

The Story: The Birth of the King

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[0 : 00] All right. Good morning, Braymar Baptist. Welcome to Daylight Saving Time. I was actually going to ask the worship team if they would add a song this morning, How Late Thou Art. But fortunately, lots of us are here, so that's good. Welcome. I know it wasn't easy for me. I don't know how easy it was for you, but obviously those of us who are here this morning, we remembered to set our clocks ahead last night before we went to bed. That's painful, isn't it? You adjust all your clocks in your house and say, oh, 60 minutes. That hurts.

But hopefully you didn't wake up in a panic this morning and realize, oh no, I forgot. Possibly lots of people did that, and they're not here. But, you know, it was quiet as usual for me this morning. I didn't have, aside from the worship team and some folks that came for the adult Bible study this morning, I didn't have any unexpected early risers who were sitting in the pews going, hey, how come church is late? So that's good. I don't know how well you adjust to losing an hour of sleep, but the reality is for most of us, we feel that quite a bit. This is just a public service announcement part of the sermon. It's one of those things that if you have to do it one day to get up and go to the airport, it's not really that bad. It's not that fun. You know, if you're trying to catch a plane or you're trying to get away early on a road trip, Daryl and Gertie went skiing today and over the next couple days. So I was talking to him, make sure you move your clock because you're already getting up early. So daylight saving time can be a bit of a killer, really. It's a time change without the added enjoyment. It's without the enjoyment of a vacation at the end.

It's jet lag without the jet. It can be exhausting. So I just encourage you to take care this week, especially if you're driving or even if you're just out for a walk because people will be behind the wheel. This is former AMA guy again talking. People will be behind the wheel and they will be tired. So give yourself grace. Make sure you listen to your body. Get lots of rest this week, especially flu season, and adjust to that lost hour because you will feel it. You know, speaking of feeling things, we played floor hockey last night. I am feeling it. I felt like I was in net and people were taking out their frustration on the pastor at times, especially Daryl and Connor and Chang.

But the reality is that the pain of the time change will go away. So you may find it more difficult getting up in the morning. We have that darkness again in the morning and that won't be very fun, but enjoy the extra hour of daylight at the end of the day. We were driving to church last night and I said, this is going to be seven o'clock tomorrow night. Look at how light it's going to be. It's exciting. And the temperatures are starting to climb. I mean, we got the snow, but the temperatures are starting to climb. So we're on the way out. So daylight saving time is a transition. And we're also at a transition point in our sermon series on the story because we're moving from the Old Testament to the New Testament. And we find ourselves essentially in the Christmas story this morning, at least somewhat.

[3 : 36] And most of us, I think, can remember seeing a Christmas pageant or even being in a Christmas pageant. I've been a sheep at least once in my acting career. That's true. Makes me feel bad to remember it. So maybe you can picture a little boy in a bathrobe and running shoes. He nervously knocks at the door and another boy playing the innkeeper and he's maybe dressed in a burlap sack. And he tells Mary and Joseph that there's no room in the inn. Mary and Joseph shrug, look sad, and start to walk away.

But what if a voice suddenly said, wait, do you realize who you are turning away? Do you think the innkeeper in the Christmas story really wanted to be known throughout history as the guy who turned Jesus away?

But see, we can't change that story. We can't change the scene. Because if we did change that scene, there would likely be other changes too.

Maybe no angels singing in the sky. No shepherds keeping watch and marveling at the star. Maybe no wise men.

No announcement to the shepherds to look for a savior in the manger. Our sermon this morning is titled, The Birth of the King. And we begin in the Gospel of John.

[5 : 13] Now I want to pause for a second. The book of John is at the beginning of the New Testament. Close. And it follows the books of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And these books together are known as the...

Thank you. Have you ever wondered why those four books are called the Gospels? I've talked about it before, but I don't blame you if you don't remember. The word gospel is derived from an Anglo-Saxon... I'm Anglo-Saxon...

term, God spell. That's what it means. Which means good story. And it's also related to the word evangelium in Latin.

And then the Greek word euangelion. Which means... Any guess? Good story. Good news. Good news. That's where gospel comes from. So the books of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are called Gospels... because they are four biblical narratives that cover the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

[6 : 29] So now we know that. So what's the difference between Gospels or a gospel and the gospel? Because there's a difference.

The first two refer to a book or books in the Bible. But the gospel is the proclamation of redemption proclaimed by Jesus and the disciples...

that is the central content of Christian belief. See the difference? And let's go through the gospel again quickly...

because we can never hear it enough. Sin is part of the spiritual DNA of humanity. And that rebellious nature keeps us from obeying God... and seeking His will for our lives.

It's only through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ... that our sin can be forgiven. Making it possible for our relationship with God... to be restored.

[7 : 33] So here we are at the beginning of the gospel of John... and I want us to recognize something. Do you remember how John starts? What are the first three words?

In the beginning. Where else do we find those three words? Thank you. So we recognize then that God is doing something amazing...

in His upper story... that intersects with the lower human story... in Genesis... where God creates all things. And this morning we see those two stories...

intersecting in a very powerful way again. It's like God has a plan. And we recognize that this morning... in the coming of Jesus Christ...

the Messiah. The Bible says in John 1, 1-5... this is one of my favorite passages... in the whole Bible. Let's read this together.

[8 : 41] In the beginning was the Word... and the Word was with God... and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning...

through Him all things were made... without Him... nothing was made... that has been made. In Him was life... and that life...

was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness... and the darkness has not overcome it. Say that last verse together.

The light shines in the darkness... and the darkness has not overcome it. The darkness will not... cannot overcome that light. When the Bible speaks of the Word... with a capital W... we recognize that it is speaking of...

[9 : 37] the Son of God... who came to be born as a baby in Bethlehem. Bethlehem. So when John speaks here... of the Word becoming flesh...

that's the event he's speaking of... God the Son... became flesh and blood... came to experience... all that it means to be human.

All of it. The word... word... comes from the Greek word... logos... which is where we get...

the English word... logic. Interesting how... reason... and faith... intersect there. Heraclitus...

was a philosopher... who lived in the city of Ephesus. And this is interesting to me... in my studying. He observed... that you cannot...

[10 : 34] step in the same river... twice. Right? You don't step... in the same river...

twice. Because a river... is constantly in motion. Try not to have your brain hurt. Heraclitus said... that the concept of logos... is one of... omnipotent wisdom... that steers... everything. This is not human logic. So how fitting... for God incarnate... the word... logos. The philosopher Plato... also suggested... that the word... that a word... capital W... might one day... be uttered... by God. Pretty neat.

[11:29] And in my studies... I found it interesting... that many Bible translators... have found that... translating the original Greek... into simply... word... is largely inadequate.

Probably not surprising. And often... the words... living word... are used instead... as a better translation. Living word... Jesus Christ. Christ. So when we consider... the power of God's breath... and God's words... it should come... as no surprise... that the ultimate culmination... of God's plan... the ultimate culmination... involved... his word... becoming literally... incarnate... as Jesus... the man. God... is revealed... this word... to which John refers... we recognize then... as being God himself...

[12:28] is revealed... in Jesus Christ. And as I said... a bit earlier... we see an echo here... of God's creative power... at work. Because God... created by words... didn't he? He created... created by speech... let there be... and there was. The word of God... was God... in the flesh. Jesus... made... flesh... with teeth... and toenails... and two kidneys... somehow... not somehow... part human... and part God. God... but this is... the mystery of it... fully human... and fully God. But let's consider... for a moment... that Jesus... [13:25] was born... an ordinary person... in a human form... to ordinary people. The Bible says... in Luke 1... 34 to 35... let's read this together... how will this be... Mary... asked the angel... since I am... a virgin... the angel... answered... the Holy Spirit... will come on 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. Jesus... was born... from a young... virgin girl... so in many ways... his birth... was unremarkable... Mary... wasn't rich... we talked about this... during our Advent season... last year... Mary... wasn't rich... she didn't come from... a rich family... [14:20] she came from... loving... but otherwise... unremarkable... and ordinary parents... Jesus... earthly father... Joseph... was... an ordinary carpenter... no offense... to carpenters... but he was... a carpenter... nothing more... nothing less... Jesus' birth... was truly... humble... but what does that... humble beginning... that humble background... mean... for us... what does that mean... for you... right here... and right now... where you are... my friends... that same Jesus... who came from... humble beginnings... the same Jesus... whose life... modeled... humility... and tenderness... and grace... that same Jesus... [15:13] he's humble enough... to know... what you've been through... this week... he's humble enough... to know... what you're struggling with... in your life... he knows... he knows... the things that keep you... awake at night... he's humble enough... to know... a cold night... and a hungry belly... the word... became... flesh... he came... to... and for... us... us... the word... Jesus... the word... was turned away... by many people... the Bible says... in John 1... 10... and 11... let's read this together... he was in the world... and though the world... was made through him... the world did not... recognize him... [16:09] he came to that... which was his own... but his own... did not receive him... the innkeeper... wasn't the only one... who turned Jesus away... we can only imagine... what went through his head... as he rejected Jesus... he rejected this young couple... this woman... who was about to give birth... they traveled so far...

were so tired... dirty... hungry... but he claimed that... it was too crowded... for a pregnant woman... to give birth at his inn... they wound up... on all accounts... in a stable... in a manger... in a cave... behind the inn... where good people... stayed in warm beds...

our world... my friends... is a crowded place... a busy place... and I don't know about you... but... the response...

[17:11] the response... I most often receive... when I ask... how someone is doing is... busy... or fine...

fine... is the... is our neutral... Canadian response... how are you... fine... it means... I didn't really care... and you didn't really... want to tell me... right...

let's be honest... but the response... also... is often... busy... how are you... I'm busy... oh... I've got so much...

to do... today... tomorrow... the rest of my life... busy... we seem... not to have... enough time... and yet... we have... exactly...

the same... the same... hours... in a day... the same... minutes... in an hour... seconds... in a minute... as... everyone else...

[18:08] often... our world... is too busy... to receive... Jesus... it's too crowded... to receive... Jesus... we're crowded... with deadlines...

and headlines... phone lines... and waiting lines... full calendars... full schedules... jam... packed... lives... Jesus... came... to the world... Jesus... came... to our lives... not to complicate... things...

that were already... complicated... but to simplify... our lives... and ultimately... to... give... us... life... it's never... too late... to invite... Jesus... into our lives...

[19:03] I once... met a young man... when I was working... in landscaping... while I was at seminary... he was at a job site... he just lost... his dad...

and against... my comfort zone... I listened to God... and I went... and talked to him... and I talked to him... about God... because he recognized... that he had known...

the Lord... but he said... to me... he had blown it... and couldn't... go back...

he felt... it was too late... for him... and you know what... I looked him... directly in the eyes... and he was a tough guy... so I gave him a...

light... punch... on the shoulder... and I said... my friend... it is never... too... late... we don't have to...

[20:01] clean up our act... before God... will receive us... before Jesus comes... because that's... why he came... turns out...

I needed this message... as much as you... we don't... Jesus comes... at the last minute... he comes... when we least expect him...

and always... when we need him most... because... guess what... God's timing... is perfect... it wasn't too late...

for Abraham... at a hundred years... not too late... for Moses... after 40 years... in the desert... not too late... for Jonah...

running from God... for Saul... of Tarsus... who had persecuted... Christians... and met Jesus... on the road... to Damascus... it also wasn't...

[21:01] too late... for Peter... who had followed... Jesus... and said... I will never deny you... and he did it... three times... it wasn't too late...

for Thomas... who knew Jesus... but doubted... who he said he was... friends... your life...

is not too crowded... and it's not too late... for you to meet Jesus... to come to him... to return to him...

the word... our king... and our savior... this morning... if you know Jesus...

and you follow him... I celebrate that... with you this morning... but if you don't know Jesus... or don't feel like... you know him...

[21:58] the way you could... I encourage you... to pray this prayer... this prayer... this morning... very short... come in... Jesus...

please come in... and make my heart... your home... let's pray... and... let's pray... we pray... and... let's pray... and... let's pray...