

God Sent His Only-Begotten Son Into The World.

Text: 1 John 4:9

Suggested Hymns:

33, 34a, 632, 633, 634

- 1) It was Absolutely Necessary
- 2) Foretold Long Ago
- 3) An Established Fact
- 4) An Incomprehensible Mystery
- 5) A Display of God's Love
- 6) We Live by Christ

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with you all. Amen.

The text for our sermon today is 1 John 4:9, *'In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.* (NKJV)

Lord God, heavenly Father, sanctify us through Your truth. Your Word is truth. Amen.

Dear friends in Christ,

Suppose there was no Christmas, no December 25 marked in red on the calendar. No Christmas joy of children. No lighted Christmas trees. No spirit of sharing and giving among men.

Suppose there were no good will among men — only ill will, hatred, and revenge, casting suspicions on others, making friends into enemies.

Suppose there were only selfish lusts dominant in the world, flaunting to the winds all purity and morality.

Suppose there were no Christmas carols to sing, no *"Silent Night! Holy Night!"* no *"Joy to the World, the Lord is Come,"* no *"O Little Town of Bethlehem."*

Suppose there was no uplifting Christmas story to tell. No children to listen intently to the angel's Christmas message, no faith in the Christ Child, no forgiveness earned by Christ and received by us.

Suppose no Christian churches dotted our land; no church spires to show that men believed in a gracious God; no Christian day schools, high schools, colleges.

Suppose the sick and the dying could find no comfort because no comfort was available. Restless and aimless they would cross the great divide, knowing not the ‘from where’ and the why and the ‘to where’ of life.

Such a condition would be depressive, with men endlessly going into an eternal night which knows no sunrise. Such would be the conditions prevalent were there no Christian Christmas.

But thank God in all eternity, we have Christmas. We hear the angel declaring: *“Unto you is born this day, in the city of David, a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”*

Our text mentions this great event of the Saviour’s birth with these winnings words: *God Sent His Only-begotten Son into the World.* May the Lord bless our meditation.

1. God Sent His Only-begotten Son into the World

It was Absolutely Necessary

The sending of Christ into this world by God the Father was absolutely necessary. Sin had come into this world. Certain scientists tell us that sin is an “upward stumble” in man’s progress. Some philosophers teach that sin is goodness in the making and that modern “prodigal sons” are only expressing themselves into a higher experience. Some psychologists say that sin is only egotistic abnormality.

Even some theologians and pastors lessen man’s sense of the enormity of sin. But sin needs to be evaluated as God evaluates it in Scripture. Through sin man has lost his blessed connection with God. Now a great chasm and gulf exists between God and man, a great wall between the Creator and the created.

Yes, sin is madness in the brain, blindness in the eyes, deafness in the ears. Sin is the curse of all curses. It spells eternal ruin for man because *“the wages of sin is death.”*

Sad to say, man cannot help himself or improve his sinful condition. He cannot by his own power right himself with God. The more he seeks to free himself from the chains of sin, the tighter they are drawn around him. He is hopelessly lost. The cancer of sin is always fatal.

But God had compassion upon poor, blind, sinful man. He sent His only-begotten Son into the world. Jesus adopted our human nature for the purpose of helping us.

It is so clear, as we read in Matthew 1:21, *you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.* Only Jesus, our precious Saviour, can rescue us from our sins. Scripture says in Acts 4:12, ¹² *“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.”* And in 1 Timothy 1:15, ¹⁵ *This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners.*

2. Foretold Long Ago

God sent His only-begotten Son into the world. This was foretold long ago. The appreciative understanding of these precious prophecies is basic when discussing the birth of Christ. They pinpoint the Babe of Bethlehem as the Messiah, and none other.

Today we would express great admiration for any doctor who could tell us exactly when and where a cure will be found for cancer. We would consider it almost superhuman knowledge if any politician or military leader could tell even a year or two in advance when and where the next world war will begin; but far greater in scope and importance are the remarkable prophecies concerning the Messiah’s coming.

They came from different people under different conditions at different times of history. Let us refresh our memories by quoting just a few of these astounding prophecies of the coming Christ.

To Abraham God said, *“In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.”*¹ In Jesus, a descendant of Abraham, men shall receive inestimable benefits for their souls. *“A Star shall come out of Jacob; A Sceptre shall rise out of Israel”*² — the Ruler of the nations is coming, and He is not weak, but all-powerful.

Each prophet casts more light upon this only-begotten Son of God who is coming. Isaiah informs the people of his day, 750 years before Christ’s birth, of the unique fact that Christ will be born of a virgin.

Ezekiel pictures the coming Messiah as a shepherd, a title which Christ often gave Himself. He laid down His life for His sheep.

Malachi speaks of the Messiah as *“the Sun of Righteousness with healing in His wings,”*³ and Christ states the fulfilment: *“I am the Light of the world.”* Micah adds the information that the Messiah will be born in Bethlehem.

We are more fortunate than God’s people in Old Testament times. Theirs was a telescopic view of the Christ Child in Bethlehem. They saw Christ from afar with the aid of these many prophecies. They yearned to see the Saviour with their own eyes, but this privilege was denied them.

We no longer need to look forward to the birth of Christ, for we can look back with a microscopic view. We can be strengthened in faith by every detail of the birth of Christ, the manger, the shepherds, and the Wise Men. With gladdened hearts we say with Simeon, *“my eyes have seen Your salvation³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples,³² A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel.”*⁴

3. An Established Fact

God sent His only-begotten Son. That is an established fact. Go to Bethlehem. There lying in a manger you see Mary’s Son, but also God’s Son. You see great poverty at the birth of that Child. No room was found for Him at the inn; consequently He was housed in a stable. There He was wrapped in swaddling clothes.

Despite all the poverty accompanying the birth of the only-begotten Son of the Father, there is about it an unparalleled grandeur. Shepherds adore Him, Wise Men worship Him, angels glorify His name. In Bethlehem you see Him whom St. John in our text calls God’s *“only-begotten Son.”*

Men hold different opinions of Christ. Some value Him very lightly, but they cannot deny that He was born in Bethlehem. History records that Caesar Augustus made a decree that the entire Roman world should be registered, and this census brought Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem, David’s city, because they were of the family tree of David.

And there Mary brought forth her first-born Son. The fact of Christ's birth was proclaimed by the angels, recognised by the shepherds, admitted even by an atrocious Herod, confessed by Anna, Simeon, and a host of others.

Every time we look at a calendar we are reminded that it is now so and so many years after the birth of Christ, that Christ actually was born, as long foretold by the prophets, of the Virgin Mary in Bethlehem of Judea.

4. An Incomprehensible Mystery

God sent forth His Son — that is an incomprehensible mystery. Human reason cannot explain how the fullness of the Godhead can dwell in a helpless infant. Even the angels in heaven cannot understand this mystery. They desire to look into this mystery and cannot. To the end of time St. Paul's words will be true, as written in 1 Timothy 3:16, ¹⁶ *And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifested in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Preached among the Gentiles, Believed on in the world, Received up in glory.*

That Bethlehem Child is no ordinary child. He is Immanuel, God with us. That first Christmas brought God into the world. This Infant is the true God and eternal Life. The body of that Child is God's body; His eyes are God's eyes; His hands God's hands; His feet God's feet; His lips divine lips — all His members are divine.

Little wonder that limited human reason is forever baffled at this unique birth. Man's mind cannot unravel this mystery. Go to Bethlehem's manger; stop, look, hear, and wonder. You are standing before an incomprehensible mystery, the greatest miracle of time.

Here is the Almighty, as a weak and helpless infant. Here is Jesus whom heaven and earth cannot contain in a small fragile body. Here is the Lord of Glory, the King of kings, in the most abject poverty, lodged in a manger.

Here is Jesus upon whom all eyes must wait, dependent upon a lowly earthly mother for food and raiment. We may try to explain this birth, but it remains a dazzling mystery; it is above us. His name shall be called **“Wonderful.”**

But what we cannot explain, we can believe with the help of the Holy Spirit. We rejoice in faith over the birth of this Child, the only-begotten Son of the Father.

5. A Display of God's Love

God sent His only-begotten Son. This is a clear display of divine love. In this world of ours we meet much envy, jealousy, and downright hatred. This condition prevails among individuals, among different groups in a society, among different nations. What is the meaning of those ugly words spoken of others, those murders of spouses, those blood-stained wars, and those mass killings among the nations? It means that ugly monster hatred is constantly rearing its head.

But among all the lovelessness in this world, this envy and hatred, comes one pure love. Who possesses this love? He who sent us His Son. Our text says, *'In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him.*

Scripture constantly emphasises that Christ's coming is the complete display of God's love (John 3:16). What a love! God gave to mankind the best He had, His own dear Son, to be the Propitiation for our sins. He gave Him at Christmas to live a life of sinlessness. God's love brought Him to an innocent death on Calvary's cross. God's love caused Him to rise again from the dead.

Love, divine love — there is nothing more winning in this world. Love, Christmas love, wins you too. Love of our God to us must motivate us to sing, praise, and exult. No wonder that we Christians make so much of Christmas. No wonder that Christmas continues to be a joyful festival from year to year.

Sometimes Christmas is celebrated under the most unusual circumstances. During World War I on the Western front at midnight a powerful tenor voice sang *"Stille Nacht! Heilige Nacht!"* ("Silent Night, Holy Night!") The soldier sang it for the second time, and thousands of faces were turned toward the singer. When the carol ended, you could hear men weeping. The love of God had become radiant amid such a loveless situation. Certainly this love of God engenders in us a reciprocal love so that we in turn love Him and His kingdom more and more.

6. We Live by Christ

God sent His only-begotten Son. This, above all, makes us live. We Christians live by faith in the Christ Child. None of us has ever seen our divine Saviour, and yet we know positively that His birth took place, and we put our entire trust in Him. Everywhere today, in the North and in the South, sinners are kneeling in faith before the newborn Son, saying, "*Oh, come, let us adore Him, Oh, come, let us adore Him, Oh, Come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.*"

The Christ Child helps us to live in another way. He gives us motivation and strength to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world. God's Son holds us back from the paths of sin.

He curbs us from sinning so that we become less selfish, so that we begin to live on the Bible standard and serve our fellow men more. Faith in the Christ Child prompts us to do good works, to help some poor or sick person this Christmastide, to make our entire lives more a service to God and a blessing to mankind.

However, when our text says, "*.. that we might live through Him,*" it refers above all to eternal life. It seems almost too exorbitant a claim to state that the Christ Child can give us eternal life. Yet this is an indisputable fact, repeatedly stated in the Bible.

There was a lady who had been blind for many years, had reared a family she had never seen. By a delicate operation her eyesight was restored. She could hardly find words to express her astonishment at the beauty of so many things about her. But all earthly beauty, trees and flowers, birds and skies, lakes and mountains, are as nothing compared with the perfect eternal life which will be ours through the only-begotten Son of the Father.

No wonder we Christians are happy and grateful today. From the bottom of our hearts come the words, *Oh, thanks be to God the Father, for His loving and unspeakable Gift of His dear Son, Jesus Christ, to whom be glory and honour now and forever.* Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, will keep our hearts and minds, in Christ Jesus. Amen.

¹ Genesis 22:18

² Numbers 24:17

³ Malachi 4:2

⁴ Luke 2:30