

Rev. Matthew Verseemann
Trinity Lutheran Church
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“Nothing Is Impossible With God”

God’s PEACE is ALWAYS YOURS in Jesus.

Hear the Word of God from Luke 1,

“The angel said to (Mary), ‘Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you....Mary was highly troubled at these words. But the angel said, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the Name, Jesus. He will be called the Son of the Most High....’ ‘How will this be?’ Mary asked, ‘since I am a virgin?’ The angel said, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God..... For nothing is impossible with God.’”

DEAR FRIENDS IN CHRIST,

We often times make our brains bigger than God. We like to be in charge. We like to tell God Who He is and Who He isn’t; what He can do and what He can’t do. That’s kind of like saying, “***God, here’s what we think of you, and whether it’s true or not, it’s none of your business.***’ Archie Bunker of “All In The Family” fame once said, “*Faith is believing what no one in their right mind would believe.*” Well, hand it to Archie to complicate the problem. A better definition of faith is: ‘*drop dead trust in the promises of God, even when you can’t figure it all out.*’ You see when it comes to God, you only have two options: ‘you will either let God tell you Who He is – because He knows Himself quite well - even if you can’t understand Him totally, or you’ll cook up a God who’s more comprehensible to you, but then He’s no longer Biblical. You’re just making a God in your own image when you do that.

In our text God does something startling, baffling, and mind-boggling. God reveals Himself to us, by entering human history, touching down on planet earth, and taking on flesh and blood for our salvation. Look at the trouble that God goes to, to save us; He totally and eternally changed His entire mode of existence from being only God, to being both true God and true man in the person of Jesus, in order to win our salvation. *“Impossible!”* you say? Then let me ask you, *‘How small is your God?’* Perhaps you need to check your brain at the door, and consider that just might possibly be bigger than your brain. If you only accept as true those things that you can understand, then you’ve made God as small as your brain, and as one pastor once said, *“A god who can fit inside my brain ain’t god! And a god who can fit inside your brain, definitely ain’t god.”* Luther once said, *‘If there are things in the Bible that you can’t understand, give the Holy Spirit the honor of being more learned than you are.’* And there are. We can’t understand the biology of the incarnation. We can only confess the incarnation. We might wonder: *‘Where and How did Jesus get His “Y” chromosome?’* All we can do is confess what God told us: *“He was incarnate by the Holy Spirit, of the Virgin Mary.”* The mechanics of the incarnation are hidden from us. Yet, all we need to know is: ***“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born to you will be called the Son of God.”*** Luther is probably as close as anyone, when He says, *“Mary became pregnant through her ear canal, and not her uterus, for the Word of God, that can create life out of nothing, implanted Himself into the womb of the Virgin, at God’s command.”* And the result is this. Phil. 2, ***“He was made in human likeness”***, 1st Timothy 3:16, ***‘Great is the mystery: God appeared in a body.’*** Luther once said to Zwingli, who would always try to make his brain bigger than the Bible, Luther said, *“There will be no caging in of Christ. God does what He says He does, and how He manages to pull it off is none of your business.”*

But why did God send Jesus to take on our flesh and blood? You see, Adam’s sin made every mother’s womb, into a tomb; in the sense that, we begin to die from the moment of our conception. But God gave us a great reversal- the Holy Spirit turned Mary’s tomb into a life-giving womb; since what is conceived in her is the Lord and giver of life.

So why was it necessary for Jesus to be true man? TWO reasons: First of all, because we needed someone to keep God’s law in our place. Galatians 4:4-5, ***“In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the Law, to redeem those who were under the Law.”*** Imagine Bill Gates putting on janitor’s clothes and scrubbing toilets. You’re not even close to what Jesus did, but you’re on the right track. **Page 2**

This prince, named Jesus, stepped down from His heavenly palace, set aside His royal robe, put away all the perks and privileges of royalty, and put on the work clothes of flesh and blood. Why? Because He had a job to do. And Paul tells us in Romans 5:19 that He got the job done: ***“By the obedience of the one man, Jesus, the many will be declared righteous.”*** Sometimes we want to blame God, because we’re born with Adam’s sin, and charged with Adam’s alien guilt (alien guilt means ‘the guilt of someone else’). So we reason: *‘Since Adam sinned in the garden, it’s not fair that I’m being charged with his sin.’* But wait a second. What’s your other option? You’re either going to be born with Adam’s sin, or not born at all. Are you sure you want the option of never existing? You see, once Adam and Eve sinned, they can only produce sinful children, or, as I like to put it: *“You can’t get a peach from two lemons.”* However, the entire time that we’re blaming God for the unfairness of being born with Adam’s sin, what we forget is the unfairness of Jesus being born to save us. And, in Jesus, God credits us with the alien righteousness of Christ (the righteousness of Jesus), which totally covers the guilt we’re still getting mad at God about. Get over the fact that your born with Adam’s sin, and rejoice in the fact that ***“Today, in the city of David, a Savior has been born for you,”*** who’s righteousness totally covers the sin you’re still blaming God for.

Jesus is conceived ‘in utero’ without sin, by the Holy Spirit. 2 Corin. 5 says, ***“He had no sin.”*** Where we got conception wrong, Jesus got conception right. Where we got birth wrong, Jesus gets birth right. The angel said to Mary in Luke 1, ***“The HOLY ONE to be born to you will be called the Son of God.”*** Jesus then passes through every stage of life – infancy, toddlerhood, childhood, youth, young adult, adult, all without sin. 1st Peter 2 says, ***“He committed no sin, and there was no deceit found in His mouth.”*** Where we got life wrong, Jesus gets life right, so He can give us His womb-to-tomb righteousness.

But there was another key reason Jesus had to be true man. He had another job to do for us. Hebrews 7, ***“Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness.”*** By taking on flesh and blood, Jesus is now qualified to bleed and die. Jesus made Himself bleed-able, kill-able, and die-able. Why? Well, the Bible says that before Jesus took on flesh and blood, He was only Spirit. Did you ever try nailing jello to a wall? No matter how hard you try, you just can’t nail jello to a wall. So why did Jesus have to take on flesh and blood? Because, you can’t nail a spirit to a cross, but you can nail a body to a cross.

However, if Jesus were ONLY true man, we would run into another problem. Psalm 49:7 says, ***“No man can redeem the life of another, or give to God a ransom for him.”*** If Jesus were only true man, at best, He could only be a substitute for one other person. Think of it like this: *“If Jesus was only a true man, he could only give the world a one-man-sized life of righteousness, and a one-man-sized substitutionary death”*. Which brings us to the question: *“Why did Jesus need to be true God?”* Anselm, the church father, once said, *“Because our sin is an infinite sin, and infinite sin demands infinite penalty; therefore, what is needed is that either we must all suffer infinitely for our sin, or an infinite person must be found to suffer for us.”* So, in steps Jesus, the infinite Son of God, to be our Savior. Now you’ve elevated His life and death to God-sized proportions.

Jesus had to be true God, so that His perfect life of righteousness, and His innocent suffering and death, would be big enough FOR ALL PEOPLE. As true God, Jesus has given the world a God-sized life of righteousness, and a God-sized death, that are big enough for everyone. 2 Corinthians 5:14, ***“Christ died for all.”*** And Hebrews 9:12 says, ***“Jesus entered the most holy place, once, for all, having obtained eternal redemption.”***

And finally, Jesus had to be true God, so that He could rise again, and conquer death, and the devil FOR ALL PEOPLE. 1st John 3:8, ***“The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil’s work.”*** Hebrews 2:14-15, ***“Since the children have flesh and blood, (Jesus) shared in their humanity, so that by His death, He might destroy him who held the power of death – that is the devil – and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death.”*** Rev. 12, ***“We overcome the devil by the blood of the lamb.”*** What’s the cure for snake-bite? Anti-venom. But how do you get anti-venom? Someone has to be bitten by the snake, and survive. The snake-bitten person, who then lives, has developed anti-bodies that overpower the snake venom. That’s what Christ did for us. He’s the anti-venom of sin, death and the devil. He bore in His body the sting of sin, death, and the devil; but rose again, and is now our anti-venom, to those enemies.

So now, let’s bring everything we’ve learned all together:

- The fact that Jesus is sinless means He’s qualified to give us perfect righteousness and to be our substitute sacrifice, since He has no sins of His own to pay for.
- The fact that Jesus is true man - flesh and blood - means that He’s qualified to bleed and die.
- And the fact that Jesus is true God, means that He’s qualified to live, bleed, and die FOR ALL PEOPLE, and to rise again in victory over our enemies. Page 4

It has been said, *‘The life Jesus lived qualified Him for the death that He died; and the death that Jesus died, qualifies you, for the life He now lives.’*

No one else in the entire universe was qualified to be our Savior, except Jesus, and He got the job done, and the whole world is saved, whether they believe it or not, or want it or not, but with one caveat, you can reject and lose it. John 1, ***“But to all who received Him, to all who believed in His Name, He gives the right to become children of God.”***

In the end, what was it that made Christmas necessary? Here’s what made Christmas necessary. Our sins created an awful predicament for God. God is holy, and must punish sin. But the penalty for sin is eternal death. So to carry out our well-deserved sentence, God would lose the very people He loves – all of us Who’s down in Who-ville. So 2,000 years ago God answered the anguished cry of a sinfully lost world, by cutting a deal with Himself – a deal by which He could remain holy and punish sin; but also a deal by which He could remain loving and save sinners. The deal? Punish our sins on a substitute. This is why Jesus is conceived in the womb of the Virgin, Mary. This is why baby Jesus, lying in the manger, already has a death sentence laid upon His baby head.

Luther calls this the sweep swap, the happy exchange, the grand finale of salvation. Jesus takes our sin, and gives us His righteousness. Jesus takes our death, and gives us His life. Jesus takes our hell, and gives us His heaven. Jesus defeats our devil, and gives us Himself as our Savior, or to put it in “angel terms”:

Luke 2, ***“Today! In the city of David, a Savior has been born for you, and He is Christ the Lord....suddenly there appeared with the angel a great company of the heavenly host, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth, PEACE, to all mankind on whom God’s favor rests.”***

And that’s what Christmas is all about, Charlie Brown. Amen.