Isaiah 9:6, Luke 2:1-7

“A simple Christmas Story”

 I am so glad that you are here tonight. I have been praying for each one of you that God would work upon your heart so that you would come this evening. You have come to a place where the miraculous birth of our Savior Jesus Christ is celebrated and tonight we heard the wonderful Christmas story. For the past month we have been looking at the Gospel of Luke and focusing upon the theme of what? No Fear. That’s right, we are learning how to live without fear and that can only come with a foundation of trust in our Savior Jesus Christ.

 The Luke story of the birth of Jesus is surrounded by all sorts of different details and information that is fascinating and grounds the birth in history. We find the Romans are in charge and the emperor demands that a census be taken. That’s neat and interesting if you are into history. But we aren’t going to focus on any of these details, but rather we are going to look at vs. 6 and focus on a few words in that verse. Let’s look at that verse again, While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. Say those three words again, the time came.

 What does that mean that the time came? What time was that? That’s right baby time? That’s what we are celebrating this evening, isn’t it? But where does the Christmas story begin in the Bible? Does it begin in Matthew, where we begin our Gospel message and you have the wonderful angels showing up to Matthew and the wise men who come a little later on. Is that where it begins? No, what about Isaiah. He pretty directly speaks about the birth of our Savior and gives him these amazing titles: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Is that where it begins? No, it begins in Genesis in chapter 3 where we see the fall of man and as a result a son has been promised to come and free us from our sin.

 Now a lot of time has passed between the beginning of the Bible and the Gospel of Luke, right? How many of you wanted a puppy when you were growing up for Christmas? What if your parents told you, okay, you can have one, and Christmas comes along and what? No puppy. Well, next Christmas it must be coming. No puppy. And this continues all along and you don’t see your puppy materialize. What are you thinking about your parents? They forgot, or they didn’t mean it, or maybe they are angry or disappointed in me, or they are just distracted, they’ll get one.

 This is how the people of Israel were feeling about when in the world is this Messiah going to be coming that has been promised to us way back in the beginning of time, confirmed to us once again in Isaiah, and now we are still waiting. How did you all get to go downstairs to open your presents? For some people your parents had to be awake, for others, and this was our family and is our tradition with our kids as well, all the kids have to be awake and you cannot come down before 6 am. You are not allowed to wake up any of the brothers

 Every year in my family of 4 boys the same things would happen. I would always be the first one up, my brother John and I shared a room, so I would wake him up, yeah I broke the rules. Then the two of us would sit outside of the bedrooms of my older brothers pretend whispering saying something like: I wonder when they are going to wake up. I wonder if the stockings are full again this year. I wonder if dad got us the same Swiss chocolates that he did last year, hoping beyond hope that this would rustle up our brothers out of bed.

 Finally one brother would come out and then another and when that last one came out, it was normally Timmy, we would all say – It is about time. And we would go down and enjoy the miracle of Christmas. When Luke tells us that the time came for her to deliver her child, it was not that simple of a story. This was the culmination of meticulous planning by our creator God who had a whole world groaning and saying it is about time. God took his time to prepare that baby to lead us to salvation.

 In Galatians Paul tells us in 4:4 but when the fullness of time had come, God sent his Son, born of a woman. On that first Christmas night in Bethlehem after a 90 miles journey on foot and donkey, in a foreign town and away from any of her family and any of her friends, Mary delivered her baby boy, and I’m guessing that as she heard the animals in the cave she thought to herself, it is about time. I’ll never forget when Rachel was born. It was quite an experience in a public hospital in Naples, Italy. I was a member of the board of the hospital and so as a VIP they said that as long as no one else was giving birth in the birthing room I could come in and assist. I thought a communal birthing room was normal. What did I know?

 After about an hour and a half of labor in the birthing room along came Rachel. Which isn’t bad, actually pretty good right? But I was exhausted, I said it’s about time. But one of my sister’s in law had a labor that lasted over 48 hours. I read of a woman who had her baby 6 weeks overdue. What do you think they were thinking when that baby finally came out? It’s about time.

 But it was God’s time that allowed our Savior to be born exactly when he needed to be born. Our Christmas story would have been much different and would have come much sooner. All of those years fit together perfectly until that night when the fullness of time came, when God’s timing was realized and as Luke’s Gospel tells us, the time came, and it was about time.

 I know this Christmas is one that right on the forefront of our minds is the tragedy of the massacre of the innocents in Newtown and families will be waking up tomorrow morning with presents under the tree that will never be unwrapped by a little hand. It’s about time for these families that this child is born for them. The inexplicable happens and all we are able to do is point to the manger and say the time has come, it is come and it is now.

 Maybe you are here this evening and you are saying those words. It is about time. But maybe you showed up tonight and you’ve been looking for something or someone and just aren’t quite sure what it is. Maybe you’re saying it is about time for my job, or my marriage, or my kids and I don’t get along, or your health hasn’t improved, or life has just lost its purpose. It’s about time that this child is born to lead me to a place that makes more sense.

 Or maybe you’ve worked your whole life and you have the three cars and the house and the wife and the kids and the retirement, but for some reason it just doesn’t seem to matter and they slipping through your fingers like sand, because you are looking for something and someone and don’t quite know what it is. You just can’t seem to find it, well isn’t it time that you look somewhere else? You’ve been looking in all the wrong places.

 Welcome home, you’ve arrived at a place where the story of Christmas is not just told, but it is lived. The story of Christmas is about God painstakingly putting all the details together so that not only on that first Christmas did our Savior come into the world, but this evening you are here for a specific purpose and a specific reason. God is saying to you isn’t it about time you let me love you? Isn’t it about time that you open up your heart and let me in and allow me to take your life and make it into something that it is not?

 Our Savior Jesus Christ was born in the fullness of time and tonight we are here to celebrate that event. Don’t leave this evening without receiving the Savior and know that He wants you to love him as he has been waiting for you to come and receive him. What a simple Christmas story it is, and boy, it’s about time.

Amen.