

The 12 Reasons for Christmas Why Jesus Came To Save (12/24/2023)

Introduction & Review

- Today is the fourth and final Sunday of Advent.
- A time when we celebrate the Coming of Christ.
- And if you've been with us for the **past 3 week**,
- you know that the **messages** have focused on the **12 reasons why Jesus Came**.
- **12 reasons** why, as the apostle Paul put it in **Philippians 2:6-7**,

⁶ ...though [Jesus] 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. (Philippians 2:6-7)

- Why did **God the Son** empty himself by taking the form of a servant, **becoming a man**?
- That's the question we've been and looking at and will continue to look at today.
- Each week we had a main theme and then three reasons for Jesus coming related to that theme.
- Plus, with each **reason**, we've also had **an application for ourselves**.
- In **week one** we saw that **Jesus Came to Teach and Train**
- **And the three points were...**
 1. Jesus came to be our **EXAMPLE** and we are to **follow His Example**
 2. Jesus came to **PREACH** the gospel and we are **called to PREACH** the Gospel
 3. Jesus came to **MAKE DISCIPLES** and We are **called to MAKE DISCIPLES**
- In **week two** we saw that **Jesus Came to Obey**
- **And the three points were...**
 4. Jesus came to fulfill the **OLD COVENANT** and we are **under the NEW COVENANT**
 5. Jesus came to **Serve**, and we are **called to SERVE**.
 6. Jesus came to **do the FATHER'S WILL** and we are **called to do the Father's WILL**
- And then last week, we saw that **Jesus Came to Reveal**
 7. Jesus came to **reveal the Heart** and we are to **Examine Our hearts**.
 8. Jesus came to **reveal the Truth** and we are to **seek and live by the Truth**.
 9. And finally, Jesus came to **reveal the Father** and we are to represent the Son to a lost world.
- Now as I've said throughout Advent,
- All these reasons for Jesus' coming are part of the final and most important reason.
- And that's what we will **focus on this week...**

Jesus Came to Save

- **Salvation was and is the heart of His mission.**
- All the other **reasons for his coming** are not separate.
- Instead, they're necessary **parts of what Jesus accomplished to bring salvation.**
- Jesus Came to Teach **how to be saved** and Train **how to lead others to salvation.**
- Jesus Came to **Obey** that he might **fulfill** the Old Covenant, becoming the perfect lamb of God, the only one able to save.
- Jesus Came to **Reveal** our Need **for a savior** and the Father's provision of **salvation.**
- So now, on this final Sunday of Advent, we focus directly on the fact that. **Jesus Came to Save...**
- And as in weeks past we have three reasons for his coming and three responses to his coming.
- **First...** or 10th reason for his coming...

10. Jesus Came to Seek and Save the Lost

- In **Luke's Gospel, Chapter 19**, we read of Jesus' encounter **with Zacchaeus**,
- the chief tax collector. (The head of the IRS in Israel)
- Remember **Zacchaeus was a wee little man** who was determined to **see Jesus.**
- And when he did, he **expressed his faith in Christ** through repentance.
- **Jesus then** proclaimed that **salvation has come to Zacchaeus** household.
- And then in **verse 10** of **Luke 19**, he says...

¹⁰ For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost. (Luke 19:10)

- Jesus **succinctly** summarizes his reason for coming into our world.
- There are **three simple and yet profound words** for us to understand in this verse.
- The first **two words** (Seek and Save) tell us exactly **what** Jesus came to do.
- And the third word (Lost) tells us who He came to do it for.
- Let's look at each of these words in turn. **First Seek**
- **Jesus came to seek.**
- The word seek is not **casual looking**, like one might use in **bookstore.**
- It's not, ***I was browsing the bookstore for something to read.***
- The word seek refers to **deliberate search.**
- It involves **effort even striving** to find what you are looking for.
- This is the kind of **searching that implies** that the **seeker** values the object being **sought.**
- In **Luke 15 verse 8-9** Jesus **illustrates** this kind of seeking.

⁸ "Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek diligently until she finds it? ⁹ And when she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.'" (Luke 15:8-9)

- Clearly **her lost coin** was valuable to **this woman.**
- She made a great effort to find it.
- Lighting a lamp, sweeping the house, and seeking diligently.

- Not stopping till the coin was found.
- Rejoicing when it was found.
- That's the kind of **seeking Jesus** is talking about. One more personal illustration.
- Have you ever sought after something you truly valued?
- When my son Michael was little, he had the habit of **wandering off.**
- I remember once **Christian and I** were **shopping at the Wal-Mart,**
- We turned around and **Michael was gone.**
- Now this was not a new **experience** for us, so we sprang into immediate action.
- I hustled to the front of the store, just in case someone was trying to abduct our son.
- And Christina began to diligently search for him.
- Calling his name, looking up and down the aisles.
- Asking people if they had seen a little blonde boy wandering around.
- And she eventually found him, he was hiding in a clothes rack.
- Now I won't tell you what happened to Michael (that's for a different illustration)
- The point is...
- As parents our children are extremely valuable to us.
- We would do whatever it takes to find them if they were lost.
- We would seek with everything we have.
- In the same way **Jesus came to seek.**
- But not for the purpose of **finding alone.**
- Jesus came to seek for the purpose of **saving.**
- That's our second word.
- **Jesus came to Save.**
- Again, this is at the heart of **his mission.**
- This is **why** behind **Christmas.**
- Remember Simeon from last week, he prophesized that Jesus would reveal the hearts of many.
- Well before that, when he first laid his eyes upon **the baby Jesus.**
- **Simeon** didn't merely see a child, He says...

³⁰ for my eyes have seen your [God's] salvation ³¹ that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³² a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel." (Luke 2:30-32)

- Simeon saw that this baby was **the savior,**
- Jesus was the one who had come to **save** both **Jews and Gentiles.**
- **And in our next two points we will look at what Jesus came to save us from and to...**
- But the fact that Jesus came to save, means that people needed saving.
- And that brings us to our third word. **Lost**
- **People needed saving because they were lost.**
- **And Jesus came to seek and save the Lost**

- Now, what does it mean to be lost?
- **Being lost means you are not where you are supposed to be, and you don't know how to get there.**
- **I remember our first Christmas in Thailand.**
- We were studying the Thai language in Lopburi, a small city about **1.5 hours north of Bangkok.**
- And since I had an **international driver's license** several of the **missionaries** asked if I would drive a group into Bangkok for **Christmas Shopping.**
- And being an idiot, **I agreed.**
- Now this was **Pre GPS, no google maps,**
- So, I got **written directions** to one of the Malls in Bangkok and we had no trouble getting there.
- However, I didn't know that in Bangkok you needed directions both ways, coming and going.
- There were so many one-way streets you couldn't just go back the same way you came.
- So, **I got terribly lost.**
- And don't forget, I was **new to Thailand** and couldn't read the street signs.
- It was terrible, we drove around and around, not sure we were even going the right direction.
- But eventually after stopping a few times to ask (in my limited Thai) for directions,
- **I somehow got us back to Lopburi.**
- So that's an illustration of being Lost, I was not **where I was supposed to be**
- **and I didn't know how to get there.**
- I was **lost physically** but the **Bible teaches** that since the fall.
- Since Adam and Eve **disobeyed God in the Garden**
- **Man has been lost spiritually.**
- We all share a common bond of **spiritual lostness.**
- Either we are lost, or we were lost – **NO EXCEPTIONS.**
- And remember the definition of lost includes two things...
- **First** you are not where you are **supposed to be.**
- Man was created to be in **relationship with God.**
- We were created **in God's image.**
- We were **designed to love Him and be loved by Him.**
- Any man, woman, or child that's **not in relationship with God, is not where they're supposed to be.**
- This means they are **lost.**
- The **second thing** being lost means is that you don't know how to get where you are supposed to be.
- If we're supposed to be in **relationship with God.**
- Then we need to **find out how to get there.**
- When we are physically lost, we need two things: **INFORMATION and TRANSPORTATION.**
- Information like A good map, a **GPS** or someone to give us directions,
- Today we just use Google Maps.
- So, we need Information.
- And we also need **Transportation** a vehicle of some sort.

- The same thing is true when we are **lost spiritually**.
- We need **information and transportation**.
- God's **word provides** the information we need.
- Its purpose (among other things) is to provide us with a **road map to relationship with God**.
- But we also need **transportation**.
- We need a way to **get where we are supposed to be**.
- The Bible teaches that **Jesus Christ Himself** is our **transportation**.
- He is the only **way to relationship** with the Father.
- In **John Chapter 14** Jesus tells his disciples that he's going to leave them,
- He's going to prepare a place for them, but he will come again to take them to that place.
- He also says that they know the way to where he is going.
- But Thomas, in **verse 5 says**,

5 ... "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" (John 14:5)

- Thomas was honest, he didn't know where Jesus was going or the way to get there.
- And then Jesus makes it all clear, yes Thomas you do know the way because you know me...
- And

6 ... "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. (John 14:6)

- Jesus is the way, the truth and the life.
- He is the only way, the **TRUE transportation** to **eternal life** in the presence of the Father.
- **There is no other way.**
- Some might think that if you're lost, all you need is directions.
- Like I received in Bangkok.
- But **a better illustration of our spiritual lostness would be of someone** hiking in the snow.
- They lose their way, they can't find the path, it's cold and late and getting dark.
- Then to make matters worse they fall into a hole and break their leg.
- They're not where they were supposed to be, they don't know how to get there.
- And even if they did have a GPS, they have no transportation.
- They need someone to rescue them. They need a savior.
- That's how lost we were when Jesus came.
- Jesus came to seek and save what is lost.
- When we understand these three words.
- When we understand that we are lost, without the ability to rescue ourselves.
- And when we understand that Jesus came to seek and save us.
- That He is the only **search and rescue team** that God has provided.
- Then we have a **choice to make**.
- How will we **react to this information?**

Our Response: Pride or Humility

- In **James 4:6** we read...

⁶ ... “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” (James 4:6)

- Before Google Maps, when people (or should I say men) got lost they were often hesitant to get directions.
- **Why? Pride.**
- An unwillingness to admit their **lostness**.
- Scripture makes it clear that **Man is Spiritually LOST** beyond His ability to find His own way.
- AND unfortunately, **men and women** are all too often **unwilling to admit their lostness**.
- James says that **God opposes the proud**.
- God opposes those who say they can **do it on their own**.
- God opposes those who are not willing **to admit their sin**.
- God opposes those who are not willing to **SAY I AM HORRIBLY LOST**
- I cannot find my way; I have **no ability to reach GOD**.
- **I NEED A SAVIOR.**
- But God gives **grace to the humble**.
- Simply defined **Grace is receiving something positive that you do not deserve**.
- So why does God give grace (Something that is not deserved) to the **humble** and apparently withhold it from the proud.
- I don't think there is a **more logical statement** in all of Scripture.
- What does it mean to be **humble**?
- It means an ability to **view your circumstances** as they truly are.
- An ability to **admit your sin**.
- An ability to cry out **I AM LOST I NEED A SAVIOR**.
- God does not give **GRACE to the PROUD** because they would never ask for it **or receive it**.
- God gives **GRACE to the humble** because the humble know that they need it,
- and therefore, they ask for it.
- They know that without the **Grace of God they are doomed**.
- So **True Christianity teaches that Salvation** is only for the **humble**.
- **Every other religion in the world** except **Biblical Christianity** appeals to the **PRIDE OF MAN**.
- Religions give people **tasks** to accomplish, **rules** to follow, **rituals** to complete.
- If you can accomplish the **tasks**, follow the **rules**, and complete the **rituals** then you will find favor with **the God or the Gods....**
- And He, She or They will reward you by doing what you want them to do.
- If I can do this or that, then I deserve Heaven or Paradise or Nirvana.
- This is a direct appeal to **MAN's PRIDE**.

- But Biblical Christianity is different.
- I say **Biblical Christianity** because there are all kinds of **churches out there that treat Christianity as a set of tasks, rules, and rituals.**
- But the **Bible** has something very different to say.
- We find it throughout Scripture, but it's best summarized in the **Apostle Paul's** letter to the Ephesians.
- In **Chapter 2 verses 8-10** he writes...

For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God,⁹ not a result of works, so that no one may boast. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

- We are saved not by what we do or do not do.
- We are saved by **the GRACE** of God.
- We have **a part to play** that is called faith (we'll talk about that in a moment)
- But there is no reason for boasting, you must maintain an attitude of humility...
- Because even our faith **is a gift from God.**
- There is no place for pride for the one who was completely lost and did nothing to acquire his own salvation.
- So, our response to Jesus who came to seek and save us when we were lost must be **Humility.**
- A willingness to admit our **spiritual lostness.**
- This is **The First Step to Understanding and Accepting the Salvation Jesus Came to Bring.**
- But maybe **you like being lost**, maybe **you're okay with where we are.**
- I don't **feel lost**, I don't **feel like I need to be rescued, saved.**
- Well, maybe that's because you still **don't understand** what it means to be **spiritually lost.**
- Being **lost spiritually** not only means you are **not where you are supposed to be**,
- and you **don't know how to get there.**
- It also means, whether you realize it or not, **you are in a very wrong, bad place.**
- The Bible says that the **lost are slaves to your sin and destined for eternal death**,
- eternal separation from the God who created them.
- But there is great news because...

11. Jesus Came to Save Us From Sin and Death

- In **1 John 3:5** we read...

⁵ You know that he appeared in order to take away sins, and in him there is no sin. (1 John 3:5)

- John says Jesus **appeared... That's Christmas**
- That's what we **celebrate** every **December 25th.**
- And we should not only celebrate his coming but rejoice in his reason for coming.
- He came to save us from, to **take away our sins.**

- The Greek word for **sin** is *hamartia*.
- It originally meant to “**miss the mark**” to **fail to fall short**.
- To not measure up to **the standard**.
- In the **New Testament** it came to be the word used for ***any act that was contrary to the commands of God***.
- To miss God’s mark of **holy perfection**.
- Now I think one of the problems in the Church these days is we **avoid** talking about **SIN**.
- Or we redefined **Sin**.
- We don’t want people to feel uncomfortable, so we call it something **different, errors, mistakes, or bad judgment**.
- But the Bible is clear...

23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, (Romans 3:23)

- We have all fallen short of God’s glory, his holy standard.
- But the fact that all have sinned leads to another problem.
- We not only **avoid or redefine** sin, but we **normalize it**.
- **If Sin** is something **everyone does; it cannot be so bad**.
- **Yes**, I’m a sinner. But not so bad a sinner that I can’t go to heaven by being reasonably good.”
- I mean **God’s got to let someone it doesn’t He**.
- It reminds me of the story of **the two guys who encounter a bear in the forest**.
- One guy starts putting on **running shoes**.
- The other guy looks at him and says, " Why are you doing that? You'll never outrun that bear."
- And the other guy says, "
- I don't have to outrun that bear; I only have to outrun you."
- We somehow have gotten the idea that God is in the business of **comparing us with one another**.
- In college I had a class called **NUMBER THEORY**.
- It was by far the most difficult class I’ve ever taken.
- Every test I took I scored in **the 30s or 40s out of 100**.
- That is normally an F
- But I got a B- in the class.
- **HOW?**
- The Professor graded a curve.
- He had to, otherwise almost everyone would have FAILED.
- And when it comes to **God and sin**, we can think we’re in competition with the rest of HUMANITY.
- As long as I’m better than most people, God will have to let me in to heaven.
- I mean compared to him or her (or especially Hitler) I am awesome.

- But I beg you to get that way of thinking out of your HEAD!
- **GOD DOES NOT GRADE ON A CURVE...**
- That's not what THE BIBLE teaches.
- The apostle Paul makes it clear...
- **Romans 6:23**

²³ For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 6:23)

- **The wages**, what you and I earn, what we deserve, what we get when sin sin is **DEATH**.
- Death here refers not only to physical Death but eternal Death.
- Eternal separation from God.
- And yes, I'll say the other word (besides sin) that Christians often avoid **HELL**.
- Let's use them together: **Our sin earns us a one-way ticket to HELL.**
- So, if God does not grade on a curve?
- If our sin (any sin) results in DEATH – Eternal Separation from God – Hell – what hope do we have?
- It's clear we can have no hope in ourselves,
- for what we have seen so far is that we're **LOST SINNERS**.
- But there is hope, hope that arrived that Christmas morn so long ago.
- John says – ***Jesus appeared to take away our SINS.***
- Paul says – ***the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.***
- Jesus came to **save us from SIN and DEATH**.
- Jesus came to this earth.
- He lived a sinless life – As John said - ***in him is no sin.***
- And then he Died in our place (fulfilling the law).
- Our sin did result in Death – The Death of Jesus Christ on the Cross.
- He took our place, He took our sin upon himself, that we might have the opportunity for LIFE.
- As Paul wrote to the church in Corinth...

¹ For our sake [God] made [Christ] to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God (2 Corinthians 5:21)

- Jesus was made sin, he took on our sin, ***he was the lamb of God who took away the sins of the world.***
- So that we might become **the righteousness of God**.
- That we might be righteous, holy, sin free before God.
- That we might be saved from sin and death.
- So, what must our response be?

Our Response: Rebel or Repent

- You have a choice to make.
- One choice is to **rebel**.
- To rebel against the truth that Jesus and Jesus alone **can save you from SIN AND DEATH**.
- Rebellion can be both **passive and aggressive**.
- **Aggressive rebellion** takes the form of **UNBELIEF**.
- I don't believe Jesus is **who he claimed** to be and therefore I do not accept His offer of Salvation.
- I don't believe that Jesus is the **only way to God** and therefore I do not accept His offer of Salvation.
- **Aggressive rebellion does not acknowledge** the truth of our LOSTNESS, our SINFUL STATE or CHRIST's PROVISION of SALVATION.
- But you can also rebel **passively**.
- **Passive** rebellion **often** just **ignores the TRUTH**.
- It lives its life as it always has.
- **There's no change**.
- Passive rebellion does not apply the truth of our LOSTNESS, our SINFUL STATE or CHRIST's PROVISION of SALVATION.
- That's the rebellion that most **people choose**.
- And whether our rebellion is passive or aggressive it leads to the same place.
- **Separation from God for all eternity**.
- But there is another **option to Rebellion** and that is **REPENTANCE**.
- In Acts 3 the **Apostle Peter** is speaking to a crowd about salvation through Jesus Christ
- And in **verse 19** he says...

¹⁹ Repent therefore, and turn back, that your sins may be blotted out, (Acts 3:19)

- We often think of **repentance** as the outward **act of obedience**.
- Someone might say ***"I am going to repent of that terrible sin."***
- What they mean is that they're going to **try their best to stop committing that sin**.
- But **repentance** means more than an outward stoppage of sinful acts.
- The word repent means **to change your direction**, to **change your mind**,
- to change your purpose.
- It is an **internal word, a heart word**.
- **Repentance is an inward attitude that has outward results**.
- Some would say that we do not need to repent to be saved.
- All we need is faith.
- But as we saw last week...

²⁶ ...faith apart from works is dead. (James 2:26)

- Faith that is not accompanied by works of repentance, turning from our sin and turning to Christ is **NO FAITH AT ALL, IT IS DEAD**.

- Therefore, true faith will always be accompanied by **works of repentance**.
- Because **repentance (the inward attitude) is part of faith**.
- And it is the only the correct response to the TRUTH that JESUS SAVED US FROM OUR SIN.
- Jesus went to the cross to pay for the sins of the world, your sins and mine.
- It is because of Christ's sacrifice that Salvation is available.
- It is because of the **Grace of God that we are SAVED from our SIN**.
- Our response to that must be faith that includes **a change of direction**, mind, and purpose.
- Our response must be **repentance**.
- So, Jesus came to save us **FROM SIN and DEATH**.
- But Jesus not only came to save us **from something**.
- He came to save us **to something**.

12. Jesus Came to Save Us To Life and Love

- In **John 10:10** Jesus famously says...

¹⁰ ... I came that they may have life and have it abundantly (John 10:10)

- Jesus came that we might **experience the abundant life**.
- And in **1 John 4:9**, the Apostle writes...

⁹ In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. (1 John 4:9)

- Yes, Jesus saved us **From Sin and Death**.
- Yes, through Christ we can **escape eternal Death – HELL**.
- But He also saved us **to something**.
- We are saved to a loving relationship with God that will last throughout all eternity.
- That in fact is the definition of the **Abundant Life**
- To go back to our earlier **illustration of the man in the hole with the broken leg**.
- He was rescued from **the hole**.
- He was saved from **Death**.
- AND that was the end of the story.
- But suppose the rescuers had taken the man out of the hole and then brought him home caring for his wounds, nursing him back to health and making him part of the family.
- Entering a loving relationship with HIM.
- That is the Salvation that Jesus came to provide.
- He not only rescues us from our sinful holes.
- He takes us into His **Home**.
- We become part of **His Family**.
- The apostle Paul makes it **abundantly** clear in... **Ephesians 1:5**

⁵ [the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ] predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, (Ephesians 1:5)

- God, through Christ, is pleased to make us part of His family.
- God is pleased to enter a loving relationship with **each of us**.
- It is His will; it is what He desires.
- Why? Well, it's not because there is something great about us,
- It's only because of the love of God.
- As Jesus makes clear in the gospel of John.

16 "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. (John 3:16-17)

- God loved each of us enough to send his **one and only Son to EARTH**
- To humble himself.
- To be born in a manger (a feeding trough).
- To live a life of love, service and sacrifice.
- And ultimately to die a horrible yet sacrificial death on a cross.
- Rejected by the very men He came to save.
- Jesus did not come to condemn the world.
- Jesus came to Save.
- This is what God wanted.
- **The question is what do you want?**
- Each of us must **decide** what we will do with **God's offer of Salvation**.
- Each of us must **decide** what we will do with **JESUS CHRIST!**

Our Response: Reject or Recieve

- Speaking of Jesus, the Apostle John wrote...

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him.

11 He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. 12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, (John 1:10-12)

- There are only two options.
- Either we will reject or receive Jesus Christ.
- **Rejection** is fairly easy to explain.
- John says he came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.
- In the context John is speaking of the Jewish people.
- Jesus came to them.
- He came as one of them.
- He came as their Messiah.
- But as a people, they did not receive Him.
- They rejected Him.
- They were okay with Him for a while.
- When he was feeding thousands and doing miracles.

- But when He made claims on their lives.
- When He asked for **Humility**,
- When He called for **Repentance**.
- When He made it clear His Kingdom was not an earthly Kingdom but a Kingdom of the Heart.
- They did not receive Him. **They rejected Him.**
- **But some did not reject Him.** They received Him.
- What does it mean to **receive Jesus Christ**?
- It means to **believe in His name**. What is his **name**?
- His name is Jesus which is the **Greek translation of the Hebrew JOSHUA** or Yehoshua
- **Yehoshua** means **THE LORD SAVES**.
- To believe Him means to believe that He and He alone is Your Savior.
- The word **believe** here is more than an intellectual understanding.
- The word believe here means to entrust, to put your trust in, to have faith in.
- One of my **favorite illustrations** of what it means to **Truly Believe** goes like this.
- Have you ever heard about the guy who walked a tight rope across Niagara Falls?
- Many people watched him do it.
- To them he asked, "**Do you believe I can walk a tight rope across the Falls?**"
- They all replied, "**Yes.**" They had already seen him do it.
- Then he pushed a **wheelbarrow** on a tight rope across Niagara Falls.
- When he completed the feat, he asked the onlookers,
- "**Do you believe I can walk a tight rope across the Falls pushing a wheelbarrow?**"
- To that they replied unanimously, "**Yes.**" Because they saw him do that too.
- Finally, a friend of the tight rope walker climbs into the wheelbarrow and the tight rope walker pushes him across the Falls.
- Wow, what a daring feat!
- When they finished, the tight rope walker asked the crowd, "**Do you believe I can walk a tight rope across the Falls pushing a wheel barrow with a person in it?**"
- To that they exclaimed, "**Yes!**" For they were now believers in this guy's awesome abilities.
- Then he looked at the crowd and asked, "**Who's next?**"
- True belief, True Faith **Gets in the Wheelbarrow**.
- We say we believe but we're not willing to get the **Wheelbarrow**.
- We may believe in our head that **Jesus is the Savior**.
- But we are not willing to in **humility with repentance** entrust our lives to Him.
- **And That's the only kind of belief He's accepts.**
- A belief that says, I trust you with every aspect of my life.
- I give myself completely to you.
- I trust you not only to save me from sin and death.
- But I trust you to love me and guide me to a full life.

- That is the choice before us this Christmas Sunday.
- To **Reject or to Receive.**
- And Receiving takes **faith**
- Faith which includes **Humility** – a willingness to admit that you are lost.
- A willingness to admit you have no ability to come to God on your own.
- Faith that includes **Repentance** – A change of mind and purpose.
- A willingness to say and believe that your way got you nowhere.
- A willingness to commit to no longer follow your way but to change directions and follow God's way.
- Believing that Jesus is Who He claimed to be.
- Trusting that Christ's death on the Cross saved you from Sin and Death.
- Having faith that through Christ God adopts you into His Family.
- He loves you and gives you Eternal LIFE.
- So, if you'd like to **in humility, with repentance, receive Jesus Christ** as your Lord and Savior.
- If you'd like to receive the salvation that He offers.
- You can do that today...
- There are no **magic words** you need to say, **there isn't even a specific prayer you must recite.**
- There is **no special place you need go, or posture you need to assume.**
- All you need do, right where you are sitting, is humbly believe in the name of Jesus Christ,
- To trust in Him as the Lord of your Life and the Savior of your Soul.
- **So, I'm going to close in prayer.**
- But before I do, I'm going to take a moment of silence for anyone who'd like to receive Christ as their Lord and Savior.
- All you need do is silently, in your own words, tell God that you are putting your trust in Jesus Christ to save you from sin and death and save you to love and life.
- So, if we could all bow our heads and close our eyes for a moment of silence before the Lord.

PRAYER

- Father God thank you for **This Special Day.**
- Thank you that we can celebrate the **love that you showed us.**
- Thank you that you **loved us so much you sent Jesus to be one of us.**
- To live a sinless life.
- To die in our place.
- To save us from sin and death, to give us eternal life.
- I pray for any who've made the commitment to trust in you.
- Lord, I pray that you would give them strength and power to full repent.
- To turn from their sin and turn to your loving arms.
- And I pray that you will lead us all in lives of faith, humility, and repentance.
- In Jesus name we pray.
- **Amen!**

- Two final things,
- First, if today you received Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior.
- Then don't leave this place without telling someone who can help you begin your new life in Christ.

- You can tell the person who brought you to church, you can tell one of our elders...
- Or you can tell me, we would all love to help you grow in your new relationship with Christ.

- **And second**, don't forget to come **back tonight for our Christmas eve service.**
- **6:00-7:00pm**, Singing Christmas Carols,
- Lighting the Christ Candle,
- Short message and a Candle lighting for everyone...
- **See you tonight.**