



Sermon  
Rev. Dr. Lang Yang

## "Jesus is the Light of All Mankind"

First Sunday after Christmas  
Our Savior Lutheran Church  
12-26-21

Grace, mercy, and peace to you from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ! Amen

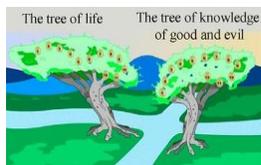
**John 1:4**, "In him was life, and the life was the light of men." This is the word of God. (Cross-reference – John 3:19; 5:26; 8:12; 9:5; 11:25; 12:46; 14:6; 1 John 1:1-2; 5:11)

Illustration (Christmas Tree) (Show Dr. Martin Luther Christmas Tree in the 16<sup>th</sup> Century)



It is believed that the Christmas tree originated with Martin Luther. The story goes that one Christmas Eve, Luther was out for a walk, and he noticed how the snow and frost sparkled on the branches of an evergreen, reflecting the moonlight. Intrigued by the beauty God has given us in nature, he cut the evergreen down and brought it home. There Luther decorated it with candles, and he told his children that the tree should remind them that Jesus is the light of the world. He has come to be our Savior. As the Apostle John writes in the first chapter of his Gospel, "In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind." (John 1:4). (<https://www.history.com/topics/christmas/history-of-christmas-trees>)

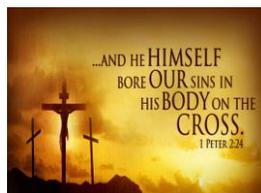
I. It begins with the tree itself. In the Bible, the tree is both a symbol of our sinfulness. It is also a symbol of our redemption from sin. (Show the two trees)



It was by the forbidden fruit of the tree that sin came into the world at the garden of Eden. God told Adam and Eve, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it, you will certainly die." (Genesis 2:16-17). Our sin begins with a tree. (Show Jesus hung on a cross)

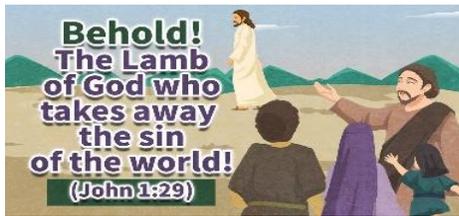


It also begins with a tree that is forgiven and pardoned of our sins. Christ was born in Bethlehem, and some thirty years later, he would die on a tree in Jerusalem. On the tree of the cross, he suffered God's punishment for our sins. The Apostle Paul wrote, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." (Galatians 3:13). (Show 1 Peter 2:24)



The Apostle Peter wrote, "He himself bore our sins" in his body on the cross, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; "by his wounds you have been healed." (1 Peter 2:24). Satan uses a tree to make humans fall to sins, but the tree that Christ hung on overcame the world's sin.

II. When it's time to pick out a tree, most people look for one that has an excellent shape. A gradually tapered tree with a point at the top. **(Show the Lamb of God)**



The point at the top reminds us that John the Baptist came to point to Christ. He was baptized in the Jordan river when he pointed to Jesus and said, "... Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! I have seen, and I testify that this is God's Chosen One." (John 1:29, 34). John the Baptist pointed to Christ. **(Show John 10:9, 30)**



Furthermore, when Christ came, he pointed the way to heaven. He pointed to himself. He declared that "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6). He told his disciples that he came to show us the Father and said, "... anyone who has seen me has seen the Father... I and the Father are one." (John 14:9, 30). Jesus came to point to himself as the way of salvation, the one who makes us right with God, the one who redeems us from our sins by his precious holy blood and his innocent suffering and death. **(Show Christmas tree with bright light)**



Whenever we decorate our tree at home, we like to put lots of lights on it. For us Christians, the lights remind us that Jesus is the light of the world. When the tree lights are not plugged in, the tree looks dark. According to our sinful nature, we live in darkness. Without the light, we are not sure what is right or wrong. Without the light, we don't know how to be at peace with God. Lights remind us that Jesus is the light of all mankind. **(Show I am the Light)**



Christ, the light of the world, was born to reveal God's salvation to us. Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." (John 8:12). **(Show shepherd/angel – wise men/star)**



Think back to that first Christmas in Bethlehem. Shepherds were living in the fields nearby, watching their flocks by night. A host of an angel of the Lord appeared to them. The glory of the Lord shone around them. They were in darkness, and the Lord brought them light.

We think of how the wise men, traveling mile after mile in the darkness, following a brightly lit star. The light reminds us that Christ is the light in the dark and the light to all mankind. **(Show evergreen tree)**



One of the reasons Christmas trees are beautiful is because they are always green. An evergreen is green in spring, summer, fall, and winter. It never changes. God does not change. **(Show Hebrews 13:8)**



King David wrote, "But you remain the same, and your years will never end." (Psalm 102:27). Malachi wrote, "The LORD do not change..." (Malachi 3:6). The author of Hebrews writes, "Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and

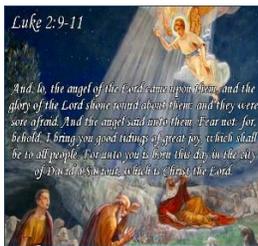
forever." (Hebrews 13:8).

III. The fact that God does not change is very comforting to us. It's significant when we put it into the context of Law and the Gospel. **(Show Psalm 103:17)**



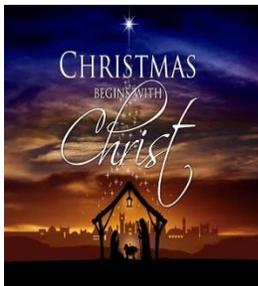
Where God's law is concerned, we are always where we stand. His commandments do not change. What was sinful 1000 years ago is sinful today, and it will be sinful 1000 years from now. It doesn't matter if the times change and everybody's doing it. Sin is still sin. The unchanging nature of God is even more comforting in his Gospel. God's love never changes. It never fails. His love and mercy are shown to us in Jesus Christ. God won't offer forgiveness one moment and then change his mind and take it away from the next. At the beginning of Psalm 51, David prays, "...O God, according to your unfailing love..." (Psalm 51:1). God's

love is dependable. He comes to us and says, "The Lord's love is with those who fear him, and his righteousness with their children's children." (Psalm 103:17). **(Show Luke 2:11)**



When Christmas time, our children look forward to the gift under the tree. God's gift to us is no less marvelous wonderful. Luke write, "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." (Luke 2:11) "The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life thru Jesus Christ our Lord." (Romans 6:23). "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8).

**(Show Christmas begin with Christ)**

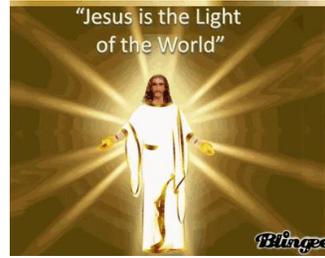
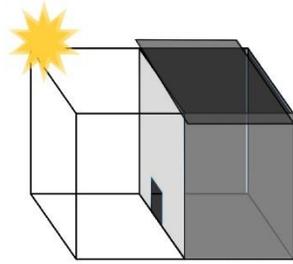


God gives his Son to us because he loves us. As Christians, Christmas represents our redemption from sin, pointing to Christ, is the light of all mankind, whose love never changes. Christmas begins with Christ. We continue to celebrate Christmas all year long. Each time we say Jesus' name, we celebrate Christmas over and over. Amen.

Now may the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus. Amen.

# Children Message

## "The Light Shines in Darkness"



**Scripture:** **John 1:5**, "The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." (NIV).

**Object:** A box with a hole in one end and a blanket that will shut out the light attached to the other ends.

Good morning, boys and girls. Today, we will have a little fun and learn something about Jesus. I brought a special box that I want to share with you. Please put your head in the box and shut out all the light with the blanket. I want you to see how dark it is inside of that box. Then when you tell me that it is dark, really dark, I will open up this tiny hole in the other end of the box and see if you can see the light and if the light lets you see the inside of the box. (*Begin the experiment with several of the children*).

The whole box is dark. We have a lot of darkness and only one tiny bit of light. I was hoping you could learn that all of the darkness in the whole world cannot shut out a little bit of light. The little bit of light can be seen in the biggest amount of darkness. Do you understand what I mean? (*Let them answer*). We shared this little experiment because it is what the Bible teaches us about Jesus. Jesus is like the light. He is only one person in the world, but he is such a strong person that he can overcome, or be stronger than, all of the rest of the people in the world.

Jesus is light. There is nothing wrong with Jesus at all, and wherever Jesus is, he will bring his best with him. Let's say that there is a lot of sin in the world. All of us make sin and are a part of sin. There is so much sin in the world you might think that we could not get rid of it. But that is not true. Jesus is like the light in the darkness. He gets rid of the sin by just being there. When you have sin in your heart, and you can have a lot of it, then ask Jesus to share your life with you, and your sin will go away. Jesus will forgive you your sin, and you will have no more.

That is why I want you to put your head in the box. The box is like a world full of sin. We don't think that we will ever get rid of sin, but the Bible teaches us that when Jesus came into the world, he was like a light, and wherever he went, he made the darkness, or the sin, leave so that people could live without living in sin. Maybe you want to make your box when you go home. Then you can remember how glad we are to have Jesus in our lives so that we don't live in the dark but rather in the light. God bless you all.