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Winter 2024
A Name Like No Other

Sermon Title: From Death to Life

To be used with Session 4: The Salvation Expressed in God's Name

Scripture: Ephesians 2:1-10

Connection with the Study: To complement the Bible Study "The Salvation Expressed in God's Name" this sermon will reveal the truth that all people are spiritually dead prior to receiving Jesus Christ. It will help the saved realize their former state and help the lost consider the truth of the gift of salvation.

The Christmas celebration brings all sorts of false hope. In our Western world, nostalgia, family, and universalism are mistaken for vehicles for eternal life. People may not recognize this, but many times the name of Jesus completely missing from homes and families during what is designated as the celebration of His birth. He is God and He brought eternal life to us. God alone can bring eternally dead people to eternal life. Only by grace through faith in Jesus can a person be saved. This sermon will reveal that truth.

Introduction: Merry Christmas Eve! Today is a day to celebrate the coming of the long-awaited Messiah, the Savior, Jesus Christ. In our celebrations at home tomorrow we will enjoy family time, exchange gifts, and make gluttons of ourselves from the abundance of food and the blessing of having enough prosperity to do so. Christmas is a joyful time.

Have you ever considered people who celebrate Christmas, yet do not know Jesus Christ? How futile does it seem that the celebration is not really a celebration of God's gift of eternal life through His only Son? How can the celebration of life occur in the hearts of those who do not possess it? Today we will explore the reality that we were once in that position. Before we knew Jesus, we were quite literally dead.

We were dead in sin and rebellion (Eph. 2:1-3)

All believers were once dead in their sins. All believers once walked in rebellion, living as enemies of God. What does that look like? We followed our hearts' selfish desires and living in the same manner as those who do not know Christ because we did not know Him! We were children under wrath, disobedient and sinful.

This passage was written to believers. There is no one exempt from having lived this sinful life. Selfishness is a hallmark of mankind. Since Adam's fall, we have been extremely adept at looking out for our own interests first and foremost. Ironically, our welfare is not our first concern, as seen in verse 3. Our evil desires tend to come first. This is the state of each person before coming to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. This is one amazing point of the gospel. None of us deserve to be saved. All of us deserve damnation and separation from God. We were all dead in sin and rebellion.

God raised us from death to life (Eph. 2:4-8)

God lacks no amount of mercy and love. Somehow, completely beyond our comprehension, He loves those who live in opposition to Him. Only He can love like this. Only He can provide salvation. Only He can raise the dead. He made us alive! He did this through Jesus. He made us alive with Jesus – spiritually alive and pure like Jesus, despite our crimes against Him.

Not only did God save us from sin, death, and hell, He allows us to have a place with Him in Heaven for all eternity. Imagine allowing an enemy of yours to have a room in your home. Imagine giving comfort, love, and forgiveness to that person. Imagine making him an heir to all you have. Only God can and has done that.

How did this happen? He did it by grace. Mercy is not receiving a deserved punishment. God gave us mercy. Grace is receiving a gift that is undeserved. God graciously gave us eternal life. None of us deserve it. None of us could obtain it on our own. There is no way we could have purchased it because we were morally bankrupt and dead in our sin.

God raised us to live for him (Eph. 2:10)

Too many Christians fail to realize their purpose. God made us alive through Jesus Christ, not to vegetate and stagnate. Vegetation is not able to be mobile and influential. Stagnant water, water which is not flowing, produces nothing useful. We are God's handcrafted works of art, but we are living, mobile, and influential. Like flowing streams, we are life-giving. God has gifted each of us in particular ways to spread the gospel, teach, help, and love others. The Great Commission is a charge to make disciples. God created us to do good works, which He prepared our hearts and souls to perform.

There is no other name by which salvation is available except the name of Jesus. Our job is to present ourselves before others as legitimate ambassadors of that truth and to utilize our spiritual gifts, our talents, our skills, and our lives to do good works among others and to spread the truth of salvation. We should "walk" (living a lifestyle) in good works, spreading the good news of Jesus Christ.

Conclusion: Perhaps this does not sound like a typical Christmas Eve sermon but remember the babe in the manger is the sacrificial lamb for the sins of all who would believe in Him. Salvation, by God's grace, is available only through faith in Jesus Christ. He was slain to pay the death penalty for those who were already spiritually dead in order to give them life. For those who believe, there is eternal life. For those who do not believe, there is eternal death – eternal separation from God with no hope for redemption.

Are you sure you have eternal life? Perhaps you are unsure. Perhaps you know you are spiritually dead. God's greatest miracle is found in Jesus Christ. He has given salvation to those who were undeserving. This gift, the babe in the manger who gives eternal life, is why we celebrate Christmas. I pray your celebration will be legitimate.

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