

Sermon followed by Service

New Year's 2023

Luke 2:21

Today Jesus would be 8 days old. What does an 8-day-old do? If I remember right, an 8-day-old sleeps and suckles, cries and coos, spits up on top, messes up down below, and, with the right kind of help, burps. I imagine that on day 8, Jesus, yes, God-in-a -body Jesus, did all those same things, like most any other 8-day-old. But on that day 8 Jesus was also doing something more - he was living as Jesus.

Our lesson starts with Jesus, day 8. Following tradition, on day 8 Mary and Joseph named their baby. Following the word of Gabriel, Mary and Joseph named their baby: Jesus. Why Jesus? Some 9 months earlier Gabriel had appeared to Mary telling her she would have a son, telling her: **“you are to give him the name Jesus,”** telling her that her son would be the Son of God, that he would take over for David, ruling a **“kingdom that would never end.”**

Mary knew what that meant. Before Jesus was born, Mary sang a song about him. God was coming to save his people. Into her cold, cruel world - think of roman occupation forces forcing their way on the people ... think of the rich and powerful, the haves having their way stepping on the have-not poor ... think of the faithless flaunting their wicked worldliness in the faces of the faithful ... into that cold, cruel world God was coming to show mercy and to make life right for his people.

Some time later, after Gabriel had appeared to Mary, an angel appeared to Joseph, telling Joseph about Mary and the child she would have, telling him: **“you are to give him the name Jesus.”** Why? **“Because he will save his people from their sins.”**

I love to hear what Gabriel told Mary and what Gabriel’s Jesus promise meant for Mary - that God has seen ... that God sees ... what this cold, hard world is doing to his people, and that God our Savior will step in, he will keep his promise, he will save and make life right for his people. I love to hear that when I see the world step on God’s people. I love to hear that when I see our world’s godless culture war against the godly. I love to hear that God will make life right for his people when the checkbook won’t balance, when I can’t make things right for people, when I see what sickness and death do. I love to hear that Jesus will establish a kingdom, that he will make life right for the people of God.

I love to hear that but what I really need to hear is what the angel told Joseph - **“You are to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.”** It’s not just that world out there that I need to be saved from. It’s from my sin in here that I need to be saved. I need a Savior to do more than make my life and my world right, I need a Savior to make me right, to set me right with God.

That’s what Jesus was doing on day 8. On day 8 when Jesus was named, Jesus was also circumcised. Earlier we heard, **“When the time was right, God sent his son, born of a**

woman, born under law, to redeem those under law ...” On day 8 Jesus was living under the law; on day 8 God in Jesus subjected himself to the knife of the law, putting himself under law to fulfill the law in its every detail for you and for me. On day 8, in Jesus’ circumcision, we see a snippet of Jesus’ perfect obedience - a perfect obedience that led to Jesus’ blood being shed to wash your sin away - you are forgiven! On that day we see a snippet of the perfect obedience we get to wear before God - with Jesus you are right by God!

And on day 8, we see something more. We see God put his name and promise on Jesus. Jesus wouldn’t have to enter life and face the world on his own; Jesus wouldn’t have to face sin and Satan on his own; Jesus wouldn’t have to face his life’s work on his own; Jesus wouldn’t have to face death on his own. On day 8, God put his name and promise on Jesus. What’s your favorite Old Testament promise? For some of you, it’s Isaiah 41:10: **“Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.”** On day 8, in circumcision, God gave that promise to Jesus. Perhaps you think of Jeremiah 29:11 - **“I know the plans I have for you, declares the LORD, plans to give you peace, not disaster, plans to give you hope and a future.”** Or Isaiah 40: **“Comfort, comfort my people ... speak tenderly to them ... tell them her sins have been paid for.”** On day 8, in giving his Son the name Jesus, God promised Jesus that he Jesus would make those promises come true for you.

What does that mean for us on this New Year’s Day? Well, what does New Year’s mean for you? For some people

New Year's means parties. For some people New Year's means loneliness, coldness, darkness, or emptiness because Christmas didn't fix things for them. For me this time of year is hard because I see my to-do lists - lists of the things I didn't get done this past year, lists of the people I didn't pastor right this past year, lists that just get longer each year. To answer that sense of failure, that emptiness, that loneliness, coldness, darkness ...; to give us something better than a party to mark time, to give us something better than a new calendar to refresh and renew us with all of its to-do's, Jesus gave us day 8.

With day 8 we have the best part of New Year's. How so? The best part of a New Year's Eve isn't being able to claim another year; the best part is being able to hear Jesus, God in Jesus, say **“My body for you, my blood for you; my forgiveness, my peace for you; my life, my promise, my heaven all for you!”** With day 8 we get to close out the old year at peace with God and at peace with ourselves. We get to know that the most important to-do's are done, taken care of - with Jesus, you have been set right with God, and that means, with Jesus, at some time, at God's right time, God will set life right for you. That's right, day 8 sets us up to look forward. We get to look forward knowing that this year Jesus will live up to his name. This year, we have Jesus to hold us with all the promises of God.

When I first typed that into my computer, I'll tell you, I didn't feel my face relax with a snap; my face was still tight and ready to snap. Until I asked myself: “what does this mean for

you?” If you’re coming off a hard year, and heading into another, and you can feel it ... think about Jesus on day 8 - what does that name Jesus Savior mean for you? What does Jesus under the knife, on the cross, alive and ruling at God’s right hand mean for you? Think about it: With Jesus, you have been set right with God, and that means, with Jesus, at some time, at God’s right time, God will set life right for you. That’s his promise! Amen.

January 1, 2023

SERVICE OF WORD AND SACRAMENT

IN OUR WORLD TODAY ... as many people as possible are taking off from work to cocoon and recover from the old year.

IN OUR WORSHIP TODAY ... we see the infant Jesus go to work so that instead of cocooning and recovering, we can face the new year covered with Jesus' life and promise - "Well Done!"

OPENING HYMN

"Now Sing We, Now Rejoice"

Hymn 363

Now sing we, now rejoice, now raise to heav'n our voice;
he from whom joy streameth poor in a manger lies;
not so brightly beameth the sun in yonder skies.
Thou my Savior art! Thou my Savior art!

Come from on high to me; I cannot rise to thee.
Cheer my wearied spirit, O pure and holy Child;
thro' thy grace and merit, blest Jesus, Lord most mild,
draw me unto thee! Draw me unto thee!

Now through his Son doth shine the Father's grace divine.
Death was reigning o'er us through sin and vanity
till he opened for us a bright eternity.
May we praise him there! May we praise him there!

Oh, where shall joy be found? Where but on heav'nly ground,
where the angels singing with all his saints unite,
sweetest praises bringing in heav'nly joy and light.
Oh, that we were there! Oh, that we were there!

INVOCATION

M: The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you.

C: **And also with you.**

+ CONFESSION OF SINS AND ABSOLUTION +

- M: We confess our sins and ask for forgiveness.
Almighty Lord God, we have gathered today to thank you for the gift of your Son, our Savior. We need a Savior, for we have sinned greatly against you. But your mercies never end; they are new to us every day. So at your command and promise, we ask you to forgive us.
- C: **O holy and most merciful Father, I am altogether sinful from birth. In countless ways I have sinned against you and do not deserve to be called your child. But trusting in Jesus, my Savior, I pray: God, have mercy on me a sinner!**
- M: I bring you good news of great joy! A Savior has been born for you! Jesus has destroyed the work of the devil; he has set you free to live with God. He has done what we couldn't do - he has made us right with God! Through Jesus you are forgiven and saved to be God's child. Glory to God in the highest!
- C: **Amen.**

+ PRAYER AND PRAISE +

LORD, HAVE MERCY

- M: For all that we need in life and for the wisdom to use all your gifts with gratitude and joy, hear our prayer, O Lord.
- C: **Lord, have mercy.**
- M: For the steadfast assurance that nothing can separate us from your love and for the courage to stand firm against the assaults of Satan and every evil, hear our prayer, O Christ.
- C: **Christ, have mercy.**
- M: For the well-being of your holy Church in all the world and for those who offer here their worship and praise, hear our prayer, O Lord.
- C: **Lord, have mercy.**
- M: Merciful God, maker and preserver of life, uphold us by your power and keep us in your tender care: **Amen.**

M: The works of the Lord are great and glorious; his name is worthy of praise.

HYMN

"All My Heart Again Rejoices"

Hymn 329

All my heart again rejoices as I hear
far and near sweetest angel voices.
"Christ is born!" their choirs are singing till the air
ev'rywhere now with joy is ringing.

Hear! The conqueror has spoken: "Now the foe,
sin and woe, death and hell are broken!"
God is man, man to deliver, and the Son
now is one with our blood forever.

Should we fear our God's displeasure, who, to save,
freely gave his most precious treasure?
To redeem us he has given his own Son
from the throne of his might in heaven.

See the Lamb, our sin once taking to the cross,
suff'ring loss, full atonement making.
For our life his own he tenders, and his grace
all our race fit for glory renders.

Softly from his lowly manger Jesus calls
one and all, "You are safe from danger.
Children, from the sins that grieve you you are freed;
all you need I will surely give you."

Come, then, banish all your sadness! One and all,
great and small, come with songs of gladness;
we shall live with him forever there on high
in that joy which will vanish never.

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Eternal Son of God, on this day you were called Jesus, a name that proclaims you to be the Savior of all people. Give us strength in the new year to live each day to the honor of your name; for you live and reign with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

Amen.

FIRST READING

Numbers 6:22–27

The LORD said to Moses, “Tell Aaron and his sons, ‘This is how you are to bless the Israelites. Say to them:

“ ‘ “The LORD bless you
and keep you;
the LORD make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
the LORD turn his face toward you
and give you peace.” ‘

“So they will put my name on the Israelites, and I will bless them.”

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN

“Peace Came to Earth”

Hymn 330

Peace came to earth at last that chosen night
when angels clove the sky with song and light
and God embodied love and sheathed his might—
Who could but gasp: Immanuel! Who could but sing: Immanuel!

And who could be the same for having held
the infant in their arms and later felt
the wounded hands and side, all doubts dispelled—
Who could but sigh: Immanuel! Who could but shout: Immanuel!

You show the Father none has ever seen,
in flesh and blood you bore our griefs and pain,
in bread and wine you visit us again—
Who could but see: Immanuel! Who could but thrill: Immanuel!

How else could I have known you, O my God!
How else could I have loved you, O my God!
How else could I embrace you, O my God!
Who could but pray: Immanuel! Who could but praise: Immanuel!

SECOND READING

Galatians 3:23–29; 4:4–7 (EHV)

But before this faith came, we were held in custody under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed. So the law was our chaperone until Christ, so that we might be justified by faith. But now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a chaperone.

In fact, you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Indeed, as many of you as were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. There is not Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female, for you are all one and the same in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants and heirs according to the promise. ...

But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son to be born of a woman, so that he would be born under the law, in order to redeem those under the law, so that we would be adopted as sons. And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts to shout, "Abba, Father!" So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if you are a son, then you are also an heir of God through Christ.

The Word of the Lord. **Thanks be to God.**

HYMN

“Jesus, Your Blood and Righteousness”

Hymn 573

Jesus, your blood and righteousness my beauty are, my glorious dress;
mid flaming worlds, in these arrayed, with joy shall I lift up my head.

Bold shall I stand in that great day; who can a word against me say?
Fully absolved through these I am from sin and fear, from guilt and shame.

Lord, I believe your precious blood, which at the very throne of God
pleads for the captives’ liberty, was also shed in love for me.

Lord, I believe, were sinners more than sands upon the ocean shore,
you have for all a ransom paid, for all a full atonement made.

When from the dust of death I rise to claim my mansion in the skies,
this then shall be my only plea: Jesus has lived and died for me.

Jesus, be worshiped endlessly! Your boundless mercy has for me,
for me and all your hands have made, an everlasting ransom paid.

GOSPEL ACCLAMATION

Matthew 1:21

Alleluia. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name
Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. Alleluia.

GOSPEL

Luke 2:21–40

On the eighth day, when it was time to circumcise the child, he was
named Jesus, the name the angel had given him before he was conceived.

When the time came for the purification rites required by the Law of
Moses, Joseph and Mary took him to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord
(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every firstborn male is to be
consecrated to the Lord”), and to offer a sacrifice in keeping with what is
said in the Law of the Lord: “a pair of doves or two young pigeons.”

Now there was a man in Jerusalem called Simeon, who was righteous and devout. He was waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was on him. It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not die before he had seen the Lord's Messiah. Moved by the Spirit, he went into the temple courts. When the parents brought in the child Jesus to do for him what the custom of the Law required, Simeon took him in his arms and praised God, saying:

“Sovereign Lord, as you have promised,
you may now dismiss your servant in peace.
For my eyes have seen your salvation,
which you have prepared in the sight of all nations:
a light for revelation to the Gentiles,
and the glory of your people Israel.”

The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him. Then Simeon blessed them and said to Mary, his mother: “This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.”

There was also a prophet, Anna, the daughter of Penuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was very old; she had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then was a widow until she was eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped night and day, fasting and praying. Coming up to them at that very moment, she gave thanks to God and spoke about the child to all who were looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem.

When Joseph and Mary had done everything required by the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth. And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was on him.

The Gospel of the Lord. **Praise be to you, O Christ!**

HYMN OF THE DAY

"Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love"

Hymn 496

Jesus! Name of wondrous love, name all other names above,
unto which must ev'ry knee bow in deep humility.

Jesus! Name decreed of old, to the maiden mother told,
kneeling in her lowly cell, by the angel Gabriel.

Jesus! Name of priceless worth to the fallen here on earth
for the promise that it gave, "Jesus shall his people save."
Jesus! Name of mercy mild, given to the holy Child
when the cup of human woe first he tasted here below.

Jesus! Only name that's giv'n under all the mighty heav'n
whereby those to sin enslaved burst their fetters and are saved.

Jesus! Name of wondrous love, human name of God above;
pleading only this, we flee helpless, O our God, to thee.

SERMON

NICENE CREED

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us and for our salvation, he came down from heaven, was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became truly human. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate. He suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who in unity with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets. We believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

M: O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is your name in all the earth. The heavens are the work of your fingers, yet you willed to save us in the most humble and sacrificial of ways.

C: **Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

M: Already eight days after being born of the virgin Mary, your Son was at work for our salvation by fulfilling your Law and shedding his blood. Receive our heartfelt thanks for the righteousness and forgiveness of sins we have obtained through Jesus' life, death and resurrection.

C: **Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

M: O God, you declare that in Christ Jesus there is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for we are all one in him. Preserve us from all ungodly prejudice, yet instill in us a deep appreciation of our distinctive callings. Grant that we would not resent what you have called us to be and to do, but rejoice to serve as you have ordained.

C: **Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

M: Father in heaven, bless and keep us by your grace. Remember those in need who cry out to you [especially _____].

C: **Lord, in Your mercy, hear our prayer.**

M: Gracious Father, in your steadfast love you have put off the day of Jesus' return until the perfect time, when the number of your elect is complete. Keep your people watchful, vigilant and awake with your gift of faith until that day. Work in us to live this new year to your glory and for the good of

your people; through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C: Amen.

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

THE SACRAMENT

(Guests, please see our communion practice on page 2.)
(Gluten-free wafers are available; ask Pastor.)

GLORIA: A Carol Setting for Holy Communion

The Preface (Tune: "Angels We Have Heard On High")

M: May the good Lord be with you. Lift your hearts to God in praise.

C: **May the Lord be with you too. To the Lord our hearts we raise.**

Refrain: **Gloria in Excelsis Deo!**

C: **In the Word of God made flesh Great and wondrous mystery
Now we see with vision fresh God's abundant majesty.**

Refrain: **Gloria in Excelsis Deo!**

C: **Therefore with the church on earth And the hosts of heav'n above
Let us praise His name, whose birth Brings to us eternal love.**

Refrain: **Gloria in Excelsis Deo!**

THE WORDS OF CONSECRATION (Tune: "From Heaven Above")

**C: The night Lord Jesus was betrayed
He took the bread; and when He'd prayed
He broke and gave them of the bread And unto His disciples said:**

M: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night he was betrayed, took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

**C: Then, when the sacred meal was o'er,
Our blessed Savior spoke once more:
He offered thanks, and lifted up, To give to all, the blessed cup:**

M: Then he took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, which is poured out for you for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of me."

**C: O Lamb of God, You take away The sin of all; now hear us pray.
And grant us from our sin release: Have mercy on us! Grant us peace!**

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS

"Now Greet the Swiftly Changing Year"

Hymn 368

Now greet the swiftly changing year with joy and penitence sincere.
Rejoice! Rejoice! With thanks embrace another year of grace.

Remember now the Son of God and how he shed his infant blood.
Rejoice! Rejoice! With thanks embrace another year of grace.

This Jesus came to end sin's war; this name of names for us he bore.
Rejoice! Rejoice! With thanks embrace another year of grace.

His love abundant far exceeds the volume of a whole year's needs.
Rejoice! Rejoice! With thanks embrace another year of grace.

With him as Lord to lead our way in want and in prosperity,
what need we fear in earth or space in this new year of grace?

“All glory be to God on high, and peace on earth!” the angels cry.
Rejoice! Rejoice! With thanks embrace another year of grace.

God, Father, Son, and Spirit, hear! To all our pleas incline your ear;
upon our lives rich blessing trace in this new year of grace.

THE SONG OF THANKSGIVING (Tune: “God Rest You Merry Gentlemen”)

C: Oh, thank the Lord and sing his praise. What He has done proclaim!
Let all who seek the Lord rejoice And proudly bear His name
Who leads His thankful people forth His promises to claim.
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy!
Lord, let Your servant go in peace. Your Word has been fulfilled.
My eyes have seen the saving work Which for the world You willed:
The glory of Your chosen race As Light for all revealed.
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy!

Oh, praise to God the Father, And praise to God the Son,
And praise to God the Spirit, Most blessed Three in One,
As ‘twas, is now, and e’er shall be While endless ages run!
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy.
Oh, tidings of comfort and joy!

THE BENEDICTION (Tune: “Angels We Have Heard On High”)

M: May the good Lord bless and keep,
Cause His face on you to shine,
Look on you with favor deep,
Granting you His peace divine.

C: *Refrain:* **Gloria in Excelsis Deo!**

OFFERING

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