

**Series:** Why Christmas?  
**Title:** Why A Savior?  
**Text:** Luke 2:11  
**Key Word:** Reasons  
**Proposition:** Everyone will call Jesus Savior because of these biblical reasons.

Good Evening. My name is Chris Farmer and I serve as one of the pastors. We are thrilled that you have chosen to worship God with us this holy night. God is in this place. He offers His presence and power, so that we can love him and others; grow to be like Jesus, and serve the world.

On June 5, 1978, a seven-year old boy named Martin slipped off a pier and fell into the Prairie River in Canada. At least a dozen adults saw him struggle for a few moments before he sank and drowned. Why didn't anyone dive in to save him? Just upstream, a plant used to dump raw sewage right into the river. The water was dirty—dangerous to your health. So, nobody jumped in to save Martin.

It's easy at times to view God as one of the onlookers standing on the pier of the Prairie River. We feel like God looks at us and says, "Look, I'm not diving into the mess of your life until you get out of the putrid river. I am a holy God, so you clean up your act first, and then I'll accept you and embrace you and love you." But the Bible paints a different picture. Angels intruded upon a quiet, peaceful night while shepherds were tending their sheep. Few would have thought that God would send His messengers to such a despised class of people, outcasts from all respectable society. Many thought that God would speak to the professionals, the leaders, the elite. But God comes to those who truly seek him regardless of status or prestige. With the shepherds we meet a

God who was—and *is*—willing to plunge into the mess of human sin and sorrow. We meet a God who says, "I'm coming after you before you get out of the river and clean yourself up." "I'm diving into your despised, meaningless life, to prove my love for you."

Luke wrote, *"But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."*

*"So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them.*

Luke reveals that God is willing to take the plunge into our mess. He won't sit on the pier and watch us struggle. He will jump in and save us. In Matthew chapter 1 we see Jesus' family history, which tells us that four of family members were foreign women who had questionable backgrounds. Women did not usually appear in family trees during this time—especially *immoral* women. This is Matthew's way of telling us that this Savior is willing to plunge into the mess of the whole world.

The babe they found lying in the manger was to be named “Jesus,” a very common name in that time meaning, “The Lord is Salvation.” The angel used three names to identify the One who would bring the gift of God. The first name was “Savior”, a Hebrew word meaning rescuer; then “Christ,” a Greek word for “the anointed One, the chosen One.” Then the third was “Lord,” referring to God Himself. So Jesus was and is the rescuer, the anointed One, God Himself, and the bearer of salvation.

So, why a Savior? Why did people then need deserve a Savior? Why do people now need and deserve a Savior? The Bible tells us that this Savior will be a very different kind of Savior from the one Israel expected. He will "save his people from their sins." God will save his people from *their sin*. The Gospel readers would have been shocked by this idea. They thought the Messiah-King would save them from the sin of others, not their sin. But the name of Jesus doesn't just mean, "God save us from them." It also means, "God save us from ourselves."

What a challenging but hopeful word! Jesus' first job is to save us from our sin—our pride, our stubbornness of heart, our lust, our oppression of others, our lack of love, our hardness of heart. Sin is a serious issue. It pollutes our lives. God takes the initiative to deal with it "once for all" in Christ. God dived into the mess of our lives before we could get out of the river and clean up our act. Why? Because He loves us. He takes pleasure in cleansing us with His forgiveness. Jesus didn't come to scare us. He came to save us.

We need a savior because the Bible says that Heaven is a perfect place and only perfect people get to go there. If God let imperfect people into heaven, it wouldn't be perfect any more. That means I don't stand a chance on my own effort. And neither did you. I lost my chance per perfection a long time ago. The point is that none of us bats 1,000. No of us is pollution free. None of us is always right, except my wife. If we had a giant screen behind me and were able to display for the audience everything we thought, said, or done in 2009 most of us would be extremely embarrassed. We live with a sense of regret because none of us is perfect. That is why we need a savior.

God in his love came up with a great plan. He sent His Son to be our Savior so that we can get out of the polluted water and enter the clean water of eternity. We heard the Bible say, "Unto you is born a Savior." A savior has been born to save us from our failures, our sins, and our mistakes. We can be forgiven. This is the priceless gift you can get—the gift of clear conscience. You can have your past forgiven, wiped clean. You can start over as a brand new person. That's Good News!

How do we receive this gift? Relax and trust in Jesus. Acts 10:34 says, "All who believe in Jesus' name will be forgiven of their sins through his name." You believe and let go of the guilt. You simply admit that your life is in a mess.

The difficulty is that we think we can work out our way into heaven. We think God is some heavenly banker keeping track of our deposits and withdraws. We say, "God, look at my balance." The problem is that we started off so far in debt that we could never balance the books. We say, "God, look, I am better than Hitler...Sadaam

Hussein...Tiger Woods...” Of course you are. You are even better than I am. God though does not judge us according to anybody else. He compares us to Himself. We all fall short. So we need a Savior. God provides the Savior in His Son, Jesus. So, reach out and take hold of him.

It was a snowy Christmas Eve. Inside the warm house, the Christmas tree was cheerfully ablaze with lights and surrounded by dozens of presents. The man’s wife and children were dressed and ready to leave for church. “Come with us, dad,” the children urged, for they loved him.

“Not me,” he snapped. “I don’t believe all that religion garbage.” For many years the man’s wife had been trying to tell him about Jesus Christ and the salvation he offers. How God’s Son had become a human being in order to show us the way to heaven.

“Nonsense,” the man always said.

The family left for church and the man was all alone in his cozy country home. He glanced out the window at the cold snowy scene outside. He turned to warm himself by the fire.

But as he turned, his eyes caught a movement in the snow outside. He looked. Cats! Three young cats walking slowly past his window.

“The fools,” he thought. “They’ll freeze for sure!” The man put on his hat and coat and opened the door. A blast of winery air sent a shiver through his body. “Come

here, cats! Come inside where there's warmth and food. You'll die out there." But the wild cats ran away, frightened by the stranger at the door.

He walked out side. "Come back; don't be afraid, I want to save you." But the cats were gone. It was too late.

"Well, I did everything I could for them," the man muttered to himself. "What more could I do? I'd have to become a cat myself in order to reach them and save them." If I became a cat, I could tell them and show them. They would have to believe me then, unless they were fools."

Just as he reached the door to enter his house, the church bells rang in the distance. The man paused for a second and listened. Then he went in by the fire, got down on his knees and wept.

My friends this Christmas. The Creator of the Universe loved us so much that he came to earth to save us from the cold, dark night of sin. If we listen to him, if we follow his voice, we will not perish from the hunger of love or chill of regret, but instead will be given everlasting life.