

2011 CHRISTMAS EVE SERMON-- BENEVOLENT SAVIOR

Luke 2:1-7

Ever run into a problem at Christmas?
Even with all the technology we have today.
We all do at sometime even children.

A young mother had taken her children to see Santa,
And when the little girl climbed onto Santa's lap, Santa asked the usual,
"And what would you like for Christmas?"
The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped:
"Didn't you get my email??!"

On that first Christmas,

SLIDE2---God had a problem.

One of the planets,

SLIDE3---Hadn't turned out the way God had hoped.

Even though it was God's favorite planet,

As it floated in space

SLIDE4---Like a luxurious green and blue jewel.

Earth had gone wrong.

The inhabitants entrusted with the care of the Earth,

Had rebelled against God

Instead of earth operating on God's plan of love and holiness,

It had sold out to the enemy

Of greed, lust, war, and hate.

But God had a plan

He was going to restore this planet

back to himself,

Author J.Ellworth Kalas says:

IT WAS TO BE A BENEVOLENT INVASION.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. 14The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. John 1:1-2,14

But a benevolent invasion is an oxymoron

Because invasion by definition means show of force.

Ask Europe about its invasions,

SLIDE---The Barbarian invasion,

The Mongol invasion,

The Viking invasion

The German invasion

Or about our own invasion

Of Normandy, Utah and Omaha beaches,

Where hundreds of 1000 were killed.

Benevolent means kind or generous,

But **Benevolent Invasion** is an oxymoron

But God can do what He wants to do.

And He didn't unleash an atomic power,

Or an angelic force,

or even split the earth with a monstrous quake
Or volcanic eruption.

SLIDE---God sent a baby.

With a GPS star locator.
To a manger in Bethlehem.
Unnoticed,

To a virgin couple named Mary and Joseph.

6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. Luke 2:6-7

God not only had a **benevolent Invasion** through a baby,

SLIDE---2. But he chose a Benevolent Entrance,

Most pregnant mothers can choose where their babies are to be born,
Most choose a sanitary OB unit in the hospital,

But we know that Babies are born in many places today,
In Taxis, and Airplanes,
In homes and subways,
Restaurants and resorts, jails,

SLIDE---and in Cambridgeshire, England

Little baby girl Dulce
was born in a post office.

She weight 5 pounds 15 oz on the postal scale.

SLIDE---Another strange births was Mrs Nana Cheindza in Mozambique,

Who was 9 month pregnant when the 2000 flood waters raged through her town. She climbed a tree to escape the crocodile-infested waters and stayed there for four days with nothing to drink or eat. Finally on the fourth day, her baby came.

She gave birth to her baby in a tree.

Soon after, helicopters arrived to winch the mother and the baby, Rosita, to safety.

SLIDE---But the Son of God was born

In a manger,
In a cattle's cave
A sheep shelter
A humble unsanitary place
Where no one would choose to deliver a child.
Much less the Son of God.

How disappointed Mary must have been,
How discouraged to be the caretaker of the Son of God,
And then not even have a clean place to deliver him.

SLIDE---But God choose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise. And God choose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. I Corinthians 1:27

It was a Benevolent Entrance.

SLIDE---HE HAD A BENEVOLENT IDENTITY,

This child did not come as a dictator,
Or cruel tyrant,
He was not a hate-filled bully,
Or a spiteful God like many other Gods

SLIDE---Who demand sacrifices of Children to appease them.

Like **Poseidon** the Greek god of oceans, earthquakes and horse,
 Or **Hermes** the Greek god worship by mortal thieves, swindlers and cheats.
 Or **Ares** the god of the underworld know for his war and violence.
 This babe born in a manger was born with a benevolent identity.

Every mother and father wonders
 What that new born child will become,
 When it is placed in their arms.
 WHAT CHILD IS THIS?

Like the Christmas song questions:

SLIDE---“**What child is this?
 Who laid to rest,
 On Mary Lap is sleeping?**”

Children are each different.
 Even twins- thou some parent may have difficulty telling them apart
 All look at life differently.
 Most children are innocent and completely honest.
 And all grow up questioning and thoughtful.

Look at some letters to Santa Claus.

Dear Santa Claus,

When you come to my house there will be cookies for you. But if you are real hungry you can use our phone and order your own pizza to go. Love Jasmine (There is a little Dave Ramsey disciple)

Dear Santa,

I want a Puppy. I want a playhouse. Thank you. I've been good most of the time. Sometimes I'm wild. Love Joey

Dear Santa, I'll take anything because I haven't been that good. 4 year old Jimmy

Children are often creative:

Listen to the letter a 16 month deployed officer in the South Pacific received from his wife telling about a prayer their four-year-old daughter made: “Dear Lord, for Christmas I would like a baby brother so we will have something to surprise Daddy with when he gets home.”

What child was this?

THIS BENEVOLENT ENTITY THAT ENTERED OUR WORLD.

Michael Gross's parents wondered the same thing

When he was born in 1954.

At three He astounded his mother by reading aloud without previous instruction.

His IQ was so high it couldn't be measured.

At four on his first day in Kindergarten he saw a class mate coloring an apple blue.

He remarked with interest, "That's the kind of approach Picasso would use."

At ten he moved directly from fifth grade to Michigan State University.

He became the youngest college freshman in nearly a century,
 graduated with a Ph.D. from Yale before he was 20.

What child is this?

SLIDE--- That's what the parents of Kim Ung Yung wondered

born in 1963 in Korea.

He was talking at five months,

Writing at seven months.

His IQ is estimated higher than any other.

At four years of age he was fluent in Korean, English, Japanese and German

Before his 5th birthday he was solving intricate calculus problems on Japanese television.

What child is this?

Joe Hall born in 1966 in Plum Tree, North Carolina,

son of a high school band director.

At 14 months he copied the alphabet,

At three he read adults books on space and electronics.

At five he was playing the classic on the piano and composing his own music.

At six he became a pianist with the high school bands.

And then when he was diagnosed with Leukemia he researched it and remarked,

"I suppose my statistical chances don't look too promising."

Bored with school, his IQ off the charts,

The Army donated 400 pounds of technical materials which he read in three weeks.

At 10 he corresponded with rocket scientist Verner Von Braun and

set up his own center for UFO investigation.

What child is this

These were amazing children,

But they all fade into foolishness compared with a baby named Jesus.

SIDE--- Who was the child of God.

No IQ measurable in excess of the number 200 could

Even come close to the mind and the capability of the child

Who was God.

SLIDE--- He healed the blind,

Stopped the flow of blood,

Regenerated arms and muscles at his touch,

He fed the 5000,

Cast out demons by the legions

SLIDE--- He stilled the storm,

He calmed the seas,

He called forth the dead.

What Child was this?

Slide--- He paid the price this lamb of God

He redeemed the lost,

He went to hell,

And he set the prisoner free.

What Child was this?

Who was born in a manger.

Died on a cross,

SLIDE--- Ascended into heaven,

And will return at the trumpets sound.

WHAT CHILD WAS THIS?

Of whom Charles Wesley wrote,
**These infant hands
 Shall burst our bands,
 And work out our salvation.**

**Strangle the crooked serpent,
 Destroy his works for ever,
 And open set
 The heavenly gate,
 To every true believer.”**

What child was this?

The angels told the shepherds he was Christ the Lord.
 This child was God and he knew it.

THIS CHILD WAS THE BENEVOLENT SAVIOR.

14The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. John 1:14

There is no confusion about this picture.
 What Child is this?
 Son of God
 Son of the Father
 Begotten not made
 Savior.

Who came to love us,
 Die for us
 And claim us as his own.
 It doesn't seem that long ago.
 It is as clear as yesterday.

It was in the morning, a Sunday morning, and I heard the patter of little feet
 Coming into the kitchen. I was putting the finishing touches on the Sunday sermon,
 The little child came in half asleep and said to me.
 “Where’s the scissors, Dad?”
 I gave her the scissors, and she went over to where there was a chain
 which was made of paper, a paper chain link for each of the days of Advent,
 and she went and cut off the chain link and said:
 “Daddy, one more day to Christmas!”
 And then that little girl got up into my lap, and she put his arms around my neck,
 and she just sat there and hugged me, for what seemed like
 five minutes of stillness and five minutes of love.
 And I put my arms around her little body and
 that child was my very own, my very own child,
 belonging to the world, belonging to my wife,
 belonging to this family, belonging to God, but also,
 belonging to me, my very own.

And there was an inner glow of satisfaction deep within me.

And when you finally realize that Christ is your very own,
not only for all the world, not only for all the shepherds,
not only for all the angels,
but when you realize that Christ is your very own,
then there becomes a glow in your heart, and you begin to sing the Gloria.
Silent night Holy Night. All is calm all is bright.

SLIDE---So tonight as we pass the flame of our candle to another,
may we be aware that we pass more than fire.

We pass among us our symbol of hope.

SLIDE---The light of our candles reminds us tonight.

That Through this child, there is no humanity unreachable.

No soul unsavable,

No heart unbreakable.

SLIDE---This, this Christ the King

Whom Shepherds guard and angels sing,

Let us light the light of Christ

SLIDE----And bring hope to the darkness.