



[Pastor Keith GeRue](#)

**Sermon for Christmas Eve Candlelight**  
December 24, 2022

## Promise Kept

### Isaiah 9:2-7; Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20

In the Name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

***The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light.***

The first people to see that light were the first people to ever live: Adam and Eve. With their sin, they had plunged both themselves and the world into the darkness of sin and death.

But God came to them with a light of hope. A promise. He would fix what they had done. He would restore creation. He would restore them. He would send a Savior.

***The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this,*** Isaiah then said.

And tonight, we rejoice that the Lord has done it. Promise kept. In the city of David, Micah's little town of ***Bethlehem***, the child Isaiah said would be born, the ***Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace***, was born.

And then it was the shepherds' turn to see the light. Go to Bethlehem, the angel told them, for there is ***Christ the Lord***. Don't let the swaddling clothes or manger fool you. It really is Him. This is God's Savior.

For God keeps His promises. Always.

I don't. You don't. Sometimes because I'm a sinner and fail. Sometimes because something happens, and I no longer want to; I take back my promise instead. Sometimes because I promise something I can't do. But even when I want to, and try to, sometimes I can't. I'll be home for Christmas . . . but then a snowstorm prevents me. I'll be there for you, do this for you, get this for you . . . but we can't always.

But God . . . *always*. Because if He kept this promise, this promise of all promises, which other one will He not keep?

***To us a child is born, to us a son is given.***



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God sends His Son into our sinful world, our world of sin and death. He sends Him to take our sin upon Himself and suffer its penalty. To be rejected by the very ones He is saving as He is condemned and crucified, and then even forsaken by His Father. For you.

Many years before this God had tested Abraham, but didn't make him go through with sacrificing his son, Isaac. But God's Son would die. His Perfect Son.

And if God did that and kept that promise, everything else is easy, don't you think?

That's how much God loves you. A love He doesn't just speak, but acts. We heard that from John tonight: ***In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him.***

Or in other words, if you ever doubt whether God loves you, swaddling clothes and a manger shows just how much He does. And what He will do for you.

Through the years, God had done a lot. Wonderful works, great miracles, awesome power. Dividing the Red Sea, sending manna for 40 years, defeating powerful armies. But nothing so great as this; as a baby. This is His greatest work, His greatest miracle, His greatest power, for you.

Sometimes He gets overshadowed by the lights of the world, or by the darkness in our hearts and lives - the struggles, sorrows, pains, cares, worries, and problems that always seem to come rolling in one after another.

And so, it is exactly to us tonight that Isaiah speaks. Whether you're walking in the darkness of the world's lights, or the darkness of sin, sorrow, sadness, and death, ***the people walking in darkness have seen a great light. The grace of God has appeared***, Paul wrote to Titus and his churches. The gift of God. His Son.

Again, through the years, God has given an awful lot. To people of old, and to us. But no gift greater than this. This gift of a promise kept. The promise of life and salvation.

Some gifts that we receive get broken and thrown away. Some change the present and some change the future. But this gift changes us. It changes us from rebels to sons, from sinners to saints, from death to life. For when the forgiveness and love of God come to you and abide in you, how can that not change you?

***Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.*** As do we.

***The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God.*** As do we.



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***The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this***, Isaiah said. And He has. His zeal for you. His zeal to love you. His zeal to save you.

A zeal which now also lives in us, as we are the people Paul spoke of to Titus, ***a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works***. Because this Son now lives in you. His love and forgiveness live in you. And so, His zeal and good works also live in you. Another great work He works in us.

Tonight, we see again this great light. The grace of God, the glory of God, the Son of God, wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. Promise kept.

And we prayed in one of our hymns tonight:

*O holy Child of Bethlehem, Descend to us, we pray;  
Cast out our sin, and enter in, Be born in us today.  
We hear the Christmas angels, the great glad tidings tell;  
O come to us, abide with us, Our Lord Immanuel (LSB #361 v. 4).*

And He has. The darkness of the world and sin and trouble may remain, but Christmas means Immanuel, God with us (Matthew 1:23). God with us in the darkness, to lighten it. God with us in the struggle, with His strength. God with us to forgive. God with us. Whether we're from a little town like Bethlehem, or the big city of Jerusalem. Whether we're lowly shepherds or the mighty of the earth. Whoever you are . . .

***Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.***

Promise kept.

In the Name of the Father, and of the † Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.