions around the world, the one thing that has been promised is in the process of being delivered:

A VACCINE FOR CHRISTMAS

Two vaccines for Christmas gives us so much hope. We have been locked down and locked in because of this Covid virus, that we have become prisoners in our own little bubbles. Experts have suggested, or should I say strongly urged us to wear masks in public, keep a distance of six feet from others, wash our hands, sanitize, and live sheltered lives all so that we don't contract this dreadful disease. And it is a dreadful disease. Millions have been bedridden because of it, and millions have died from it. We want it to end. Help is on the way.

But it hasn't been easy. A vaccine usually contains a form of a virus that has been killed. When injected, the body's immune system recognizes the threat of the virus and seeks to destroy it. It takes time. It takes effort. But to receive its benefits, all you have to do is be injected. You don't need to

develop it. You don't need to distribute it. You just receive the benefits by getting the vaccination.

The vaccines for the Coronavirus are currently being distributed to our health care workers and some residents in nursing homes, and are still being mass produced. The general populace won't be vaccinated until sometime next year. There is a real concern among the populace as to who exactly will get the vaccine, when it will be offered to them, and when? Where are you in the pecking order? How will everyone get the vaccine, and will they get it in time to help? And then there is the question of herd immunity, where lives will get back to normal and it will be safe to take off our masks. There are still so many questions, and not enough answers. In these darkened times, when we celebrate Christmas on a smaller scale with those within our bubble, there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

But what happens after the vaccine? Imagine that all of the world is indeed vaccinated. What then? The sad fact is that millions still will die. But not from Covid. From something else, a disease far worse than Covid. It's the disease of sin. Sin pays off with death, it is because of sin that death has spread to all people, everyone who is a sinner will die, and if this malady of sin is not remedied, then sinners will not only die a temporal death but they will also face an eternal death as well.

The Good News of Christmas is that there is a VACCINE FOR CHRISTMAS, a vaccine that gives health and healing to all. For those of you who wonder and doubt, saying, “how do you know that there is a vaccine for Christmas that gives health and healing to all? Just listen to the message of the angel who said: “Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. And this will be a sign for you; you will find a baby wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger.”

God our Heavenly Father has seen the sin sickness that you are afflicted with. He has diagnosed what the problem is. He knows what ails you. He sends help. But there is only one Way that God provides this help. Not with a pat on the back. Not with words of encouragement such as “hang in there, buck up, things aren’t so bad, or things are bound to get better.” God gives you Something better. He gives you Himself.

Jesus, born for you, is God’s gift to you this Christmas. He is the One sent from heaven to take be the antidote to the sin that ails you. There are not multiple vaccines to defeat sin, Satan, and death, there is only One. Jesus. John writes in his epistle: In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. God’s Son was born on Christmas morning to live for you. He knows your suffering, for He

suffered for you. He knows your fears, for He lived among us for a time, experiencing all of the things we go through, yet without sin. He can sympathize with you in your every problem, help you in your every weakness. He was tempted as you are tempted yet without sin. And then, at the right time in history, Jesus died and rose for you. “Christ Jesus, **6** who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, **7** but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. **8** And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross.”

God loves you in Jesus Christ and has sent His Son to be born for you, to live for you, to die for you, and to rise again for you to defeat sin, Satan, and death, for you. This is given to you by grace, a free gift of love on God’s part, this is not of your own doing. For you have been saved by grace through faith in Christ, not of works.

So how do you receive this great Gift of God? By faith. God gives to you the faith He requires. He gives you faith, forgiveness of all of your sins, deliverance from sin, death and the devil in the waters of your Baptism. “The goodness and loving kindness of God has appeared in Jesus, our Savior. He saved us, not on account of anything we have done, but He saved us according to His mercy by the washing and renewal of the Holy Spirit whom He poured

out upon us richly (in Baptism) through Jesus Christ so that you have the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:4-7).

Jesus comes to you in Baptism. He speaks to you in His Word. He offers to you today medicine of forgiveness, faith, life and salvation in Jesus. Jesus comes to you and for you, He is born for you, because He loves you. He gives you what you need.

Even though Martin Luther lived over 500 years ago, he experienced similar trials that you and I go through today. The Pandemic Luther lived through was the Bubonic Plague. This was a devastating plague that affected all of Europe. It came in waves, killing millions, with no vaccine or hope on the horizon. People would have paid whatever they could to spare themselves and their loved ones from the devastation.

Luther not only witnessed this devastation and ministered to the suffering, he also understood that in a greater way Jesus came to earth to give hope and healing to sinners. Listen to the words of Luther when he writes: “Think about it. Imagine there was a doctor somewhere who understood the art of saving people from death, or, even though they died, could restore them quickly to life so that they would live forever. Oh how the world would pour in money like snow and rain. No one could find access to him because of the throng of the rich! But God in Baptism freely brings to everyone’s door such a

treasure and medicine that it utterly destroys death and preserves all people alive." (LC IV 43).

This is the treasure God gives you in Baptism, for in Baptism God delivers you from sin, Satan, and death, He gives you faith in Jesus, and whoever believes and is baptized shall be saved. What a blessing your Baptism is! What a treasure! For God has made you His child and saves you in Baptism!

Yes vaccines are on the way for Covid 19. But a Greater Vaccine against sin, Satan and death has been given for you. There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven by which you can be saved (Acts 4: 12). For to you is born in the city of David a Savior, He is Christ the Lord.

Amen