Romans 1:3-4 This gospel is about His Son—who in the flesh was born a descendant of David, who in the spirit of holiness was declared to be God’s powerful Son by his resurrection from the dead—Jesus Christ, our Lord.

Not long ago on my social media pages I saw a post concerning Christmas. The post caught my eye because it had a picture of Jesus in the style of all the pictures that are hanging in our Fellowship hall. So I paused and read what it said. It got me to really thinking.

What did it say? It said, *“If you want to put ‘Christ’ back into Christmas….feed the hungry, comfort the afflicted, love the outcast, forgive the wrongdoer, inspire the hopeless.”* Now, when I first read that I immediately thought, “That’s not bad, there are a few problems here, but that’s not a bad thought.” But then I thought about it more and more and I realized in actuality just how horrid this post really was. Horrid because it really misdirects, it actually takes your focus off of Christ and what he is all about. Let me show you why I think that.

So did Jesus feed the hungry? Did Jesus authorize and direct his disciples to run a food pantry or a soup kitchen or do we have any record of the fact that Jesus and his disciples regularly contributed to the poor and needy? What we have are two recorded miracles of Jesus, the feeding of the 5,000 and the feeding of the 4,000 and in truth the end results of what he did were not good. Because of the bread that Jesus fed people they wanted to make him King by force and have him be their earthly ruler…not because he was God’s Son and their Savior, but rather because he feed them free bread! The end result of one of those miracles was that many of the disciples of Jesus stopped following him because of his teaching on eating the bread of life which followed the feeding. In truth, it is the Law of God that provides for the feeding of the hungry and poor and that Law of God was really a kind of “work-fare” thing. Fact is, Jesus did not mandate and authorize the feeding of the hungry.

Did Jesus comfort the afflicted? Well, we can say here that He did! Mostly he comforted them by curing their illnesses, raising the dead and eliminating their afflictions. That’s what he did with the physically afflicted. When it came to the spiritually afflicted he directed them to faith in him, to what he taught, and to the kingdom of faith he was going to establish. Hang onto that thought for a moment because you want to ask what Jesus’ comfort and miracles got him from the world?

Did Jesus love the outcast? What is meant by those words? By outcast do you mean those who were rejected by Jewish society as outcasts, those that Jewish society rejected because the Jews were filled with haughty pride and thought they were better than those “sinners!” Then yes, Jesus loved the outcast. He lead the outcast to repent of their sins and to follow Him, to trust in the Word and to give up those things that God declared would close the gates of heaven to them. He loved them and by sharing the truth of God with them changed their lives. Because in truth, when it comes to God’s Word we are all outcasts, cast away from God because we refuse to hear and believe what God says and why. We are all miserable sinners who need to repent and turn to God for his grace and love.

Now if by outcast, you mean ‘people who have decided to reject, spurn and deny the authority of God to establish morality and truth’ then please remember that Jesus in love told them they needed to repent and if they did not repent then they would perish. Same message as John the Baptist. Think of Jesus calling the Jewish religious leaders “whitewashed tombs, children of the Devil and sons of hell.” Make sure of what you mean before you determine Jesus did this or that.

Did Jesus forgive the wrongdoer? Yep, but always with the call to repent and always the direction: “Go and sin no more!” He directed them to stop their sinful lifestyle and to live the way God declared was proper and right. Remember that thief on the cross that repented at the last moment…Yea, he was saved because he did repent and did put his hope and faith in Jesus. But don’t forget there was another thief hanging there who did not repent and who did not put his hope and faith in Jesus. No record that he was saved.

Did Jesus inspire the hopeless? Yes, he did that by what he taught, by his promise of eternal life and salvation to those who believed in his name. He promised the wonders of heaven and the joy of eternal life based on what He would do and accomplish! Remember it is Jesus who gave us the words of John 3:16: **“For God so loved the world that he gave his only-begotten Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life.”** And just so we are straight here, here is what John 3:18 says, **“The one who believes in him is not condemned, but the one who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only-begotten Son of God.”** Your hopelessness is dealt with because of the hope found and given in the redemptive work of Jesus, no other way.

Now, how did all of this work out for Jesus? We can say that Jesus did a lot of these things…and what did it get Jesus? Yep, they took him and put him on the cross. He ran around in this world, yea, this baby whose birth we celebrate, God’s very own Son, after three years of miracle after miracle and healing just about everybody in the entire land of the Jews, the thanks that Jesus got was that the people and the leaders shouted “Crucify Him” and so it was that Jesus died a miserable and horrid death for all the good he did! Nope, if you look at the world and how it behaves, doing all of those things is not going to put “Christ” into their lives. I am going to guess that the majority of the world still desires to have Jesus dead and out of their lives. Actually, I don’t have to guess, it is a fact that the majority of the world hates Jesus and everything his faith stands for, including hating you and me. Now do you see why I thought it was really a horrid post? It is not what Jesus was about.

And I thank God that Jesus was not about those paltry and work-righteous ideas. Do you know what Jesus was about? I think our text tells us. Our theme for today will be: **“This Gospel is about His Son!”**

What uplifting and wonderful words to hear on this day. It is a message concerning the whole point and meaning of Jesus, something the world likes to ignore and skew whenever they can. It tells us that the “gospel”, the good news of God is about Jesus, about the Son of God who came into this world. For that matter, if you paid attention you saw that Paul even reminds us in the first two verses that the entire Holy Scriptures were about Jesus, about the promises of God’s Son and what He would do. Yep, the entire Scripture is the history of God’s salvation and deliverance from sin.

Note that we are not left to determine for ourselves who this Son is. We are told this Son is the one—**“who in the flesh was born a descendant of David.”** If you noticed how our readings were put together for this day of worship you have to recognize the wisdom of those who did this work. First we heard Isaiah’s prophecy of the Christ. It would be a child born of a virgin. That would be one of God’s signs to identify his son. Other prophecies of Isaiah, Samuel, Jeremiah, etc. help us to establish other things that would identify the Messiah. Born in Bethlehem, born a descendant of David, born to be a king, born to establish a forever kingdom, born to suffer and pay for sin…the list is really quite extensive. By the way, for those who say that the Bible is not true or that there is no proof of God, could you tell me how Jesus managed at his birth to fulfill all those prophecies connected to his birth? How did Jesus get his Mom and Dad, who lived in Nazareth, to have his birth in Bethlehem? Or to have the Magi come or to flee to Egypt or to have those kids in Bethlehem killed? You see all of those things testify to the truth and wonder of God’s Word and the reality and fact of God working to save us.

Our Gospel reading is about that birth. Mary, found with child by the Holy Spirit. Joe was going to divorce her because he knew it was not his kid and then the angel came and told him that Mary had told him the truth, **“the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.”** Our gospel emphasizes that all of this took place in order to fulfill God’s promises of the virgin birth. Note, this child is “God with us.”

So it is clear the gospel is about Jesus, the Son of God, born just as the Scripture declares and born to fulfill the very role that God had promised and planned for the salvation of mankind. Our text in one simple statement highlights that truth. It says, **“Who in the spirit of holiness was declared to be God’s powerful Son by his resurrection from the dead.”**

Those words are truly packed with meaning. When it speaks of “the spirit of holiness” there are two schools of thought and I believe both pretty valid. The first is that this is just another way of speaking of the Holy Spirit of God, that the Holy Spirit was active and instrumental in helping Jesus to the perfect and holy son of God that he might be the perfect and holy sacrifice for sin. The other way of thinking of this phrase is to understand it to be speaking of the fact that Jesus in his spirit was perfectly holy and that this is what qualified him to be the atoning sacrifice for sins and the payment for the debt of mankind. Both end up speaking of the same thing. It is a phrase inviting us to think of the whole point of Jesus and recognize that this point of Jesus ends with his resurrection from the dead. That means you need to contemplate the passion and death of Jesus too.

There is a truth. This baby laying in the manger is the Son of God, the perfect and holy Son of God. He left his majesty and his authority of heaven to enter our world and become our Savior. To be our Savior he had to live a perfect life in thought, word and deed, facing every temptation common to man and doing so without ever sinning in any way. Once Jesus spent basically 30 years showing he was holy and perfect, Jesus then began a ministry that demonstrated to all the He was exactly what he claimed: God’s Son who came to revel the truth and fulfill the promises of God for salvation.

That is why Jesus went to the cross. To be the atoning sacrifice for our sins. To pay for all of our wrongs and let us know that just because of his love for us, we could and would be inheritors of eternal life and salvation. It is ours by faith. Because we believe absolutely that Jesus is Lord and Christ, or as our text declares, **“God’s powerful Son.”** Jesus is someone to be listened to.

And then we are told exactly how we know this to be true: **“by his resurrection from the dead.”** Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God because of and only because of the resurrection from the dead. God told us it would all hinge on that. If Jesus dies and stays dead, who cares when he was born or what he did? Who cares what he taught or supposedly did because without the resurrection none of it matters! People, if you belong to a church that denies the actual and physical resurrection of Jesus, please, get a new church that is going to teach the truth. This is not some sort of “spiritual” memory, not some sort of mass illusion, and not some sort of human trickery. It is about the fact that God’s Son died and rose from the dead, physically rose to be our God, Lord, and Savior.

I pray that this is what Jesus is to you. I pray that you grasp Jesus and what he taught, that Jesus and what he was all about is not ignored or taken lightly by you. He is the Lord. He is God. He is the say in all things in every way. He and his Father, because of this resurrection, then gave us the clear and precise record of his life and teachings. It is called the New Testament. The Holy Spirit perfectly inspired the Apostle and Evangelists to give us a true and perfect record of Jesus. That’s what Jesus says the Holy Spirit would do. Jesus said in John about the Holy Spirit: **“He will teach you all things and remind you of everything I told you…He will testify about me!”** We know the truth of Jesus because of God‘s Holy Word, the Bible. It is about Jesus. It is about what He has done for us through his suffering, death and resurrection. It is about salvation from sin and eternal life. That is what the Gospel is about!

So, if you want to help the poor, feed the hungry, comfort afflictions, love outcasts, forgive the wrongdoer, and inspire the hopeless, fine, do that, but do it because Jesus has risen from death and gives the hope of heaven. Do that all the while preaching and teaching the truth of Jesus. But seriously, first teach Jesus. Teach salvation from sin. Let the Gospel shine in your life because you have Christ in your Christmas. You have Christ because you grasp he is God’s powerful Son come to bring eternal life to all who believe. Amen.