

Why Jesus Came (Matthew 1:18-25)

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[0 : 0 0] Amen. Amen. What a joy it is to be able to gather together, open up God's Word, and remember! the hope that we have in Christ. We are at a time of the year, this Christmas season, when I'm sure that many of us have many Christmas traditions that we like to honor and we like to do each year at this time.

Maybe it's a favorite type of food that you always have for Christmas dinner that just brings back those memories for you. Several in our church have told me that they always enjoy having a birthday cake for Jesus and making sure they have time to sing happy birthday to Jesus at Christmas, and I think that's a wonderful tradition as well.

We have so many things. For many of us, it may be drawing names and exchanging presents. For many, not only in this church, but also in our community, one of the things that we enjoy doing is coming together for our Christmas Eve candlelight service, a special time that for many just reminds us of what Christmas is about.

We have so many different things. I can remember as a child growing up, and one of the things that we did as a family was we would read the Christmas story from Luke chapter 2.

And so we have these traditions. There are so many traditions that we do each year, and some of these things remind us of the reason that we celebrate Christmas, the true meaning of Christmas, and others are just fun things that we enjoy doing with our families.

[1 : 3 6] But one thing that I want to encourage all of us to do to make as a tradition is taking time to not only remember that Jesus came, but take time to remember why Jesus came.

Yes, we want to remember that Jesus came, but it's also important that we remember why Jesus came, his purpose for coming, and what made him uniquely qualified to accomplish his purpose. Our passage of scripture this morning is a great place to start as we think about these things, as we think about why Jesus came, as well as what makes Jesus uniquely qualified to accomplish his purpose.

And so today we're going to be finishing up Matthew chapter 1. So if you have a copy of God's word, I invite you to open up with me to Matthew chapter 1, and we're going to start reading in verse 18 and read through the end of chapter 1.

And so if you have a copy of God's word, I invite you to open with me there and follow along as I read. This is what the word of the Lord says. It says this, Now the birth of Jesus took place in this way.

[2 : 5 0] When his mother, Mary, had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. And all of this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.

Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us. When Joseph woke from his sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded.

He took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son, and he called his name Jesus. And so after going through the genealogy of Christ, we are given a snapshot into a struggle that Joseph found himself in.

[4 : 10] The woman that he was betrothed to Mary was now pregnant. And we see Joseph was a just and kind man, and so he had decided to divorce her quietly and not put her to open shame.

But she was pregnant, and he knew that this child wasn't his, and so divorce seemed to be the only option for him. But God showed Joseph mercy and gave him a peek, a window into who this child actually was.

And so in this passage, we see Joseph was told what this child came to do, and also he was given a snapshot, a little glimpse, of to what makes him able to do it.

And so to begin with, I want us to answer a few questions today. I want us to look at a few questions that this passage answers for us as we think about why it is that Jesus came.

And so the first question that I want us to answer today is this, what did Jesus come to do? What did Jesus come to do? The passage tells us that Jesus came to save his people from their sins.

[5 : 23] Verses 21 and 22 remind us very clearly of this. It says, You see, the angel came to Joseph and comforted him with some heavy but warmness.

Wonderful news with some overwhelming but at the same time incredible news that this child would be named Jesus and that he would save his people from their sins.

It's impossible to overstate the significance of what this angel is telling Joseph. It's impossible to overstate how life-transforming this is not only for Mary and Joseph but for the entire world, what was about to take place.

In fact, James Montgomery Boyce, he notes, he says, Although these events are fully historical, that these events took place in a real time, in a real place, they are also supernatural.

For this is the supreme moment in human history when the supernatural broke into the normal flow of historical events by the grace of our good God.

[6 : 50] This is the moment that the entire Old Testament was preparing the world for. This was the fulfillment of the promise of God from the moment that sin entered the world.

This was the fulfillment of the proto-evangelion, the first good news that takes place in Genesis 3.15, where God said to the serpent, where he said, I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring.

He shall bruise your head and you shall bruise his heel. Finally, finally the snake crusher has made his way to the same, the one who would take the sin of the world onto his shoulder and give us new life.

Finally, he is making his entrance into the world. But even the name Jesus is significant here. Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Yeshua or Joshua.

And it literally means Jehovah is salvation. The message that the angel is proclaiming to Joseph is wonderful news. He is being told that the one conceived by Mary from the Holy Spirit is the long-awaited Messiah.

[8 : 05] The one who had been promised from the very moment that sin entered into the world. God was now providing that hope. And what has this hope come to do? This hope had come to make peace with God.

As we think about this second week of Advent, and this wonderful and often unappreciated or underappreciated gift of God of peace, we're reminded of what it is that Jesus came to do.

You see, peace is something that is hard to come by in our world today. Would anybody say that they have a busy schedule? I think just the laughter. I'm reminded that each of us have so many things going on.

And yet, many times, the world tries to remind us of trying to find peace from different avenues. Many will say, just simply slow down.

Take time to be with family and friends. And do this just to eliminate some of the busyness to find peace. And yes, that's something that's absolutely important to do.

[9 : 09] But that's not the peace that we're talking about today. That's not the peace that we're talking about in this passage. The peace that comes with God. This is not the peace where we are talking about when it comes to what Christ has to offer.

The peace we are talking about is far more valuable and much harder to obtain. What we are talking about here is peace with God. I want you to listen to those words in Luke 2.

I know we're in Matthew 1, but I want you to listen to those words in Luke 2, where the angels are coming to the shepherds. And it says, Peace among those with whom he is pleased.

Peace among those with whom he is pleased. You see, Ephesians 2 reminds us that because of sin, it is impossible to please God.

In fact, we follow the ways of this world. The sons of disobedience and by nature are objects of God's wrath. And this is a condition that has no hope outside of the only begotten son coming to earth and accomplishing what we can never hope to accomplish on our own.

[10:49] He gives us this by fully taking on himself the wrath that we deserve and giving us his peace with God. This is an example of what theologians call the great exchange.

Jesus taking our sin, our shame, and our death and giving us his righteousness. Giving us his righteousness that makes peace with God. And so this passage, it reminds us, this is what Jesus came to do.

But this passage also reminds us of something very important. And it answers another question for us this morning. And the next question that it answers is, What makes Jesus able to save?

This passage gives us a little snapshot as to what it is that makes Jesus able to save. It says, Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us.

Emmanuel is one of those words that must be spoken of often at Christmas. And I think it honestly should be spoken of all year long. But because of it's spoken so often at Christmas, I'm afraid that it's lost some of its meaning for us.

[12:04] Or at least some of its strength and power that it conveys with it. But Emmanuel, God with us, is so incredibly comforting. Charles Spurgeon notes, he says, It is pleasant to Mark that according to this verse and the 21st, where we just read about what Jesus came to do.

He says, It is pleasant to Mark that according to this verse and the 21st, Emmanuel and Jesus mean the same thing. God with us is our Savior.

He is with us as God on purpose to save us. And he says, The incarnation of Jesus is our salvation. But this hypostatic union, this of Christ being both fully man and fully God is vital to our faith.

It's something that we must never compromise on for at least a couple of reasons. For example, one, if this is not true, if this is just made up, if this is not true, then Jesus can't atone for sins.

Jesus became man so that he could die for our sins. He had to be human in order to pay the penalty for humans. But here's the thing. If this is true, if this is true, that God is both fully man and fully God, and I believe with all my heart that it is true, and I believe that God's word, which is in there, it tells us that it's true.

[13:28] I believe if this is true, then it changes everything. It means that he and he alone can atone for sins. It means that he is the only way to the Father, and it means that he does have the authority to tell us how to live our lives.

And I think this is the part where many people begin to have a problem with Jesus. It's not necessarily that we claim that Christ is a man, and it's not necessarily that we claim that Christ is God, but the implications of the incarnation when played out is where the problem lies.

You see, most people don't have a problem with you believing that Jesus is God. The problem is that if this is true, then all of a sudden, Jesus has the authority to tell us where to find salvation.

He has the authority to tell us where our salvation is found. And he tells us that salvation can only be found in him. And if this is true, then the next logical thing is that he has the authority to tell us how to live our lives.

And if you really want to make someone upset, tell them that their lifestyle is wrong. Tell them the choices they are making are wrong. Tell them there is only one way to God and that it is through Jesus.

[14:53] And then you begin to offend. But if the incarnation is true, then Jesus has that authority. And this is the stumbling block of the incarnation.

Because if this is true, then everyone in the world must submit to his authority. You see, by understanding who Jesus is, with the correct understanding that he is both fully God and fully man, at the same time, then it changes everything.

This makes Jesus uniquely qualified to adopt you and me as his children. Jesus is uniquely qualified to pay for our sins because he is both God and man.

You see, these qualifications would require him to be God. In order to bridge the infinite chasm between us and God, it would require an infinite and perfect sacrifice.

We also see that this person would have to be human, like us and familiar with our weaknesses. But finally, we see that this person would have to be perfect.

[15 : 58] If that person had sinned, they were disqualified because they would need someone else to pay for their sins. And so the qualifications to save us needed are this, like God, like man, and perfect.

There is no one else with these qualifications other than Jesus Christ. You see, God sent his best. God sent the only one qualified.

God sent Jesus. God sent his son. And that is why we celebrate Christmas. J.I. Packer, speaking on the Incarnation, notes.

He says, Hebrews stresses that had he not thus experienced human pressures, weaknesses, temptation, and pain, he would not be qualified to help us as we go through these things.

As it is, his human experience is such as to guarantee that in every moment of demand and pressure, in our relationship and walk with God, we may go to him.

[17 : 00] Confident that in some sense, he has been there before us, and so is the helper that we need. You see, the truth of the Incarnation is wonderful news for us today.

The question we must ask ourselves is, do I really believe this? Do I really believe that Jesus is the God-man, that he is both fully God and fully man?

Because if we believe this, it changes everything. The Incarnation is good news for us. Because it lets us know that not only do we have a Savior who is uniquely qualified to do what he came to do, but we also have someone that understands us where we are.

We have someone who understands our struggles. We have someone who understands the heartache that we will experience in this world, because he himself has been there. And so this incarnation is wonderful news.

Emmanuel, God with us. What life-giving and life-transforming comfort we have in those words. The Incarnation of Jesus is our salvation.

[18 : 09] And if you desire peace with God, yet you don't understand who Jesus is, then you will never get what you desire. But when we understand these two questions, what did Jesus come to do?

And what makes Jesus able to save? When we understand these things, if we understand these two questions, then it will always lead us to a third question.

And that is the question that I want us to leave with today. What do we do with this? What do we do with this understanding? What do we do with this life-giving and life-transforming knowledge of what Jesus came to do and what makes him able to do that?

If we believe that Jesus came to rescue the lost, that Jesus came to a sin-stained world to endure the penalty of sin and to stand in the place of sinners, that he came to die on a cross, to give his body, to shed his blood, all so that you and I could be rescued from our sin and shame and be reconciled to God, if we believe on this, if we believe these things, then we must ask the question, what do we do with this wonderful news?

And I'd like to submit a few things that we do with that news. One thing is that we celebrate Christmas. We celebrate Christmas in a big way. We do this by coming together with family and friends, not only remembering that Jesus came, but remembering why Jesus came.

[19 : 42] We also do this, well, we also do this wonderful news is we make sure that we are a part of spreading this good news to anyone who doesn't know. And as a church, we do this in several ways.

One of those ways that we do this as a church is that we join with thousands of other churches all over the world and coming together to give to the Lottie Moon Christmas offering.

This offering goes to missionaries all over the world like Josh and Molly that you saw today.

Missionaries who are serving in some of the most unreached places in the world.

And by giving to this, not only does it provide financial support for these families, but it also lets them know that they have thousands of churches that are standing alongside them, that are praying for them, that are saying, we are with you.

And that's so incredibly important for these missionaries to know. This couple, just this week, I was in contact with them, messaging back and forth. And they were really struggling because one of them had a family member that was in a very serious car wreck.

[20 : 49] And so they're on the other side of the world, grieving and trying to pray for and be there for their family who is suffering here in the States. And so when we are able to give to this, we're not only showing them that we're supporting them with our financial means, but we're also showing that we're standing with them.

We're praying for them. What an encouragement it is for them. But also the way that we let this play out in our lives is we make sure that as a church, we reach out to some of the most pressing needs right here in our community.

And just this week, we're able to do this in a real tangible way with the Christmas toy store that we're going to be hosting this Saturday. And so one of the ways that we celebrate this good news, this wonderful news, is by showing love to those who are most needed in our community.

This year, what an incredible opportunity we have. We have well over 120 families that will be coming through our doors, which represents over 400 kids that we'll be helping provide Christmas for.

And so in doing this, it's not just that we're providing a toy for their children, but what we're doing is making sure that every single person that comes through these doors will not only receive some tangible love from us, but they'll also receive the message of the gospel.

[22 : 12] Every single family will have the gospel message clearly presented to them and given an opportunity to respond to this wonderful news. And so we do this, but also we make sure that we're a part of the spread of the good news in our individual lives, in our families.

And that may be through your family volunteering to help out with the toy store, but it also may be by inviting your neighbor to come over for Christmas dinner. It may be by inviting them to come over and you're able to share with them why Christmas is such an important time, why we make such a big deal about this each and every year.

Or maybe we're able to do this by reaching out to our family and friends, inviting them to a church service, inviting them to come with you, not just inviting them to church, but inviting them to come with you.

And finally, we realize, and one of the ways that we celebrate this is that we realize that this is still good news for us today. Why Jesus came 2,000 years ago has not changed.

His purpose of rescuing the lost is still true today. And so probably the greatest way that we can celebrate Christmas is by giving our life to Him if that's something that we've never done.

[23 : 29] Maybe you're here today and you haven't come to church very long or maybe you never have or maybe you've been coming your entire life. And all of a sudden, you're realizing the importance of understanding why Jesus came to do and what makes Him uniquely qualified.

And you're ready to give your life to Him. I can't think of a better way to celebrate Christmas than to give your life to Him. Understanding what He came to do can apply to you by placing your faith and your trust in Him.

So this Christmas, may we not only remember that Jesus came, but also why Jesus came. Father, we thank You so very much for who You are and all that You do for us each and every day.

God, we thank You for Your Word which tells us not only the historical story of the fact that You came into this world, but it reminds us why You came.

And it reminds us that You and You alone are the only one who can take our sin. And so Lord, I pray that that's something that we give our lives to. That's something that we celebrate not only at Christmas, but that we celebrate all year long.

[24 : 39] And Lord, I pray that You help us to live on mission for You. And I pray that You give us the boldness to celebrate this, to celebrate this wonderful news by sharing this news with those who haven't heard.

And Lord, I pray that there's somebody here today that's ready to give their life to You, to follow You as their Lord and Savior. Lord, You would give them the boldness and courage to do that.

And so God, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for what it teaches us about You. And we ask all these things in Jesus' precious name. Amen. I want to invite you to take your Baptist hymnal and turn to hymn number 207, What Can I Give Him?

And if God is speaking to you this morning, won't you respond as we stand together and sing? Amen. Thank you.