

Christmas Message - A True, Life Changing Story

Good evening on this Christmas Eve. What a joy it is to gather together. We welcome you to Morrison Zion Lutheran Church. I'm Pastor James Enderle. Here at Morrison Zion, our mission is to glorify God as we gather around the Gospel; we grow in that Gospel and go to others with that wonderful Gospel.

That's what tonight is about. As we will be hearing these children share that story once again, "What a Story" is what you are going to hear about. That story is really all about that Gospel. When we look at it, it's not just a story. It's a true life-changing story.

When you think about Christmas, you might have mixed emotions. Maybe you really, really love Christmas and have been preparing for months, got all the decorations, played the Christmas music way ahead of time, planned all the Christmas cookies and the meals and all the presents. Maybe you are on the other side though and you have a very different reaction to Christmas where you kind of don't want anything to do with it. You'd rather not get together with family and the idea of those gatherings and a lot of the things for Christmas aren't something you would like to be a part of.

People have different emotions about Christmas. I kind of compare it to the weather up here in Wisconsin in winter. A year ago now, we actually didn't have this service if you remember that. We canceled the Christmas Eve Service because of the snow. I think it was -9 degrees out. That's a little bit different than the 50 degrees we have now. Some people love that cold weather and the snow so they can go ice fishing and snowmobiling. For me, I'd rather just sit on the beach and enjoy warm weather. We have different reactions to different things.

As you hear this story, the message about Jesus, the truth is that people have different reactions to Jesus. Some people worship Jesus and other people want nothing to do with Him. It's interesting in our world today that a lot of people want to like Jesus, to like Christmas, but at Jesus' time, that wasn't really how it worked. People either despised Him, hated Him, or they worshipped Him.

I think as we think about who Jesus is and what Christmas is about, you have to have one of those reactions. If it is true that Jesus came into the world, why did He have to come into the world? He came to be our Savior. Why do we need a Savior? It's because we are sinful. We can't save ourselves. We can't get to heaven by what we do or how hard we try. We know that even if I would say "All my good things are better than all the bad things I've done" or "At least I'm not like those people," whoever you want to compare yourself to, we need Jesus. We need this true, amazing story of Christmas and Jesus' coming to the world because we are sinners with broken

relationships living in a broken world. We need Jesus to come and fix that problem, and that is what He does.

He comes as the Light into the world. Could you imagine driving out here tonight without your headlights on? At night, you couldn't even fathom that, and then in this fog, it's dangerous! But if we know Jesus, if we know the truth, that's kind of like what it is in the world if we are ignoring the truth and ignoring His world out in the rest of the world. We need that Light to guide us, especially because life isn't easy. Just like the fog, it's even harder than just darkness.

That's what Jesus gives us; that's what the Word gives us, that truth and something to guide our lives. But most of all, that tells us that we are loved and redeemed. No matter what you've done, God loves you. You are forgiven. You can always look to God. That's what Christmas is all about—that God so loved you that He sent His Son into the world to save you.

That's the story you are going to get to hear again from these kids. You'll hear that true message (that life-changing message) that means Jesus loves you. Thank you.