

Hope in God's Salvation

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Date: 24 December 2023

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[0 : 00] The scripture reading is taken from Matthew chapter 1 verses 18 through 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 fulfill 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.

[1 : 11] 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.

Amen. Amen. Thank you very much, Joan. For this morning we have come to the fourth and final sermon in our Christmas sermon series.

And it is titled, Hope in God's Salvation. And I pray that whatever circumstance we find ourselves in this morning, that this sermon will truly help us to hope in God's salvation.

So would you pray with me before we consider this text? Father, we thank you for your word this morning.

Lord, we have come to a very familiar passage of Scripture. And we know, Lord, how easy it is to not give the due attention to such passages because we have read them and heard them read again and again.

[2 : 40] But would you grant us fresh hearts and minds and ears to hear again this amazing account of the Saviour's coming into the world.

And I pray, Lord, that you would work in our hearts in such a way that we would all leave this place filled with hope in the great salvation that you have provided through sending your Son.

I ask, Lord, that you would grant me grace and the wherewithal to faithfully proclaim your word to your people.

And I pray that in all that is said and done, your name alone will be glorified. We pray this in Christ's name. Amen. Amen. Well, there's a lot that can be said about this short but very pregnant passage of Scripture.

But this morning, I want to focus our attention to the salvation hope that is contained in the two names of Christ that Matthew highlights in his gospel account.

[4 : 00] And they are the names Jesus and Emmanuel. And I pray that as we consider these two names that all of our hearts will be filled with hope in God's salvation.

So first, let's consider the name Jesus. Now, although it was not a part of the reading, the genealogy, Matthew opens his account with a genealogy of Jesus Christ.

And what Matthew does at the very outset is he helps us to see that the birth of Jesus is an important part of God's redemption plan.

And the way Matthew does that is he does it by attaching Jesus to the two most important persons in redemption history, in salvation history that we find in the Old Testament.

Those two persons are David and Abraham. And what Matthew does at the very outset of his gospel account is he refers to Jesus as both the son of David and the son of Abraham.

[5 : 21] I think we all know that Jesus was not the biological son of David, nor was he the biological son of Abraham.

It's a human impossibility for him to have been the biological child of any one of these men, even more so both of these men, who lived thousands of years apart.

In the case of Abraham, he lived some 2,000 years before Jesus was born. In the case of David, some 1,400 years before Jesus was born. And between the two of them, a 600-year difference. So Matthew's point is not to show us or to say to us that Jesus was the biological son of any of these men. Instead, what he is showing us is that Christ is the redemptive son of both Abraham and of David.

And what that means is that the promises that God gave to Abraham and the promises that God gave to David and their offspring, that Christ is the offspring in whom those promises of redemption, of salvation have been fulfilled.

[6 : 42] He is their descendant in whom God fulfilled these promises. And so starting in verse 1 with David and Matthew, sorry, David and Abraham, Matthew proceeds to give us a genealogy of Jesus.

And he comes to verse 17. And in verse 17, he summarizes and he says this. So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations, and from David to the deportation to Babylon, 14 generations, and the deportation to Babylon to Christ, 14 generations.

Matthew highlights three periods that were 14 generations long, from Abraham to David, from David to the deportation to Babylon, and from the deportation to Babylon to Christ.

And his point is to show us that this is all by divine design. This is not by chance or happenstance. This is by a sovereign God working out his redemptive purposes in human history.

Matthew carefully makes this point as he prepares to lay out the historical account of the birth of Christ. You'll notice in Matthew, for most of the series, we have been in Luke's gospel.

[8 : 20] And Luke's gospel gives us the birth of Christ, the account of it, from the perspective of Mary. But when we come to Matthew, he gives it to us from the perspective of Joseph.

And what we find is that Joseph is wrestling with a very difficult situation. Mary is betrothed to be his wife. They're not yet married, but they're in this committed stage of marriage.

But they have had no sexual relations. And his wife, Mary, is pregnant. And obviously she would have told him and explained to him as best she could.

And as Joseph pondered this, in his human limitation, he decides that he is just going to put her away quietly. He doesn't want to bring her to shame.

He obviously didn't have the kind of conviction to believe that she was being dishonest with him, but he could not grasp what he was faced with. And so he was going to quietly put her away.

[9 : 24] And God, in his mercy, comes to him in a dream and speaks to him through an angel. And this is what we read in verses 20 and 21.

Look there again with me. 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.

From the Holy Spirit. Not of the Holy Spirit, but 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 so the angel tells Joseph, this is okay, this is true. What has happened to Mary is something supernatural. The child, the conception that she has is from the Holy Spirit.

And so take her as your wife, and when this child is born, you are to name him Jesus. Joseph was not going to have the privilege of naming this child.

[10 : 40] This was a divine name that this child would be given. He was to be called Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. The name Jesus means the Lord saves.

And the reason that this name was given to him is that it pointed to his mission. And he came to save his people from their sins. Jesus did many other wonderful things in his ministry.

He healed the sick. He raised the dead. He performed other miracles. Multiplied loaves. He cast out demons. He was the master teacher.

But first and foremost, this is why he came. He came to save his people from their sins. He came to address our greatest need.

The other things that Jesus did are really peripheral. But what is central is that he came to save his people from their sins. And that is the reason he was given this name.

[11 : 51] And how did he do that? How did Jesus save his people from their sins? We know that he has since gone on. And so we know that he fulfilled his mission.

And how did he do that? Well, the first way that Jesus did it is he did it by living. And oftentimes we forget this.

I think we are well aware that he died for us. He died for our sins. But we are not so mindful at times that he lived for us.

Jesus lived a perfect life, keeping the law, perfectly loving God, perfectly with his whole heart. And he did this for his people. He did this for us because we couldn't do it for ourselves.

And because we couldn't do it for ourselves, we stood condemned before a holy God whose perfect standard we could never meet. We could never achieve. We could be just a hint off from his perfection in holiness.

[12 : 58] And we'd never make it. And I think we're all honest enough to know that in and of ourselves, we are far away from a hint off of his holiness. But Jesus came.

He came to save sinners. And part of his saving of sinners was to do for them what they could not do for themselves, to fulfill the law so that God would credit it to sinners like you and me.

And in his saving, he shields us. In his living, he shields us from condemnation condemnation because of our own inability to keep the law.

He kept it perfectly. And we should remember this, brothers and sisters. We should strive to serve the Lord and strive to be faithful and strive to love the Lord with all of our heart and all of our soul and mind and strength.

But let us not forget that our Savior has already done that. And wherever we fail, whatever degree we fail, he has succeeded.

[14 : 11] And God looks to him and credits that to us. The second way that Christ saved his people is by dying for them.

Not only did he live a perfect life on our behalf, but he died a substitutionary death on the cross in the place of sinners like you and me.

He died our death. He took our place. He paid the just punishment, the just punishment for our sins because our sins separated us from God.

And what God did was God treated Christ the way you and I deserve to be treated. If you want to know what our sins deserve, meditate on the gospel accounts of the crucifixion.

When at the brightest moment of the day, darkness engulfed the earth. And the Son of God was separated from his Father that he cried out, My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

[15 : 20] And God forsook him because that's what our sins deserved. And that's what you and I deserved. And Christ came to do that for his people.

He came to die for them. You know, a lot of times we have experiences in life and we don't fully know them until we have gone through them.

Not so with Jesus. Jesus knew what it required and what it would take to save his people.

Living perfectly and then dying in their place. And that's why he was given the name Jesus because he came to save his people from their sins.

And so as we reflect on this name at this time of Christmas, I pray if you've trusted in Jesus, let's rejoice this morning. Let us rejoice that Jesus did what we could never do.

[16 : 30] He kept the law perfectly and he did it for us. And let's rejoice that even though we deserve death because the wages of sin is death, we've had a substitute.

We've had one who's taken our place and therefore we do not have to die but we can live in the good of his accomplishments, his merits on our behalf.

And if you're here this morning while you're watching or listening online and you've not yet trusted in Jesus, I pray that you would hear this as a call to repent, a call to turn away from sin and put your trust in the Savior.

The truth is until you do, you are an object of God's wrath. only those who have found their place in Christ are the objects of God's mercy.

There's no in-between, friends. We are an object of wrath or we are an object of mercy. And the wonderful news is that those of us who are now objects of mercy were once objects of wrath but no longer because we have put our trust in Jesus and I pray this morning that you would do the same.

[18 : 00] The second name given to Jesus in Matthew's account of the birth of Christ is the name Emmanuel. And this is my second and final point.

While many people are familiar with the name Jesus, many are unfamiliar with the name Emmanuel. But Matthew tells us that the name Emmanuel explains the meaning of the Son of God

coming down to this earth and taking on human nature alongside his divine nature without mixing the two so that he was both the Son of God and the Son of Man.

the Son of God pointing to his divinity and the Son of Man pointing to his humanity. Look again at how Matthew explains it in verse 22.

He writes, all this took place to fulfill 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. So in verse 22, Matthew tells us that the birth of Christ took place in the way that it did to fulfill a prophecy and then in verse 23 he quotes the prophecy which is from the prophet Isaiah in Isaiah 7, 14.

[19 : 38] The Lord spoke these words by the prophet Isaiah some 700 years before Christ was born and the name given to Christ in that prophecy was Emmanuel which means God with us or God is with us.

And why is this name Emmanuel so important and how does it cause us to hope in God's salvation? In coming to the earth in the exact manner that humans come Jesus came into this earth the exact way that all of us have come into this earth.

the Son of God the second person of the Godhead came to this earth in the incarnation and our best explanation of it is what the scriptures say that it was from the Holy Spirit so the Son of God came to this earth as a baby came into this world just as you and I did he came as God having a divine nature but also as man having a human nature without mixing the two so he was able to be both God and man simultaneously simultaneously and here we see God could never experience and know what we humans know on this earth as God if he could it would make no sense for Jesus to come in human form it would make no sense for Jesus to take to himself a human nature alongside his divine nature keeping both separate there would be no need for that but because God could not in his divinity identify fully with our humanity he sent his son to be like us to be one of us to take on our human nature and to experience in this life all that we experience in the son of God coming to the earth God came to us and God is with us Isaiah's prophecies about Christ don't stop in Isaiah 7 14 we read in a more fulsome way in Isaiah 53 words that foretold that he would come to save us and to be with us Isaiah tells us that Christ was wounded for our transgressions that he was crushed for our iniquities that's how he saved us but he also tells us that he was a man of sorrows grief and in this we are reminded that this is the one who is with us one who is a man of sorrows a man who was acquainted with grief he was not one who was a distant stranger he was not one who did not know brokenness and sorrows of life but he was one who walked where we now walk and brothers and sisters as we grieve as we mourn the loss of our dear sister

[23 : 44] Jennifer Cox let's remember this God is with us and he is with us not in a distant way but he is with us in a real and in a personal way the second person of the trinity the word the son of God became flesh and dwelt among us and he knows what we are going through!

and he is with us to comfort us and to strengthen us Christ wept at the grave of Lazarus his friend he wept over the lostness and brokenness of the people of Jerusalem he's a man of sorrows he's acquainted with grief he was persecuted he was lied upon he was betrayed he was unjustly crucified by the Romans and the Jews but he was justly crucified by God because he was our substitute and he bore our sins and the punishment he received was the just punishment that our sins deserved the writer to the Hebrews reminds us of the nearness of Christ in our weaknesses and in our temptations here's what he writes in Hebrews 4 14 to 16 since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens

Jesus the son of God let us hold fast our confession for we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses but one who is in every respect who in every respect has been tempted as we are yet without sin let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in the time of need brothers and sisters notice that we have a high priest who is able to sympathize with our weaknesses he doesn't just empathize he doesn't just understand no he is able to enter into our grief enter into our weaknesses share in our sorrows because he has walked where we walk he's with us you know sometimes there are some people who go to doctors and they have never seen the medical condition that they present or sometimes they go to experts and they bring a particular problem and the expert says

I've never seen this before never heard of this before brothers and sisters we have the confidence that in whatever we face in this life whatever weakness whatever sorrow whatever brokenness whatever fallenness we come to a high priest who is able to sympathize with us because he has

been the bible says in every respect in every respect tempted and tested as we are and yet without sin and so he is an able and a faithful high priest isn't isn't this comforting isn't this comforting to know that we will never go to him and he is flustered dumbfounded doesn't know what to do never saw that because he's able to sympathize sometimes we don't have to utter a word not a single word he's able to interpret groans by the holy spirit he sympathizes with us and he's only able to do that because he took on a human nature and he kept it separate from his divine nature so he fully enters into our humanity and enters into what we experience in this life in

Matthew 18 verse 20 Jesus gives us an amazing promise he says where two or three are gathered in my name in his name there I am in the midst of them this is an amazing promise but it's easy to miss for Jesus to give this promise he has to be omnipotent you cannot say blanketly that wherever two or three are gathered I'll be in their midst unless you're able to be everywhere at the same time which is what omnipresent means he's omnipresent but he was always omnipresent when he was the eternal son of God the word in heaven from eternity past he was omnipresent and so in that sense he's always been with people he's everywhere he's with everyone but Christ in his coming came to his people in a different way yes he is omnipresent but his coming to us speaks more of imminence than omnipresence our triune God father son and holy spirit is by nature omnipresent but when

[30 : 33] Christ came to this earth and he took on human flesh God the son communicates the nearness of God to his people in a unique and in a special way that is different from omnipresence unbelievers may not be aware of the omnipresence of God but he is omnipresent with them but he has come to us as Emmanuel and the more relevant word for his coming to us is this word imminence it has a similar root as Emmanuel imminence speaks to the nearness of God to his people it speaks to the fact that no matter what they go through no matter what they are going through no matter what they will go through he's with them he's with them not omnipresently but imminently and not imminently in some distant kind of way but imminently in his fullness as human he was God of very God and man of very man he was one person with two natures and he's able therefore to be with us and this brothers and sisters is no small thing this is no small thing and we should remember this in this Christmas season but we should remember it as we look forward to a new year as we look forward to 2024 a year that is filled with unknowns a year that we do not know what it holds for us but here's what we know here's one known we know of the new year

God is with us he's with us he will be with us in joys and sorrows he'll be with us in whatever he sovereignly brings our way and so brothers and sisters I pray that as we reflect on this second name of the Lord Jesus I pray that we would grow in our familiarity with it I pray that we would bring it to mind often to remember that not only is he Jesus who came to save us from our sins but he is also Emmanuel who is with us God is with us may we remember that in this Christmas season and may we remember it in every season of life and I pray that our hearts will be filled with hope in God's amazing salvation let's pray well Father we thank you for sending the Lord Jesus Christ to this earth to bear our humanity that he'd be able to sympathize with us and all of the experiences that we have in this life

I pray for those of us this morning Lord who try to coming in this meeting carrying burdens and concerns but not mindful that the Lord is with his people would you ask this in our hearts and in our memories that we would reflect upon it often that whatever we face if we belong to you you're near to us and Father I also pray for those who do not know Christ those who will only experience him in omnipresence I pray Lord that you would convict them of sin of righteousness and judgment to come

I pray that you would be pleased to save them Lord and bring them to yourself that they may know the one who is with us that they may know Christ in his eminence Father work in the hearts of your people as only you can as a faithful God and a faithful Lord we ask these things in Jesus name Amen let's stand for our closing song let's stand and join them all