

Bringing Many Sons to Glory

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Date: 15 November 2020

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[0 : 00] Hi everyone, so the reading today is from Matthew chapter 1 verses 18 to 25.

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. 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. All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us.

When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son, and he called his name Jesus.

[1 : 24] God to know. My name is Bo, and I am one of the elders of the church. Today's message, the title is Bringing Many Sons to Glory.

This title, while we are doing Matthew 1, verses 18 to 25, this title is taken from Hebrews 2, chapter 2, verse 10.

In this verse, only sons are mentioned.

What happens to daughters? Because in the New Testament, sons represent those who are to inherit, or having the right for inheritance.

And that's why everyone who is in Christ are sons. Similarly, we are all daughters in Christ as well. Daughters are used in the Bible as people who, like daughters of Jerusalem, just people who depend on God for their life or for their significance.

[2 : 40] So, it's not so much gender-based. Okay. And I've been thinking, like, last, when I first started this, preparing the sermon, I was thinking the title, like, A Better Life or Bitter Life.

But then, towards the last weekend, it came to me that this could be the title I should use, but I wasn't sure whether I could cover it. It's quite a big title.

But then, last Sunday, for the household song, both morning and afternoon service, the household song was the same.

It was chosen by two different people independently, and it was, how deep the Father's love for us. So, the first verse says, How deep the Father's love for us, how vast beyond all measure, that he should give his only son to make a wretch his treasure.

How great is the pain of sharing loss, the Father turns his face away, as wounds which mar the chosen one, bring many sons to glory.

[3 : 55] So, I thought, well, since those two people chose the song, that would confirm for me to speak on this title for today's sermon.

Shall we pray before we begin? Oh, Father God, we thank you for the grace that is awaiting us, even as we read your word and listen to you.

And we also thank you for reminding us that we are made in your image. Even though we see everywhere in the world the shadow remains, we know that you are doing something to restore us and restore your creation.

And we await that day to come. And as we do so, help us to live a life worthy of calling. Thank you, Father. We pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Amen. On 17th April 1975, the inhabitants of Nong Peng, that is the capital of Cambodia, they were very excited.

[5 : 04] They were celebrating on the street because they've been fighting with their own government for a long time. the government that was under King Suhano, that is very corrupted.

And so, people, they are not happy. They were looking for a better government, a better life. And so, for years before that day, Pol Pot was leading the rebellion with the communist army under the help of Chinese communists.

So, eventually, and finally, they won the war and toppled the king. And people were very happy on that day.

So, Pol Pot and his army marched into the city. And on the same day, Pol Pot executed 800 people, all those top officials of the whole government.

And the same day, he ordered 2.5 million of the inhabitants of Nong Peng to march out to the rural area because he didn't trust any of those people.

[6 : 18] And so, many people died as they went out under the hot sun and with very little provision. And over the next four and a half, four years and four months, one in four of the population died because of Pol Pot's regime.

And there was no education over those four years and four months. No industry, no development. And it took 20 years after Pol Pot was toppled for the nation to start developing again. So, it's quite a big blow to the whole nation.

What happened to Pol Pot's vision? You see that at the beginning, Pol Pot, I think he did want to give people of Cambodia a better life. But he ended up giving them death.

The Cambodians' dream of a better life became a nightmare. The problem was that Pol Pot tasted power. We all like to have power. Power means that we can achieve the desire of our hearts.

[7 : 24] Pol Pot also had the backing of the communist ideology. Pol Pot was convinced that communism was a way to achieve utopia for his people. He therefore needed to kill all the potential threats to protect himself and the ideology.

Human hearts are both short-sighted and self-centered. We do anything to protect our own interests, often not considering the things we do may eventually destroy us.

When we all do that, even the food that we eat right now could be destroying us slowly. We don't even know because we enjoy doing it. Or anything that we do, the movie that we watch, the work that we do, they all can be damaging to our bodies or our souls.

We just didn't know or didn't think about it. The king of Cambodia allowed his officials to oppress his people because he gained much wealth from that corrupt behavior. He did not think that this would eventually lead to his own demise.

The people of Cambodia supported Paul Port and his ideology because they wanted to escape from their corrupt government. And Paul Port oppressed the people more than the government he toppled so as to maintain his power.

[8 : 42] He thought that by killing all the educated people and leaders, no one would challenge him. He did not expect his own official were the ones to finally rebel against him.

Humans have been trying to build a better society to live since history began. We all think that we could do better than our forefathers. We think that we can have better marriages, better families, better governments, or even better churches, but we fail.

If you remember 1 Kings chapter 19 when when who is that I just have a mental blank when the prophet Elijah asked God to take his life he said I'm no better than my forefathers even though Elijah was such a great man a great prophet but he he was still trying to do something better than his forefathers and he felt so disappointed that he couldn't achieve it.

And that so the best even the best of us would feel that we could not make a better society make a better church or make a better family even.

I suppose you can see that the disappointing outcomes should be expected if you understand that the problem is with the raw material. The humans who make up the marriages and societies are rotten.

[10 : 11] So when you mix rotten eggs together you should not expect to get something good out of it. We see this even clearer in the story of Exodus.

So God provided the Israelites the best human leader possible to rescue them from the Egyptians. And on their way to the promised land the Israelites complained bitterly and repeatedly about being mistreated by Moses or misguided by Moses.

Every time the Israelites complained Moses prayed to God for them and God provided their needs but they kept complaining. Why did they keep complaining? Because they were short-sighted and self-centered.

Their slogan was what do we want? We want a better life. When do we want it? We want it now. And this slogan has been repeated ever since then until now.

The Israelites wanted to get into the promised land straight away because God had promised to bring them to the land flowing with milk and honey. Do you know what would happen if you put rotten people into a land flowing with milk and honey?

[11:28] You can imagine they would start fighting for more milk and honey. they would start fighting to be the most prominent person and basically they would spoil the place as they are and they did.

I mean, eventually they went in and they did spoil the place. But the fact that we are always looking for something better, a better life, a better marriage, better government tells us that we have been created for something better.

We fail again and again to build a better society with education and civilization because our minds are crooked and our hearts are rotten. It takes someone with a right mind and a pure heart to start the process.

We cannot produce someone from within ourselves. We needed to come from it it needed to come from outside of us. Just like the computer programming terms garbage in, garbage out.

So we cannot use garbage to produce good things. And so that's how this story comes in today. So going back to last week from Matthew 1 verses 1 to 17 it tells us about God's plan and the genealogy.

[12:51] So despite the Israelites short-sightedness and self-centeredness, God did not leave the Israelites alone because he promised their ancestor Abraham that his descendants would become a big nation and become all the nations of the earth will be blessed through them.

God does not leave the world alone either. He promised Adam and Eve that an offspring of woman would abolish the curse of their fall. God has an eternal plan for his kingdom and this plan will be fulfilled.

The fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham is part of the fulfillment of his promise to Adam and Eve. Today we have come to the beginning of the fulfillment of both promises, the coming of the Christ.

The Christ or the Messiah means someone who is anointed or chosen by God to establish his kingdom. The existence of Israel was to prepare for the coming of Christ.

We read in Galatians chapter 4 verse 4 but when the fullness of time had come God sent forth his son born of woman born under the law to redeem those who were under the law so that we might receive adoption as sons.

[14:12] The birth of Christ had to be unique if it was that someone who came from outside of us. This someone needed to be holy like God to redeem us. He also needed to be one of us to represent us.

He needed to be both God and man both holy and common. The virgin birth was therefore necessary to make this combination possible. You may think that virgin birth is scientifically impossible.

You can think deeper again. If scientists can make test tube babies why could not God make a baby from a woman? Eve was made from a man without a woman?

Adam was made without a man or a woman. Even for all of us who are made because of one man and one woman it's still miraculous.

If you know how many things can go wrong for pregnancy to happen for a child to be born you will know that each birth is a miracle in itself.

[15:16] So even though we said that the virgin birth is a miracle actually any birth is a miracle if you know how many things could go wrong in any consciousness of birth.

So the virgin birth though we call it virgin birth actually is virgin conception so it's the more appropriate term and the virgin conception is necessary because Jesus needed to come from outside of human beings but he also needed to be part of human beings.

But like most people Joseph could not believe this and how could Mary explain to Joseph about her pregnancy? The Holy Spirit made me pregnant or Mary could also tell Joseph if you do not believe

me you can ask my cousin Elizabeth.

Actually God did not leave Mary on her own there was someone who can confirm Mary's story. But Joseph did not bother to go and see Elizabeth is some distance away I suppose so he decided to cancel the marriage.

[16:40] So Mary's pregnancy presented a huge problem to Joseph. I think he loved Mary but he was an Israelite a person who was born under the law.

To him marriage was sacred and audient by God. To have to be seen to have premarital sex would mean disrespect to God's will for marriage and dishonor to both families.

So if he accepted the responsibility for the pregnancy and married Mary he would bear the shame of having premarital sex with Mary. If he denounced Mary as an adulteress and cancelled the marriage Mary would be stoned to death.

Joseph was a just man. He could not believe or tolerate Mary's behavior. In Joseph's mind Mary was not only an adulteress but also a liar.

Though Joseph tried to be kind in planning to cancel the marriage quietly he was still short-sighted because he could not see miracles. Joseph was still self-centered he needed to protect his own reputation.

[17:56] The cancellation of the marriage would only save Mary for a short time. How would Mary explain the baby to other people in the jungle. If Joseph did not believe Mary's story what is the chance of other people believing in Mary's story?

You might think that it was fair for Joseph not to believe in Mary's story. If I was Joseph I wouldn't believe in that story either.

But considering if Joseph faced God in God's judgment throne before God's judgment throne God asked him why didn't you believe Mary's story?

Joseph can defend himself and say that well this story is simply not possible it's not believable then God will ask Joseph did you believe in Mary?

Joseph will have a bit of answer this question because I think he loved Mary and he did believe in Mary and he knew that Mary was a good person so God would ask him that he told him that you should have considered Mary's story seriously take her work seriously you see whether a story is believable is not so much about whether it's scientific or whether it happened before but it depends a lot who is the one who tells you the story if someone who is trustworthy and someone who has no history of lying and telling your story I think we all need to take it seriously and find out if he went to see Elizabeth but he didn't so but God was gracious

[19:58] God did not leave Joseph out of the loop in this matter because Joseph was a descendant of King David and Joseph played an important role as we have read from last week's genealogy for the promise of God to take place God gave Joseph a dream so this dream is a better dream than the one that Joseph had before we can imagine Joseph had a dream about his marriage how he's going to be happy ever after with Mary all those things as all we do and then Mary told him that he's pregnant so his dream was shattered and now today we are reading another dream a better dream for Joseph this dream confirmed to Joseph that miracle was possible and it was happening right before his eyes and also this was a sign that

God was fulfilling his promise to Abraham and King David that the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel this had been recorded by Isaiah 600 years before even though Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus he would be the adopted father of Jesus so that Jesus would become the greatest son of David so the dream restored Joseph's trust towards Mary Mary was not being unfaithful to Joseph Mary was being obedient to God like Joseph Mary would have her own dreams about her marriage God had given her greater dream to conceive Jesus Mary was prepared to sacrifice her own dreams her idea of marriage and even her dignity because she would know what Joseph would do to her God would Joseph prepare to stand with Mary to go ahead with the marriage would mean a loss of status in the society Joseph's life would become harder Joseph like Mary was changed by God and you see this again and again in the Bible there's God's grace in the change in people's life after the dream Joseph's idea of a better life was no longer the same he had something much greater or bigger to live for he stood by Mary and married her in adopting the son of God as his own son Joseph played an important role in God's plan of adopting rebels as his sons the angel of the Lord said you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins the name of Jesus was not randomly given name it represents his nature and his purpose in life as we shall see in the book of

Matthew his name tells us not only what he was going to do it tells us what kind of person he was to the world Jesus was not an impressive person he grew up in a little and unknown town his father was a carpenter he did not have any qualification or degree to his name he did not write a book to tell people how to have a better life he simply lived a life of joyful obedience to God the main difference between him and other people was that he did not come to fulfill himself none of this Jesus said I can do nothing on my own that is from the book of John chapter 5 verse 19 in particular Jesus repeatedly saying that I can do nothing on my own except what my father told me to do Jesus was farsighted and God centered he said he could do nothing of eternal value if he did them for his own glory Jesus did not come to fulfill his own and that is how the image that Jesus is restoring or an image of us as being created by God how we should live Jesus started by giving up his equal status with God and became a man Emmanuel means God with us or God mixing with us living together in armies despite this being foretold by

[25 : 17] Isaiah the Israelites could not believe this was possible the Israelites were the people who knew they were rotten because God's law told them so they therefore could not believe that the holy God would come near them though they believed that if they worked hard enough to obey the law they could become good enough to be accepted by God when Jesus came they were not prepared to receive him as the son of God some call him good teacher some call him a lunatic some call him a liar what do you think will happen when someone with a right mind and a pure heart live among people of crooked minds and rotten hearts people would find him both attractive and repulsive attractive because he was never anxious he was never resentful he was never bitter he was never in a hurry so when people look at Jesus they would find that he's quite a fascinating person he

Jesus didn't seem to have worries that we do all have so for today as soon as we wake up we will have things that will worry us things that we want to be in a hurry to finish or accomplish and things that will upset us and those who live near Jesus will find that Jesus didn't have such things Jesus never complained like the Israelites complained bitterly about all the discomforts they gone through and Jesus did not live a comfortable life and Jesus was kind to the needy he had time with the poor with the sick with those rejected by the society and Jesus was unlike the leaders of the time we can see the leaders it's more about performance as like performance like mobistar rather than serving the people so we can see people who want to be president would criticize the presidency people who want to be in government would criticize the government so a lot of talks but not many people really live among the people and serve them and people who are near

Jesus will see that Jesus was not like this Jesus did talk and teach he did teach but more than teaching Jesus lived with people he had compassion with those who are lost and that's the part of the difference that people would notice and be attracted to Jesus but then there are also people who find Jesus repulsive because Jesus was not bound by traditions he was not bound by the reputations or sensations he just did not try to appease anyone and he was not intimidated by those who were in power so eventually he would become such a threat to those who were in power that they plotted to discredit him by killing him on the cross the Israelites were correct in thinking that they were rotten they were mistaken in thinking that rotten hearts could obey the law and remake themselves they were mistaken also in thinking that

Emmanuel was not possible the biggest surprise for them was not even the fact that God did live among them in the person of Jesus Christ it is the fact that God was killed by them in the person of Jesus Christ the leaders of the world would sacrifice others to secure their positions who would foresee that the creator of the world would sacrifice himself to secure their adoptions could give us life Jesus lived among us but unlike us he was without sin he obeyed God joyfully his death was therefore sufficient to redeem us his death also tells us that there is something far greater important to live for and to die for many soldiers had sacrificed themselves during World War II to defend world peace the death tells us to treasure the peace we now enjoy the death of Jesus the death of the soldiers did not really secure world peace not long after

World War II a newspaper editor in England asked the question what is wrong with the world G.K. Chesterton replied dear sir in response to your article what's wrong with the world I am yours truly G.K.

[30 : 20] Chesterton so in a short sentence but the best answer the soldiers or the United Nations cannot secure world peace because there's no peace in our hearts until we have peace with God we all long for a better life God also wants us to have a better life God's idea of a better life is quite

different to ours our idea of a better life is primarily about having greater comfort God's idea of a better life is primarily about holiness that is why Jesus came to save people from their sins he did not come to save them from poverty or suffering though things will change after we come to know Jesus it is only in holiness that we can have peace with God and understand what real life is glory means glory means glory it will only be a very short time in the scale of eternity

Jesus saved his people to bring them to glory glory means something that is eternal value something that is worth more than life something that will amaze us humble us delight us and transform us Jesus laid down his life because he saw this glory we also have a glimpse of this glory in Jesus Christ the Emmanuel such a glimpse is sufficient to tell us that someone truly great has come to live among us and for us before his greatness the greatness of any nation any race any family and anybody will pale into insignificance he has been sent to bring many sons to glory would we surrender our desire the desires of our crooked mind and our rotten hearts to follow him if he insists on raising our own dreams we will end up destroying ourselves if we follow him and seek first God's kingdom and his righteousness Jesus promised that he would be with us until the end of the age and the Holy Spirit will change us into someone who can take part in the fulfillment of God's plan God God God God God does not stop at forgiveness of our sins in thinking about Jesus saving his people from their sins we tend to start with the point of no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus which is true and we thank God for that Jesus came to do far more than that he came to bring us to glory he came to change our lives he came to live among us I hope that we can see that and so we can live a life that is worthy of his calling and I hope that as we go on with the book of Matthew we can see that Jesus was living out a glorious life and he is inviting us to join him let us pray father may you change us change our vision that we will see greater things glorious things and that we would truly live a life that would honor you and be a blessing to everyone else around us thank you father we pray in Jesus name amen go good how did come out if like alone I did read the life ■■■■ to do have I try toürü in