

Wrapped up with Love
December 24, 2023 – Christmas Eve

Our Savior is Way Lutheran Church

Pastor John Scott

Merry Christmas. I just cannot say it enough. Christmas is one of those things that has so many expectations. We have waited for this for so long. Remember when you were a kid and you waited for this for months and months and months? Are you old like me when you circled things in the Sears Catalog? I had to introduce that to my kids this year and last year. Target started sending out those catalogs. I told the boys, “Guys, you can circle all the things and maybe you will get it.” They replied, “I just text you what I want. I do not need to do that.”

Everything changes, but we still wait. We are still excited for Christmas. It does not matter how old we are. We move from being excited about getting presents to giving presents. The older I get, the more excited I get about seeing people’s faces when they open the presents that I give.

Sometimes when it is a silly present, it is a lot more fun than sometimes when they are real ones, too. Christmas is an incredible time to just wait and see what God has in store for you. And what I want you to leave here with tonight is an understanding in your heart and in your mind that you are wrapped up with God’s love.

You are here for a reason this evening to hear of this incredible story of a God who has come to you to be one of us, to experience the trials and tribulations and temptations and sufferings that we all go through. And yet he gave himself up for us. He died for us and rose again. This is Easter already.

We will get there in a few months. But he rose again just for you, that you would be wrapped up in his love today and forever. This is the whole story of Christmas. When we think about that first Christmas morning and of this little baby being wrapped up in his mother’s arms, his father’s arms,

and those shepherds coming to see exactly what God had promised for centuries and centuries coming true in their lifetime.

You cannot help but be moved by this. Put yourself back with them. Jesus would have been wrapped in strips of cloth, probably rubbed down with a little bit of olive oil and some salt to clean.

He would have been held tight by his mother. He would have cried. It was not a silent night. He would have cried quite a bit. There was no sleeping that night. I imagine that for a while, not just because of the labor and the experience of having a child, but because of what this child meant promise to both Joseph and Mary was that this child will be like no other.

It would be all about how in Jesus, the warmth of God's love is going to be given to the world. And today it is yours. To Joseph, the angel promised that his name would be Jesus because he would save the world from its brokenness. He would save you from your mistakes and your sins. I do not know about you, but I think every family has somebody in the family who is an incredible gift-giver who knows exactly what people want. They have this uncanny idea of giving just the right gifts at the right time. And we also have really terrible gift-givers in the family. Why is it that we have that experience and not the perfect experience of the perfect gift-givers?

It is because we are kind of broken. We are not perfect. We are not whole. When the angel promised to Joseph that Jesus would be the one to save His people from their sins, this is what he came for—To save us from our mistakes our brokenness and our sin that we could not get ourselves out of. He comes and He says, I have died for you. I am alive for you, and I give you that life. I give it to you. You cannot earn it. You cannot work for it. There is not a checklist to get it. But I am going to give it to you.

This is my gift to you. This is what Christmas is all about. Not only are we wrapped up in the warmth of Jesus, but that knowledge that this gift is given to you means that you are safe. Just like that infant Jesus and His mother's arms warm and safe, you are as well swaddled in God's love for you. The angel said to Mary that this Jesus that you are going to give birth to will be so special that His kingdom will never end.

And that is good news for you and me because that means that we are part of that kingdom. That love that he has for the world is for us and for our children and the generations to come. And it will never ever end. Do you know why else that is good news? It is because Christmas is not always a wonderful, fantastic time for all of us.

I do not know about you, but this year I am missing quite a few people that I do not get to celebrate Christmas with, which makes it really hard. We do not get to do the traditions that we used to do. I am not going to see or hear from or get a phone call from the people that I loved who are now with the Lord.

The promise of Christmas is that in the kingdom never ending means that Jesus' love for you, this warmth and security, hold you tight, even when you cannot think about anything else but crying. He is there with you. He is holding you up. He is leading you on. You are safe in His arms. You now are one of God's beloved children. You are wrapped up in His love.

Now you also have something to do here as well. Many of you have brought family and friends and kids. And I want to remind all these parents and grandparents that you have been given this incredible blessing of family in order to share this love with them.

Now, I know it is easy when they are tiny, when you get to hold them in your arms, and they are just so adorable. When you have an infant in the home for Christmas, you do not need any other entertainment. Everybody just sits and stares and plays, and it is just wonderful, until they cry and then you give them to their parents.

You are wrapped up in God's love, and you have a job to do. It is like the shepherds; the shepherds were called to see Jesus and experience this love. And then every day after that, they went back to where they were in their regular lives, and they praised God for his goodness. They told everybody that they too could be a part of this. I hope that your Christmas this year changes your hearts and minds just a little bit. You might see not only that you are wrapped up in God's love, that you are safe and secure in His arms, but that in the relationships that you have in your family, at work, at

school, with the people in your neighborhood, you too can share this goodness of Christmas with them through your kindness, through the way you share hope, through the joyfulness that you have, through the time that you take for other people, serving them, sacrificing part of you for them, giving gifts.

In all of these things, you show them how much they matter, not just to you, but to God. May you see this gift of being able to share His love with others. It is one of the most incredible things that you can do in this world. So, Merry Christmas.

Let's close in prayer. *Heavenly Father, we thank you for being with us today, for leading us and guiding us. We give you thanks that you sent your son, Jesus, to be born on this earth, to be one of us, to know our brokenness, to know what those temptations and our trials and suffering are all about, but to die and rise again, to give us the life, the life that you earned.*

We pray, Lord, that you would remind us each and every day that we are warm and that we are safe in your love. And from that place of security, let us share this with the world, helping more and more people experience your joy and know that they too are greatly and dearly loved. We pray it all in Jesus' name. Amen.