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Substance of Sermon preached by our Pastor *Mr. J.W. Spelling-Tyler*
on Christmas Morning, December 25, 1978. *at The Dickes*

Lesson. Luke 2. vv. 1-20

And she brought forth her firstborn son, and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn. Luke 2. 7.

By these blessed words of inspiration St Luke tells of an event, the most glorious, happy, wondrous event in the whole history of the earth, even the Advent of a Saviour, the birthday of the Son of God in His incarnation. Why is this the happiest event we celebrate in worship and service that this poor world has known, coupled with His glorious, triumphant resurrection and ascension to Heaven and His session at the right hand of God? Why should it be the happiest event we celebrate? For a specific reason, yet we shall never know it fully until we reach the Happy Land where this sweet Person reigns in all His majesty and glory, with all the saints adoring and praising Him, and we trust through sovereign grace to be there. Why is it the happiest event we celebrate to His everlasting praise, the praise and glory of the Triune God? Because it was the birth, O amazing truth! the divine birth of a SAVIOUR, of the Saviour. And being fallen creatures, guilty, dying sinners taught by the Spirit something of the depths of iniquity and defilement we are the subjects of, and the pressure of guilt on our hearts, O the paramount need there is of the SAVIOUR. So it is the happiest event there ever was, the Birthday, the Advent of a SAVIOUR. My friends, I am certain of one thing, in varying degrees, and increasingly with the deepening of the work of the Spirit we find ourselves involved in guilt and defilement and ~~with~~ the intolerable weight of a body of sin and death; we are corruptible, -it is wonderful that we are favoured to celebrate the birth of the Saviour, and His power, willingness and love to save His people from their sins. This suits me, it comes where I am, a sinner needing a mighty Saviour, the birth of a Saviour. Did you ever hear the like? that

into this sin-ruined, sin-blighted world, to a ruined race in all the sins of the fall and the miseries of their ruined condition there should come forth a SAVIOUR.

I hope to be led and enabled, not just in a doctrinal manner, but by the unction, power, life and love of the Holy Ghost to tabulate some of the vital things pertaining to our everlasting peace, safety and security in Him. Take the beautiful words, "And she brought forth her firstborn son" - to show His preeminence. It had taken place. Do you see the wonder of it? The event had taken place, unnoticed by the masses on this planet, and especially by the power of the Roman Empire and the great Caesar, in the little town of Bethlehem. The greatest event of all had taken place. He was born a SAVIOUR. One thing that emerges is, all the promises were fulfilled and performed. The great promise given after the fall of our first parents was hereby performed. We read concerning the dear saints before the Advent, "These all died in faith,"- in faith of the event; "not having received the promises," they had not lived to see the fulfilling of them. "but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them," They all died ^{in faith} concerning the coming into this lower world of a SAVIOUR.

There is a personal advent of Christ to every believer. So all the holy promises were performed; all the expectations of holy faith were realised. All the prophecies were fulfilled, "for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." All the prophets had a word concerning the long-awaited and expected Messiah, this SAVIOUR. There would have been no hope, nothing to live for apart from this. It would have been endless ruin, black despair apart from the coming into the world of a SAVIOUR. O the wonder and glory of it! Contemplate what it would have been like on the earth at this moment if there had been no SAVIOUR, no House of God, no ministry, no gospel, no Bible, nothing between us and despair, hell, flames, and the deep abyss! O this glorious, transcendent, holy, immaculate, pure, blissful event! the birth had taken place of a SAVIOUR.

There are two titles to mention to you: the first is, "And thou shalt call his name JESUS," "a name that is above every name: That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." O how precious and eminent that

dear Name is! Every quickened sinner is brought to love the Name of Jesus and to adore the Person of Jesus. What does it mean? "for he shall save his people from their sins." Nothing is more tremendous than that. Counting myself a member of the congregation, on this Christmas morning I ask you how many believe you are saved sinners? I will put a question that precedes this. How many know themselves as sinners? O to feel what the sweet teacher says in the Hymn; "O to feel cuts deep beyond expression I am a sinner. It is not to make a formal acknowledgement of it and to say, "I have been guilty, ill-mannered, rebellious, and many have been the same." It is to feel deeply in our souls the burden of sin, the misery of guilt ~~of it~~ and the shame of defilement, and to know how heinous and malignant sin is. It is sin against God. I am a sinner vile indeed. Can you say with Job, "Behold, I am vile."?

Wonderful it is that the Lord gives to those He loves the excellent grace that is so acceptable to Him: they mourn. Mourning is the fruit of love. Once divine love touches your soul and you feel the sweet mercy of Christ in your soul, you mourn and repent: your heart is broken at the foot of the cross, or as to day, over the manger: you are seeking to look into the manger. If only you could look by faith and see the sweet Babe, the SAVIOUR! "for he shall save his people from their sins." Amazing grace! boundless love! infinite compassion! a SAVIOUR, for He shall save His people from their sins, from the penalty due to sin, from hell. What would it be this morning if we had no hope, no grace, no life, no knowledge of the Lord, and only hell to anticipate, and we richly deserve it. I remember telling the Lord in a solemn way when I lost my last mite, that He would be just to consign me to the pit, and I felt it. I had sinned, and not in ignorance. I had sinned against the light of His truth and the knowledge of what is right, and sinning thus I felt my damnation sealed, and I justified God. If this poor sinner were sent to hell,- he is not in hell, is he. He is preaching the gospel because of this event, the Birthday of our King, the Advent of the SAVIOUR: and because this morning we are able to testify that He saved us by His grace so we anticipate Heaven, and because we have had foretastes of it, and often in this Sanctuary. If you get a little sip of the dear, sweet, dying love of a precious Redeemer who came so freely, you will have a

taste of Heaven in your soul. You are saved from the penalty due to sin, saved from the agonising guilt of it and the weight of it on your conscience, saved from the power of it and from the defilement of it.

"Be of sin the double cure,

Cleanse me from its guilt and power."

A SAVIOUR. As we have known and know our beloved Saviour we shall know Him more. He will make Himself known to us and in Heaven. As we know this mighty Saviour so we shall say,

"For who of mercy needs despair,

Since I have mercy found?"

There is hope for your dear children. There is hope here for the vilest, especially in the context;- who live to feel their need of Him. However base, polluted, there is hope in God for those brought to repentance.

A SAVIOUR. My poor unworthy soul feels happy on this morning, and you are able to say you know this Saviour. You know when He first visited you; when you felt His compassion, mercy and grace, and when you cast your anchor in Him within the veil. O this Saviour, to save, rescue, deliver, emancipate His people from their sins, their vile, cruel sins! Do you celebrate the nativity of the Saviour? Do you feel in your soul that salvation has come to this house?

The other beautiful title is, Immanuel, God with us. God in a holy humanity to come as our Surety, a Brother to our souls, so near us: to be our heavenly Father, Husband, holy Bridegroom, Mediator, Redeemer; to be with us in all our distresses, sorrows, troubles. God with us. This is the event. I am sure you will feel personally,

"O holy Child of Bethlehem,

Descend to us, we pray;

Cast out our sin, and enter in,

Be born in us to day."

It is personal. The experience of the beloved Saviour is His personal Advent to a child of God; the coming of the Saviour. What an event!

I am sure our beloved friends will appreciate the theme, the melody and harmony of adoration that is sung by the multitude of the heavenly hosts; all the glorified spirits in Heaven. Wonderful it is to have dear ones in Heaven, and to know they are there from God. And the long line

of witnesses, your beloved forebears are there, and you are happy to set your footsteps in the steps of the flock, following the Master. You rejoice to hear of the work of God in their souls, and their living and dying testimony. You know they are singing the everlasting song in Heaven, and their precious dust awaits the resurrection of the just. O the wonder of the beloved Saviour, full of holy efficacy in relation to their salvation! And they came to Calvary, where they crucified Him, and voluntarily He gave His precious life for us, and His death was sacrificial and expiatory. His death expiated all the sins of His people; they are behind God's back, drowned in the depths of the sea. He suffered the Just for the unjust, to bring us to God. O the agony He suffered when His soul was made a sacrifice for sin! when He offered the sum total of His holy humanity on the altar of His Deity to atone for crimes that we had done. I wish I could live without sin! I long to be with Him and see Him and be like Him. Happy, blessed people you are who know the joyful sound! who know this Saviour. O with what gladness of spirit we recently heard the testimonies of those who were brought to feel themselves sinners and to know the Saviour, and who could not refrain from honouring Him. Think of the wonder of having a living hope in the Saviour; interested in this glorious event; because in God's eternal purpose He loved you and all the election of grace. A saved sinner! You will long to be with Him, to see Him face to face, and be able to crown and adore and magnify and extol Him, and to sing eternally in the perpetual light of His glorious presence, in the everlasting sunshine of bliss; holy, happy, eternally satisfied in Him and with His blessed family. This is what so moves me in relation to the families, because the Lord favours His dear people. There are many of these on record; prayers of godly mothers and fathers and others, and prayer so abundantly answered. You know the Saviour, and your prayers have been answered and your family is complete in Heaven; not one left behind. This will be the fondness of your love and hope as you join together as families presently, that all may know this Saviour, this dear, sweet Saviour. We have nothing but sin to bring Him, and we shall receive nothing but His love, forgiveness, bliss, salvation, holiness, justification.

The Birthday of our Saviour. I will make a further comment on this. Think, dear friends; take a retrospective view of your life: have you not proved in afflictions, cares, responsibilities, concerns you have experienced 'Immanuel, God with us'? He has never let you sink, never failed you. You have been stripped of props and brought low. Your God has never forsaken you. He is Immanuel, God with us. Going back to your early days, in distresses, bereavements, sorrows, your weighty cross, this has always been your comfort, security, peace; Immanuel, God with us.

I will endeavour to look at what remains in this beautiful verse. The event has taken place, and you know because of the indwelling of Christ by His Spirit in your soul. I am not here to speak of self, but I can discern two things. The first is, there was a season, and it does not end,- when I began to recognise that the Holy Ghost was preparing the chamber of my breast. He was shedding abroad His grace and virtue,- what for? The Advent of the Saviour, the coming of the Saviour to my soul, and it is an experience of Glory when He enters with all His glorious train into your soul and you are caught up to His Throne. You have Christ in you the hope of Glory,- glory so great you quickly recognise that your body could stand little of it. If the Lord increased the volume of it your soul would burst through the portals of clay and you would fly to be with Him. You will know it. Mary was divinely instructed and given wisdom and grace to wrap Him in swaddling clothes. She swathed His precious body in bandages, and you will see how this is synonymous with grave clothes. O the deep spiritual significance! He came as our Surety. In the law He stood in our place; He was bound by the law. Justly did God bind Him according to the sanctions of the holy, moral law. He stood in the place of His dear people who had sinned. Justice bound Him. That is how you get your liberty, emancipation, freedom, for having the Son you are free indeed. Christ was bound by the law. "But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons." So He was bound by the law and Justice held Him. O the perfection of His obedience and it is all put to your account,- not your sin; not your violation

of the law. What Christ did in holy perfection is yours, O believer.

And how in His agony and Passion He suffered the curse due to our sins so, and this has been wonderful to me, there is no curse in our sorrows, afflictions, trials or death. There is love in it; nothing else because He suffered. "See Him in His grave clothes lie." We looked in His tomb when the pool was opened just now. He is risen. When Peter and John went to the sepulchre there was the observation of the grave clothes. There was no disarray in the precious sepulchre: the grave clothes were all neatly folded. Justice was satisfied, the law magnified, the price of ransom paid.

"and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger; because there was no room for them in the inn." In a manger, the trough where cattle feed. It shows His infinite stoop, the depth of His condescension, and it also sets before His dear people the blessed principle of humility. Not in a palace; in a manger. Lord, let that manger be my heart. One dear friend said to me after a Christmas morning service, "How this reconciles us by grace to our lot!" You who are in affliction, brought low in providence, in every way, this is where you will come to look in the manger, and it will reconcile you to your lot.

"there was no room for them in the inn." The inn is a symbol of the human heart in darkness and death,- no room for the Lord Jesus. Once there was no room for Him in your breast: it is different^{now}. I think of the simple, beautiful language in the Hymn, and we address the words to His precious Person, personally and unitedly,- it is wonderful to realise we shall be one day in Heaven!

"We bow as sinners at Thy feet,
And bid Thee welcome to our heart."

Blessed be God.