

**Luke 2:10-11** - “ \_\_\_\_ is Coming to Town”

Pr. Kurt A. Van Fossan - Christmas Eve 2021

Our theme for this evening’s Adult/Children’s sermon is “ \_\_\_\_ is Coming to Town.” How would you children fill in those two blanks? Because of the well known Christmas song, some of you said Santa Claus. But even the Christian Bishop, St. Nicolas, who lived in Myra (modern day Turkey) around the year 300, would not be happy about this song because it says, “You better watch out. You better not cry. You better not pout. I’m telling you why. Santa Claus is coming to town.”

This American version of St. Nicolas is not someone you would look forward to coming to town. He makes a list and checks it twice, he’s gonna find out who’s naughty or nice, and then, based on how you’ve behaved you either get presents or you get nothing, or a piece of coal (like this) in your stocking. No talk of forgiveness in that song. Be good for goodness sake or too bad for you!

Unfortunately many people think of God in a similar way. While God certainly knows everything we do, a lot of people figure that if they do more good things than bad, then God owes them some good things here on earth. And when it’s all tallied up in the end, hopefully they will have done enough good things to get to heaven. Neither is true.

The truth is, if we compare ourselves to the way God made man in the beginning, we are all far from good. “*All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God*” (Romans 3:23). That means that we would all be getting coal this Christmas. And since one of the main things coal is used for is burning, it can serve as a reminder of where we’d all be headed if it was up to us.

Thankfully we have come here this evening to hear about someone else who came to town—the little town of Bethlehem, and who continues to come to all of us here this evening through the words of an angel who said: “*Fear not, for behold, I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.*”

Notice that the angel didn’t say, “Be afraid, because unto you is born this day someone who is going to give you what you deserve based on whether you’ve been naughty or nice.” Instead he said, “*Fear not*” for a **Savior** has been born for “*all the people*,” which includes you and me. He comes to save us because He knows that none of us would ever be good enough to make it to heaven.

Jesus was born to do two main things for us, that we can’t do. First He lead the perfect life without sin. Then He became like this piece of coal in our lives. I told the children here at Redeemer a couple weeks ago that people use coal not just to burn in the fire, but to also get rid of or filter out bad stuff in things like our water. If the water filter in your refrigerator is like mine, it uses coal to filter out the impurities in our water.

Jesus did something similar to coal when He took all the impurities of our sins upon Himself and then died on a cross so that He could take all our sins into the coal cellar of hell where they belong. That’s very cool, isn’t it!? But even cooler is when He rose from the dead to give us His goodness, making us sweet like this candy cane.

The red on this candy cane also reminds us that Jesus shed His blood on the cross to pay for our sins and make us sweet, especially when we tell others about the sweet things Jesus also did for them—when we let people know that “Jesus Christ came to town,” and through His birth, death and resurrection gives us what we don’t deserve, good gifts in this life and forever in heaven.

Thanks be to God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Amen.