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Good Shepherd Sunday School Children's Christmas Program
12/24/21 – Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, Beaver Dam, WI

And you know, that's not the only question that gets asked around Christmas time every year, either. "What Child Is This?" – that's a famous hymn we're going to sing later in the service. "Mary, Did You Know?" – did you know who your baby boy really was and everything he was going to do for our world? Or one of my personal favorites has Charlie Brown turning to Linus and lamenting: "I guess I really don't know what Christmas is all about. Isn't there anyone who knows what Christmas is all about?" And with all the confidence of a future preacher, Linus walks on stage, calls for lights, and gives the best answer to every question out there, "*And there were in the same country shepherds...*" You know how the rest of it goes, and our children are going to remind us tonight if you don't.

See lots of people have lots of questions about this world and the meaning of life and everything else, but they all finally come down to this: "Who Is He?" Who is this baby of Bethlehem, wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger, whose birth we celebrate here on Christmas night? Well as we explore that answer together, we're going to see that Christmas isn't really about Santa and his reindeer and isn't just about love and generosity. No, Christmas is and always will be about Jesus Christ. The simple fact is that apart from Jesus Christ, there would be no Christmas; apart from Jesus Christ there would be no joy to the world, no peace on earth, no goodwill toward men; and apart from Jesus Christ there could never be salvation for sinners like us.

Yes, this is a story of love and generosity; but not ours – God's. See, the heart of this story is what the angel said to Joseph in Matthew chapter 1, "[*Mary*] will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name *Jesus*, because he will save his people from their sins." Jesus, the eternal Son of God, came into this world for one purpose, and it's what his name means: salvation. Jesus was *Immanuel*, he was "God with us," he was God and man in one person so that he could keep all of God's commands perfectly in our place because we haven't and couldn't, and so that by his death on the cross he could pay for all our sins and win us eternal life in heaven. Jesus was God and man in one person so that he

could be our substitute, so that he could be our sacrifice, and so that he could be our Savior.

And that's why Christmas is so hugely important. See, about four months from now, we're going to celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus. But without Christmas neither of those events ever happens and we're still lost in our sins. The reason we celebrate Christmas is because it points forward to the cross and the empty tomb – it's the first step toward our sins being paid for in full and our eternal life in heaven being guaranteed! Christmas is how we know that our God really is serious about His love for us and how much he wants all of us to be saved. So my friends, because Jesus Christ came for you, you can trust that your sins are forgiven, life and salvation are yours forever, the doors to heaven stand open for you, and your Savior is waiting there for you with open arms.

So "Who Is He?" Well this I know: no child's birth has been so anticipated. No child's birth has been so celebrated. And no child's birth has been so infinitely significant for every last person who has ever walked this earth. And for the answer to a question like that, I'm not going to trust a search engine or pop music or classic cartoons. No, tonight let's go straight to God's Word, the Holy Bible, and let's hear his promise that God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. We come here with a question, and you can be sure that our God won't let us leave here without his answer identified in his Son and our Savior, Jesus Christ. So God bless you all this Christmas season as you marvel at our God who (without question!) loved us so much that he sacrificed his own life in order to save ours for eternal life in heaven with him forever. Amen.