

Titus 3:3-7 ESV

We Need Christmas!

Thursday, **December 24** at 6:00 PM

The Nativity of Our Lord

Join Us on 12/25 at 10; 12/27 at 10; 12/31 at 7 PM

Our Regular Schedule Resumes on Sunday, 1/3 and Monday, 1/4

Introduction: Dear friends in Jesus Christ: Tonight I want to show you two **beautiful pictures** of why *we need Christmas*. As I do so, keep in mind that no one is in a neutral position. Since one side includes sin, death, and hell, **God** took super-radical action, *with Christmas being a key component*, to present us with His gifts of forgiveness, life, and heaven!

Picture Number 1: A shepherd rescuing a sheep:

- The sheep was able to get himself *into* this situation, but he is helpless to get himself *out*. So the sheep *needs the Christ of Christmas!*
- The Shepherd is Jesus; *He is God in human flesh* (the halo); tonight and tomorrow we celebrate His birth! In the picture He is taking action to save the sheep. *He is not helping the sheep*; instead, **He is doing everything necessary to save it!**



- Picture number 1 is about me, *and possibly about you*. Years ago I was spiritually lost and helpless; if God would have left me where I was, my future would include only sin, death, and hell. **BUT God the Father took action** – *by His Spirit through His Word* – to rescue me through Jesus. Now, *because of God’s work through the Christ of Christmas*, I have His gifts of forgiveness, life, and heaven!

Picture Number 2: Tonight’s epistle reading from [Titus 3:3-7](#):

- Why We Need Christmas:** ³ **For we ourselves were once foolish** [*senseless*], **disobedient, [being] led astray** [*deceived*], **slaves to various passions** [*lusts*] **and pleasures, passing our days in malice** [*evil*] **and envy, hated by others and hating one another.** // Those words describe me when I was the helpless sheep; *maybe they describe you too*. **Foolish** – *thinking my ways were better than God’s*; **disobedient** – *following my ways rather than God’s*; **deceived** – *being led away from God and yet not even realizing it*; **a slave to sin**; **doing evil rather than good**; **being envious of others**; and **having hatred in my heart**. Years ago I was blind to such things, *but now I can see them*. **How?** God made them known to me by His Spirit through His Word! In the past I celebrated Christmas because of **the gifts**; now I celebrate Christmas because of **JESUS**—He is God’s gift to us, *the gift which everyone needs!*
- The Holy Trinity Saved Us:** ⁴ **But when the goodness and loving kindness** [*literally, love for mankind*] **of God our Savior appeared,** ⁵ **he** [*the Father*] **saved us,** // In other words: God the Father sent His Son into the world—that is **Christmas**; *then the Father worked through His*

Son to remove our sins—that happened on **Good Friday (Easter)**! The Bible says that “**God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself**” (2Co 5:19 NAS).

- a. **Why He saved us:** **not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy,** // Our good works cannot make us perfect, *so they cannot save us*. Therefore, *God saved us because of who He is, not because of what we have done!*
- b. **How He saved us:** **by [literally, through] the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit,** ⁶ **whom [which] he** [that is, God the Father] **poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior,** //
 - i. **Since our former condition was so horrible, God’s work had to be so radical!** Therefore, on **Christmas** the God-Man was born, and on **Good Friday** Jesus, *who is God in human flesh*, died. But how do we benefit from His work? Since we were helpless, God had to take action to give us forgiveness, life, and heaven! So He took that action when we were baptized into the Christ – *the Christ of Christmas!*
 - ii. **Some people view baptism as minor and insignificant.** Baptism means *to wash with water*; the essentials of Christian baptism are *water* and *the Word of God*. Through those means God is saving from **sin, death, and hell** – *that is significant!* Let me try to give you a picture of God’s radical work. **I**

have some water; now I need a volunteer:

1. First, let us understand that any amount of water is enough.
2. Second, let us understand, *in a spiritual sense*, that God's work is *radical, saving, life-changing!*
3. **Our Blessed Reality:** ⁷ **so that being justified by his** *[that is, the Father's]* **grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.** // Whenever we try to justify ourselves, we will always remain in our sins. So, *knowing we are helpless, we, by God's grace, keep trusting in Jesus, the Christ of Christmas – the One to whom we were united in Holy Baptism and continue to trust in for eternal life!*

Conclusion: As we celebrate the **birth of Christ**, let us remember *our total helplessness* and rejoice *in God's radical saving work!* And all God's people said: **Amen!**

Disciple Training

(Matthew 28:18-20)

Important Teachings to Remember:

1. Since we are spiritually helpless, *God must do everything to save us!*
2. God the Father sent His Son to take away the sins of the world; then God the Father worked by the Holy Spirit through Baptism to unite us to Jesus!

Important Actions to Practice:

1. As we feed our bodies for physical health, *let us also feed our souls with God's Word for spiritual health!*
2. As we exercise for physical health, *let us also exercise by living according to God's Word for our spiritual health!*

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