

Divine Intervention

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Preacher: Joe Dugger

[0 : 00] Thank you, Eric and Emily and choir for leading us in that time of worship through song.! If you would go ahead and turn in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 1.! Matthew chapter 1.

Alright. Now, I told you, we're looking at the birth of Jesus this morning, and I know that there are questions right now in your head. Like, didn't we just do this?

Right? It was just Christmas. What are we doing here already? Why are we doing that again? Well, we're going through Matthew's Gospel as a church. And going through Matthew's Gospel, when I say that, I mean we go through the book, like line by line.

And the next verse after last week was the Nativity. So, we're going to read the next verse. We're going to study it. But the other thing that I want you to see is that when we go through this passage and we study the incarnation of Jesus Christ, I want you to understand that we can, and I would suggest should, study the reality of the incarnation far more often than we do.

If we limit our study on the coming of Christ to one month out of the year, or sometimes one or two weeks out of the year, then we do a disservice to ourselves, and we would do a disservice as the church.

[1 : 22] I mean, we should always study the incarnation of Christ. The miracles that took place around the event. The virgin birth itself. The visits from the angelic beings.

I mean, these things are part of the bedrock of our faith. This story is part of the bedrock, the foundation of our faith. And so, we will take some time looking into this story of the birth of Jesus Christ today.

And with that, I want to set the stage for our study. Focusing on the incarnation, I want you to understand what the incarnation of Jesus Christ is.

Simply put, the incarnation is when God took on flesh. I've defined the incarnation this way. This is not out of a textbook. This is just Joseph's definition. It says, The incarnation of Christ is the miraculous moment in history when God himself stepped into time and space and took flesh upon himself.

He never stopped being truly God, even for one moment. Never losing any divine attribute. And now, there's a few important realities that I want to address about the incarnation before we look at the story today.

[2 : 32] And here they are. The first one is that the incarnation is visible at the birth of Jesus, but it occurred at the conception of Jesus. The incarnation is visible at the birth of Jesus, but it occurred at the conception of Jesus.

And I want you to understand what I mean by that. Jesus lived the entire human experience. From embryo to adulthood, Jesus lived the entire human experience.

And I point this out because I think in the incarnation of Jesus Christ, we see one of the best defenses and cases for the sanctity of life in the womb. If we believe that Jesus Christ took on human flesh and never stopped being God, even for a moment, and we believe that he was truly a human being, then that necessitates, I think, a belief that from the moment of conception, when the Holy Spirit placed the baby Jesus in the womb of his mother Mary, that from that moment, Jesus Christ was a living being.

Right? A human, living human being. And so there's a powerful reality here where God places a heavy emphasis on the sanctity of life at every stage, even in the womb.

You see that because he didn't skip this phase. Right? He didn't skip this phase and go straight into being a baby. He didn't drop from heaven. He came into the world through the same means that you and I did, only that the events surrounding the incarnation are miraculous.

[4 : 01] And that's the second point. The incarnation occurred through miraculous means, not ordinary means. Listen, Scripture is very clear that Mary was a virgin.

There was no human male involved in the process of conceiving Jesus. His origin is that the Spirit of God placed the baby in his mother's womb.

The reality of the virgin birth is essential for us to accept because Jesus could not have been only human and been the efficient or effective Savior of the world.

Hebrews 2, 14 and 15 explains it this way. It says, This is a miraculous birth.

And the third point is that the incarnation is when God assumed human flesh, not when he ceased being God. So Christ, taking on human flesh, possesses two natures. Truly human and truly God.

[5 : 29] Those two natures are inseparable. They are without confusion. They don't overlap with one another. They are Christ. Two natures. This is known as the hypostatic union.

Everybody say hypostatic union. Hypostatic union. I saw Clint wake up a little bit, so that was good. Okay. I'm going to get you all to say more things. Keep Clint on his toes. You know what I'm saying? Amen. So that's what I mean whenever I say that we're studying the incarnation of Christ. We're studying God becoming man. And this is a reality that impacts us every day of the year, not only on December 25th. Amen? Okay.

Now, I want to turn our attention for a moment to ourselves. And as we study the incarnation of Christ and the various ways that it impacts us, let me address one reality that is woven into this passage.

And that is that there is a false assumption that we are inherently strong enough to handle any situation, no matter how bad it might be. So raise your hand if you've heard this before. You've heard someone say, God won't give you more than you can handle.

[6 : 34] You ever heard that one? Okay. I hear that all the time, right? I hear that all the time.

People who comfort themselves with this phrase, you know, like I was talking with somebody just recently, and the experience that they were going through is very, very challenging, very, very difficult.

And the way that they came to terms with it, the way that they comforted themselves with the situation that they were facing was they said, well, at the end of the day, I know that God won't give me more than I can handle, so I'll be okay.

And I stopped them and I said, well, actually, God will give you more than you can handle. This situation you're in is more than you can handle in your own strength. This is a false promise.

It's not actually a biblical concept at all. And the false confidence is placed in our ability to handle certain things, our ability to have enough strength or mental fortitude or inner, you know, resolve to handle difficult things that we face.

But this is not a biblical idea, the idea that you won't face too much pain or you won't go through too many challenges. That's not a biblical idea. And when we teach ourselves this, and hopefully I'm encouraging you, I'm not condemning anyone for saying that.

[7 : 47] I think it's been taught so often that this is what, you know, the Bible says. But when we think that way, that God won't give us more than we can handle, and we, you know, we preach this to ourselves over and over and over, what I think can happen, what the danger is, is that when we get into a situation or circumstance where it is too much for us to handle, we feel like we're in over our heads, we're drowning in the weight of the moment, whatever it may be, in those moments, we have this tendency to feel like God has either abandoned us or broken his promise, and suddenly the blame for the bad situation shifts now to God, and it's his fault for giving us more than we can handle.

What are you talking about, God? I thought I would always be able to handle everything. The reality is that that idea, just so you know, comes from the Bible somewhat, okay?

And what I mean by that is, in 1 Corinthians 10, verse 13, the Bible says, No temptation has come upon you except what is common to humanity, but God is faithful.

He will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation, he will also provide the way out so that you may be able to bear it. In other words, what the Bible promises, what God promises to you and to me is that we will never be so overtaken by sin and temptation that we cannot escape that temptation.

And the reason for that is not because you or I are particularly strong enough, it's because God will provide a way out. The fact of the matter is that all of this is about God and his power.

[9 : 29] And so I want to caution you today, don't believe the lie that you won't be given more than you can handle. Because I'm afraid you will.

You will. That's part of the human experience. In fact, it's part of the Christian experience to be given more than you can handle. The promise in Scripture has to do with the ability of God to free us from temptation, not the ability of God to protect us from too difficult of problems.

The thing that we have to realize when we think about, you know, the challenges that we face is that we need to rest in God and his ability to take us through things, to bring us through challenges and difficulties, and not rest in our own ability to get out.

See, if we start thinking that we, you know, have this ability to escape whatever challenging situation that we're in, then when we face challenges, we'll look inward instead of upward.

We stop looking to God, we look into ourselves and try to find ways to navigate hard, challenging circumstances and situations in life. But the call for the Christian is instead to look upward, to look to him, to look to the one who can, who has endured, who can get through the challenges of life, and who will provide for us the necessary strength to make it through.

[10 : 51] Our confidence is not placed in ourselves, it's placed in Jesus. It's found in the fact that Jesus Christ came and lived a perfect life and died on the cross and rose again, and now he's on the throne in power.

Now, as we're looking at this passage, you're like, well, Joe, that was kind of a weird tangent to go off on. Well, let me explain something. I want you to think right now, put yourself in the position of Mary and Joseph, Mary or Joseph. If you're a guy, Joseph.

If you're a girl, Mary. Do you honestly think that what God called them to do was not too much for them? Right?

Like, they were given a very challenging call, like a dangerous call, actually. Socially, I mean, like with their families, like things were going to change because of what God called them.

Do we really believe that this wasn't too much for them? Of course not. These young people were just living life. I say young people.

[11 : 51] Mary was probably 13 or 14 years old. Joseph was maybe 17 or 18 years old. They were just living life. They were betrothed. They were under contract. I'll explain the betrothal process in a second. They were planning for marriage.

Okay? They were preparing for a life together. Then all of a sudden, because of the call of God, they now had new problems to work through. They had a call that was going to affect every aspect of their life.

Their families would doubt the story. Their friends would stop being seen with them. And they would have struggles with each other in their own relationship that they couldn't have expected. Not to mention the spiritual community would have shamed them and not believed them.

Or the fact that they also, on top of all of the social stigma and everything else, now have the responsibility of raising a baby. I mean, having children is a beautiful thing.

But it's a ton of responsibility. They have all of this. All of this weight is placed on them. And we're going to teach and think that God won't give us more than we can handle?

[12 : 54] No. I think Mary and Joseph are great examples for us. In that God will give us more than we can handle. And that His grace is sufficient. God does give us more than we can handle.

He allows things to occur in our lives that are beyond our own strength. Because when we are weak and lack ability, He is strong and able. 2 Corinthians 12, 9 says, But He said to me, My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.

Therefore, I will most gladly boast all the more about my weakness, so that Christ's power may reside in me. Let's remember, folks, as we study the incarnation of Jesus Christ and the circumstances surrounding this miraculous moment, this huge event, this cosmic event, that these people were facing a situation that was beyond their strength.

But in their weakness, God was made strong. So we're going to look through this passage now, and I'm just going to break it down for us as we go.

So the first thing is that this is a scandalous situation. Looking at the circumstances surrounding the incarnation of Jesus Christ, this was a scandal of all scandals.

[14 : 06] Verse 18 says, The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way. After His mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered, before they came together, that's a euphemism, that means before they had had sexual relations with one another, that she was pregnant from the Holy

Spirit.

You know, when we did that presentation in Taiwan, at this point, Chris, who would do this part of the presentation, would pause, and he would say, Do you think Joseph believed Mary?

What do you think? Do you think Joseph believed her? It's a pretty unbelievable story, is it not?

She's pregnant? What in the world? And let me explain this betrothal, okay?

So it says in the CSB, what I'm reading, it says engaged. That's just for us, our context. The reality is, the ancient betrothal custom for Jews was a lot different than our modern-day engagement custom, okay?

These people were not dating and spending every waking moment with each other and writing each other love notes and, you know, going for cake tastings and looking at venues. That's not what was going on here, okay?

[15:10] The betrothal custom for the Jews in the first century especially was that a contract was reached, normally actually by the parents of the two. And that contract included a bride price.

Typically, the bride had the right to approve or accept the price. It wasn't that she was completely out of control in the situation. But nonetheless, a contract had been agreed upon.

And then what would happen is, during this betrothal period, legally, they were married. But socially, they were actually pretty separate. In fact, for most of the time that the betrothal took, which was about 6 to 12 months, for most of that time, they were not really together publicly much at all.

Instead, the husband or the groom was building an addition onto his parents' house, and the bride was at her home preparing for marriage and preparing the things that she would bring into the home. So this year-long period was a test of fidelity, okay?

If someone can make it through the engagement period without, you know, going with another in any way, then certainly we can be married and have a long life together, right? That was the idea there. And also a time of preparation.

[16:17] So during this time, Mary and Joseph weren't together. So it says it was discovered that Mary was pregnant. Like this, when it says discovered, Joseph, we don't know how he found out, but it would have been discovered.

Either someone told him, hey, dude, hey, Joseph, hey, just so you know, I don't want to be the bearer of bad news, but I think Mary's running around on you, man. Joseph's like, what?

What do you mean? She's pregnant. That's terrifying. That's terrifying. So this betrothal custom, now Joseph is in this place of thinking that she's been unfaithful, and now he's concerned for their future, of course, as he would be.

And that the challenges that they would face because of this were great. Now, if pregnancy occurred during the betrothal, there's a couple of ways that Scripture explained how this could be handled.

Number one, if the bride-to-be became pregnant by the groom-to-be, they were then married, all right? He's like, okay, you guys are pregnant. You've been together. Now you'll be married, okay?

[17:22] Now the other way that this could happen is if she was pregnant by another, if she was proven to be unfaithful, the Old Testament actually called for potential up to capital punishment in this case, meaning the woman could be stoned to death if she was found to be pregnant.

This is Old Testament, Deuteronomy, okay? So Joseph, just so you know, in Jesus' day, they did not have the right to stone people anymore because Rome was over Israel, so they took away capital punishment from the Jews.

So Mary wasn't really at risk of being stoned to death, but what still did happen and could have happened in this case is that Joseph could have absolutely ruined Mary's reputation and character. He could have run her through the mud. He could have shamed her publicly. He could have made a whole spectacle of it. But that's not what happens. I want you to see, thinking about the challenging situation that they're in, that there is a high cost to obedience to the Lord, right?

Mary had been visited by the angel, Gabriel, and she submitted to God's plan, and in submitting to God's plan, put herself at a huge risk.

[18:32] It was a challenging situation that they found themselves in. At the time that Mary submitted to the call of the Lord to bear this child, she had no idea how her groom would respond.

She had absolutely no idea. It's one thing to accept what God calls us to do when we can taste the fruit of the endeavor, right? When we can see how good it's going to be.

But it's another thing altogether to accept what God is calling us to do and obediently walk in faithfulness when we have no idea what the end will look like and we know how challenging the path will be.

When we go to difficult places when God calls, when we do difficult things when God calls, we know that it can affect us personally, financially, socially, and permanently in the case of Mary and Joseph.

It's a dangerous calling. Now the question is, how do we respond to the call of God? How do we respond to the call of God? And that's Matthew 19. So her husband, 1.19, her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly. [19:41] Now I want to stop for just a second and go over to Luke's gospel and read how Mary responded when the angel told her the news. Because you see Joseph's response, right?

Joseph is a righteous man and we'll get to that. But I want to look also at Mary's perspective. Luke 1.34-38, it says, Mary asked the angel, how can this be since I have not had sexual relations with a man?

The angel replied to her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. And consider your relative Elizabeth, even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called childless.

For nothing will be impossible with God. See, this is Mary's response. See, I am the Lord's servant, said Mary. Mary, may it happen to me as you have said. So the angel told Mary what was going to happen.

She had no idea how it was going to happen. And when it was explained, this was going to be a miraculous work of God, Mary believed. She believed the word of the Lord. And she said, okay, I submit to the plan of God. She trusted God's word and she submitted to his call.

[20:49] That's cool too, by the way. Sometimes when we have questions, how is this going to happen? What's it gonna look like? How do I know that you're good on your word? God will give us examples in other people, right?

So Mary has this example in her much older cousin, Elizabeth, who was pregnant later in life. It's a powerful thing that God gives us these gracious moments of reminder that he is good and that we can trust his word.

But now let's turn back here to Matthew chapter 1 and think about Joseph. Think about his response. Well, one, we know that Joseph was a righteous man. Joseph was a righteous man. And what that means is that he knew and loved the law of God, right? He knew and loved God himself. And so Joseph knew his legal options. Because of the betrothal contract, this would require an actual certificate of divorce.

This was going to, you know, break their marriage. It's not as easy. Like today, if someone wants to break off an engagement, they just throw an engagement ring at the guy, right? Like, take your thousands of dollars back, you know?

[21:53] Back then, they actually had to go to the synagogue and they had to actually receive a certificate of divorce because legally they were married. And again, Joseph could have publicly humiliated her.

But being that righteous man, his righteousness infused with his character, Joseph acted nobly instead. He decided that he would do things quietly, that because of his character, which reflected his righteousness, that he wouldn't publicly disgrace her or shame her, and that he would just kind of let this all go.

And that's a noble thing. Again, because in today's world, when someone does us wrong, the thing that we want to do most is tear them down, right? We just want to make them look bad.

We want to make sure everyone knows how bad of a person that they are. That's not what Joseph did. And Joseph is an example for us, by the way, of righteous living. We should love the Lord, and we should love his word, and our love for the Lord and his word should be seen in our character. Christians should have noble character, and we should pursue peace, and we should be gracious in the face of challenges. This is the decision that Joseph had settled on, but then God intervened.

[23:06] So we're going to look at the divine intervention. God intervened, and the reason that God intervened is because his plans, his purposes, were going to come to pass.

So Matthew 1, 20 through 23, says, But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

She will give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. You know, sometimes when we are facing really hard situations, we're in over our head, we ask God to intervene, right?

We ask God to heal miraculously. We ask God to show himself powerfully. We ask God to speak mightily. We want God to intervene when we're facing really scary situations, and Joseph got that experience.

God intervened. And there's a few things about this intervention I want to point out. Number one, God intervenes intentionally. This was before Joseph, the righteous man, was going to do the righteous act of divorcing her quietly.

[24 : 16] Before that could happen, God stepped in. Why? Well, because Joseph is the son of David. Jesus, in order to be of the line of the house and family line of David, had to be legally adopted by an earthly father who was of the house and family line of David.

Joseph is the son of David, so God, knowing Joseph's righteousness and knowing his willingness to serve the Lord, intervened. He stepped in. He sent the angelic messenger.

And God intervenes and he reveals in that intervention. So he reveals his plan to Joseph. He says, look, first of all, what Mary's telling you is true. This baby is the product of the Holy Spirit, right?

This is a miracle. But not only is Mary telling you the truth so you can take her as your wife, also, this child has a very incredible, specific purpose and mission, and you should take him as your son. So he tells them, or he tells Joseph to take Mary as his wife and when she gives birth to this child, when she gives birth to this son, that Joseph would need to name him Jesus.

[25 : 27] So here's an interesting little historical tidbit. The father's right was to name the son, name the child, okay? So when Joseph named Jesus Jesus, that was the formal legal adoption where Jesus is now formally son of Joseph, right, his earthly father.

So there's a really cool thing here that the call of God was, take her as your wife and take him as your son. That's a powerful thing. God revealed his plan. He also told him that his name will be Jesus because of his mission on earth.

He will save his people from their sins. Notice he didn't say he'll save the Israelites from the Romans. He'll save your people from oppression. He says he will save his people from the greatest threat, the greatest enemy that any human being has ever faced, and that is the enemy, the oppression of sin and death.

Jesus, which is a Greek version of the Old Testament name Joshua, or Yeshua, which means Yahweh will save, now Jesus is the one who will save.

That name, literally, it means Yahweh will save, and the angel says his name will be Jesus because he will save. In other words, Matthew's telling us something here. Jesus, Yahweh, one and the same.

[26 : 51] He is the God of the Old Testament, and he's here to save. You have to understand, Joseph would have, I mean, he's a righteous man. He knows the law of the Lord. He would have been floored by this reality.

So the mission was explained or revealed to Joseph as well. But the other thing that God does when he intervenes is he intervenes through his word, through his word.

So it goes on. Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet. See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Emmanuel, which is translated God with us.

See, Joseph, knowing who Jesus would be, knowing the purpose of saving the world from his sins and understanding the circumstance of this true virgin birth, this actual miracle at the hands of God, Joseph recognized Jesus as the fulfillment of this Old Testament prophecy.

And Matthew explains it here for us because we wouldn't necessarily make that connection. See, if you go back to Isaiah chapter, I don't know if I have time for this. Are you guys interested in Isaiah chapter 7, the history and context of that?

[28 : 00] Okay, good, good. Here we go. So Isaiah chapter 7, Isaiah is speaking to a very specific audience. It's to the king of Judah, Ahaz, okay?

Ahaz is scared to death because the northern kingdom of Israel and another kingdom were fighting and coming and trying to take over Jerusalem. So Ahaz is terrified.

So Isaiah goes to him in Isaiah chapter 7 and he says, Ahaz, stop being so scared. Ask the Lord for a sign. He'll give you a sign. He'll explain this to you. He'll show you how it's going to be okay.

And Ahaz is, you know, this fake nobility. He's, no, I would never ask the Lord for a sign. I would never test the Lord. And Isaiah says, okay, fine. The Lord will give you a sign. See, the virgin will give birth, or will conceive and give birth to a sign and his name will be Emmanuel.

Okay, here's the thing. I don't know if we have time, for real. Okay, here's, well, we're not doing the Lord's Supper. We've got plenty of time. Okay. Isaiah chapter 7 was that prophecy in Hebrew.

[29 : 05] The word for virgin is actually the word Alma, which means a young woman who has not been with a man but is of a marriageable age. And so, people have said that that prophecy was not fulfilled in Jesus.

Rather, it was fulfilled in Isaiah chapter 8, where Isaiah conceives a child with a young woman there in the house and in the house of the king who then, that child, by the time he was old enough to, you know, speak and have these conscious thoughts, those types of things, by that time, the fearful kingdoms that were going to come and take Jerusalem will have been defeated.

Okay? That's kind of a rough way of explaining it. I'm trying to be brief. Read Isaiah chapter 8.

Okay? That's your homework. However, in the Greek translation of the Old Testament, the word used to describe this young woman of a marriageable age is the same word that Matthew uses here, which is the word for virgin.

Okay? Only one meaning to that word. It's that she's a virgin. So, in Matthew's day, the belief or the expectation was that this word for virgin was the right translation of the Isaiah prophecy.

Okay? Now, what does that mean in terms of fulfillment? A little bit of insight into the gospel of Matthew. Matthew uses these fulfillment passages to tell us about how Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of the Old Testament.

[30 : 32] And when he uses these passages, what he does is he incorporates into the story and life of Jesus this type of, this completed version of fulfillment of God's Old Testament promises.

In other words, in the Old Testament, there was a prophecy and there was a fulfillment. But that was only a type of fulfillment or a partial fulfillment. In Christ, that prophecy has been completely fulfilled.

You see what I'm saying? So this is, I didn't get any nods on that one. Does that make sense? I got it like four or five that time. Okay. That makes sense, right? So, Matthew shows us that in the Old Testament, the prophecies that had, you know, messianic claims that were fulfilled in the Old Testament have their complete fulfillment found in Jesus Christ.

Okay? And, there you go. Okay, now back to the sermon. Okay. So, his name will be Emmanuel, which is translated, God is with us.

God is with us. When I was a kid, this used to stop me. Like, why is his name supposed to be Jesus and then his name is supposed to be Emmanuel? How does that work? Well, here's what we see. It's not that his name, like what his title is in life, will be Emmanuel.

[31 : 49] Rather, Emmanuel describes who he is. Okay? So, Jesus, his name describes what he'll do, and Emmanuel describes who he is.

He is God with us. So, this is as close as Matthew gets to telling us directly Jesus is God, one and the same. So, that's the incarnation.

He is God with us. It's a powerful, powerful picture for us all, but especially for Joseph. God's divine intervention led Joseph to a place where he was comfortable to trust and obey the word of the Lord. So, if you look at verse 24 and 25, you see that Joseph, when he woke up from his dream, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him.

He married her, but he did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son, and he named him Jesus. So, now Joseph, in his obedience, stepped out in faith.

[32 : 45] He married the woman who could have been publicly shamed. He married the woman that could have started a lot of questions and a lot of drama. He did all of that because he knew the word of the Lord.

He knew the promises of the Lord, that Jesus was going to be the Savior of the world and also that Jesus is God with us. He understood the purpose and the mission of this child.

So, Joseph is comforted by the reality of God being with him. The reality of God being with him and the calling that God placed on his life overcame the fear and doubt and worry that he had in a situation like this.

And by the way, he was fearful because the angel, first thing he said was, Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid. Right? Whenever angels intervene, they always tell people, don't be afraid. And it's normally because they're facing pretty scary situations.

Joseph was no different. But because of his trust in the word of the Lord and the revelation of the Lord, Joseph was willing to obey. And I want you to see how this actually, how we can take some lessons from Mary and Joseph.

[33 : 53] The responsibility that you and I have today is that when we hear the word of the Lord, through the written word or through the preached word or even through singing, when we hear the word of the Lord, when we know that the spirit of God is leading us or calling us or speaking, you know, to us through the word of God, when we hear God speak, we have a responsibility to obey.

Now, that doesn't mean that it's always easy. Sometimes obedience comes at a cost. Mary and Joseph, it came at a cost for them. And sometimes our obedience will come at a cost. But nevertheless, we're called to obey.

We're called to trust the Lord. And I want you to also see, it's not just that we're called to trust the Lord. It's a reminder that the Lord, Jesus Christ, is with us.

One of the coolest things that I found this week as I was studying this passage is that Matthew starts this gospel by saying that he is Emmanuel, which is translated, God is with us.

And then every week we read the Great Commission, right? What is Jesus' promise and his reminder to his disciples at the Great Commission? Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son of the Holy Spirit and remember, come on guys, I am with you always.

[35 : 12] remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. So Matthew opens and closes this gospel by this powerful reminder that Jesus is the Son of God and he is God with us.

It's not that Jesus was Emmanuel, Jesus is Emmanuel. So we have this great encouragement and strength found in the fact that Jesus Christ is with us.

And that's why we're able to go through situations and circumstances and events in life that are just downright awful and beyond our strength to handle them. It's because Jesus is God with us.

That promise is available to us in Christ. Mary and Joseph weren't able to endure the challenges that they faced because of their own strength.

They were able to endure because they trusted the word of the Lord and they knew the promise that Jesus was God with us. that same Jesus who was born as a baby in Bethlehem would grow up and become the Savior of the world by dying on the cross for our sins.

[36 : 18] His name, Jesus, would be fulfilled in that act of dying on the cross and rising again three days later. So I'm gonna wrap up. I'm gonna wrap up now, okay? Sorry about my tangent about Isaiah 7, guys.

I hope that was okay on time. I'm not actually sorry. Okay. I have to say that because sometimes I apologize for something and people think I'm being serious and they're like, don't apologize for preaching the word.

I'm not actually, I was trying to be funny, okay? Anyways. Here's the thing. You see the incarnation of Jesus Christ. The reality of the fact that we cannot handle things on our own and we need the strength of God, the presence of God, the power of God in order to survive this life.

The greater reminder is that our greatest fight, the greatest battle that we cannot overcome or win on our own is the battle against sin and death. We have this sin curse where we are sinful by nature and we're sinful by choice.

The only hope of overcoming and defeating that curse is found in the person of Jesus Christ who did overcome sin and death and is victorious.

[37 : 33] So, believers, I want you to be encouraged as you consider the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Because of Jesus, victory can be ours, right? Victory is ours in Christ.

Victory over sin, victory over death, victory in this life, literally, that we can face difficult, impossible moments and circumstances and challenges because of his presence.

I mean, like, if you have been a believer for any length of time, then you know the presence and the comfort of the Lord Jesus Christ when you're facing impossible moments, right? When you hear the

word of someone that you love dying, when you get a terrible diagnosis at the doctor, when you have a huge financial situation that just, you weren't expecting and it hurts, knowing the presence and power and comfort of the Lord Jesus Christ in those moments is like nothing else. And how does he do it? He's God with us. So believers, I want you to celebrate that. And if you have not yet placed your faith and hope in Jesus Christ, your trust in him, the call for you today is to believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

This miraculous birth was just the beginning for us to see his perfect life. Jesus never made the mistakes that you and I make. Jesus never lied.

[38 : 53] Jesus never cussed. Jesus never even got angry and, you know, like Jesus was a carpenter, right? So like when Jesus is nailing, you ever think he hit his thumb? What words do you think he left his mouth when he hit his thumb?

Probably not the same as you or me, right? Jesus was sinless, perfect, and being the perfect, sinless, spotless lamb, Jesus Christ died on the cross.

The Bible says that he became sin, meaning he took on our sin so that we might become the righteousness of God in him. In other words, he gives us his freedom. He gives us his righteousness.

He gives us life that belongs to him. That's the power of the incarnation. The power of salvation is seen and known in the birth of Jesus Christ.

That's why we can't just celebrate this at Christmas, right? This is a reminder that we need every single day. Jesus Christ is God with us. So if you have never placed your faith in him, if Jesus Christ is not known to you as God with us, then let today be the day.

[39 : 56] Because the call of God on your life right now is to confess your sin and repent of that sin and believe in Jesus for salvation. Let me pray for us. Lord Jesus, we thank you for your word.

We thank you for this just unbelievable picture of your love for us, that you would condescend, that you would leave heaven and take on human flesh. You love us so greatly we can't even explain it, understand it.

So Jesus, we thank you and we praise you. Lord, thank you for the examples that you gave us in your earthly parents in Mary and Joseph. Examples of faithfulness, examples of submission, examples of righteousness, examples of noble character.

God, it's no surprise that you chose them to be the earthly parents of Christ the Messiah. So Lord, thank you for their example, but thank you most of all, Lord Jesus, for your perfect example.

That what Mary and Joseph did well, you did perfectly. And that by faith in you, you can forgive us of our sins and you can save us and give us life.

[41 : 05] Thank you that the incarnation of Jesus is only the beginning of what would be fulfilled in the resurrection of Jesus. Thank you. It's in Jesus' name that we pray.

Amen. Amen. Amen.