

Jesus: A Very Human Birth

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- [0 : 0 0] Please have a seat. I'm just going to ask Chris Mitchell to come up here for a second. Take out your Bibles. Just as you know, we are in a study called The Life of Christ.
- And what we're doing, we have a two-fold reason for doing this study. The first is it helps us build our confidence in the authority of God's Word as we go through this study.
- But number two, we want to look at the humanity of Jesus Christ. So before I get into that, I want to do a few housekeeping things. One, update on the youth. Apparently they're having a great time at the Bible Center.
- I believe they've only burnt down two of the cabins. Something to do with Cade wanting to build a forge or something like this. But Mike, he's my friend who's doing the leading, he says he loves the kids, loves the staff.
- So he's really encouraged with what he's experienced there. So please remember, we're going to pray for them as well as we get in there, the future of our church. Number two, usually we'd be having communion, but there's been a lot going on this week.
- [1 : 0 6] So we're going to put communion off till next week. And the third reason I've asked Chris to come up or Chris has wanted to be up here. I just want to give you a quick update on Daniela, my wife.
- Just what's been going on with her. As you know, a couple of weeks ago when I was up here preaching, I did not know that my wife was actually at Lionsgate's hospital. And the doctors were kind of saving her life at that time.
- So a couple of things that I want to be praised for. One, just to give you a quick update, I'm going to back up. So two weeks ago, Daniela got really sick on a Saturday night.
- Took her to emergency. Doctor wasn't quite sure what was going on, but her blood pressure and vitals started plummeting. Praise God, the emergency room doctor had the sense to put her on antibiotics right away and did some other type of medical things that kind of kept her body working.
- Finally, when she got to... So I was with her till about 3 o'clock. She seemed to be stable. Everything was fine. They were just waiting for the results of the tests. So early Sunday morning, they rushed her to Lionsgate.
- [2 : 1 6] And praise God, a doctor was able to do the right test to find out what was going on. And what had happened was her gallbladder had ruptured and spilling bile into her system. So the big issue at that point is to stop the infection before sepsis can get in.
- So they loaded her up on the antibiotics. And praise God, she did a lot better. So she was able to move back. I think it was on a Thursday.
- A couple things. So thank you for the praise. Thank you so much for the flowers and gifts of thought. I know some of you have inquired about visiting. She's still not ready. So right now, she has a drainage bag.
- So the idea is to drain the fluids out of her body. And then the gallbladder is supposed to heal after six to eight weeks. And then they can remove it. But you can't remove it while it's already ruptured.

It would cause more bile to go into her system. So a couple things to pray about. So yesterday was her, she's off the oral antibiotics. So they're going to see how well her body is able to sustain fighting the infection.

[3 : 23] A couple things the doctors are worried about right now is her blood pressure is low. So tomorrow, she's going to go to the hospital and get some blood tests run. So we're very thankful.

They have call-in nurses are able to come and check on things. Her bag still fills. So there's plenty of bile there. But thank you so much for people who've reached out.

She can't eat a lot of the food. So a lot of the dinners you've been sending, the boys and I have been mowing down very well on that. So thank you. We appreciate your prayers.

We have a full, flourishing garden in our living room. And the dogs don't leave her side. So she's got plenty of warmth and company while she's lying down waiting for her body to heal.

So. Lord, thank you for this time. Thank you for this time.

[4 : 19] And thank you that we can come together and submit these requests before you. Lord, we thank you. Lord, we thank you. Lord, we thank you. First of the youth that became mentioned.

God, we pray for their salvation. We know that it takes you changing their hearts for them to believe. And we just ask that you do that.

And we ask your blessing upon their time together, Lord, that it will be rich and fun and that they will just grow together as a group, Lord.

Lord, I pray for Dave and others who are ministering, seeking to give them truth, Lord. Lord, we pray for your help in doing that.

Because we know that we do not do that perfectly or even well sometimes. And we ask for your intercession on that front. Lord, I pray for Daniela.

[5 : 21] God, what a close call. We know that life is hard because of our sin. And yet you intercede. You help us.

And you ask us to submit a request to you. And so we're doing that right now for Daniela. God, we thank you for sparing her life.

And we ask for healing. We ask for encouragement. Lord, as she spends long hours on her own or just with limited company.

And we pray for BK and the boys, Lord, for their encouragement as well. And that they would grow through this as you use these situations to do.

So, Lord, we thank you for Daniela. And we thank you for that family. And we ask for your hand of healing upon her. In your name, amen. Amen.

[6 : 28] And thank you from me just for it was kind of I got hit with a lot of pastor appreciation, comments and cards last week. And appreciate those so much. It's been, as you know, kind of a stunning week.

As Chris just iterated, you start thinking about how quick things can turn just in an evening where you're just sitting down watching TV, just finishing having dinner and life is fragile.

So, this kind of encourages me as I get into this life of Jesus Christ. As we're going to come to understand the great humanity that we have in this.

Oh, we have these kids apparently are supposed to go somewhere. All right. Thank you, Jody. We need to get a flag raised. Hey, kids, come on up. Come on up. Uh-oh.

Have to stick through the adult service. Oh, no. Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, thank you for these wonderful gifts that we have as our children. Those ones that we continue to pray for, lift up before you.

[7 : 38] The pleasure of stewarding these souls that are your kids, oh God. I pray that you would give us much wisdom, grace, understanding of your truth. May we reflect you in how we teach and how we lead and how we just come into their lives and bless them, oh Father.

And we just think of them as blessing to us. I know I am so encouraged just to see the desire. And I'm encouraged by the parents who have taken the time to care for their kids, to instruct their kids in biblical wisdom and desire to see them follow after you, oh Lord.

I pray that the transition of leaving their parents' faith to a faith that will be their own will be one of simplicity, be one of grace.

For they will see you in the lives that are reflected here in the church at home. God, you know us all and you know each and every individual life that's here.

We thank you and praise you for this. May you bless them as they go on to learn more. In your name, amen. Thanks, Jody. Appreciate that. All right. All right.

[8 : 49] First thing I want to do is I want to bring to your attention the words spoken by the prophets Isaiah. So a couple things you're going to be. You're going to be in Matthew and you're going to be in Luke chapter 1 as we examine the birth of Christ.

And as you all know, if you've been visiting or not here, we're kind of doing an examination of the life. My contention is we look at a lot of what both Jesus taught and the theology, high theology of Jesus being God.

But we tend to somehow, some reason, for whatever reason it is, we sometimes disregard the humanity of Jesus Christ. There's a reason for that. It's because a lot of liberal theology that has grown out since the 1800s has been all in on Jesus being man but not God.

And we fully affirm that Jesus Christ is fully God. But he's also fully man at the same time. And I believe probably in the last 80 years, the teaching of the humanity of Jesus Christ has been somewhat deficient.

And today, in Squamish, we're going to try to buffet that and raise that up and get into a little bit of the history and understanding of who Jesus is.

[10 : 02] So today, my goal is to destroy the myth of the Christmas narrative for you. I hope that doesn't bring sadness. But we're going to bring some new light, what the text says, what history says, and how it leads us.

And I pray into a deeper understanding of how Jesus Christ relates to us. So I just want to begin by reading this passage out of Isaiah 53.

Isaiah the prophet, 700 years before the time of Christ, writes, Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?

For he grew up before him like a young plant and like a root out of dry ground. He had no form or majesty that we should look at him and no beauty that we should desire him.

He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And as one from whom men hide their faces, he was despised and we esteemed him not.

[11 : 15] What I want to do for you today is when we look at that passage, we think of what it was Christ when he was an adult before the cross. But I believe there is some truth to be found in regards to this text in the birth of Jesus Christ himself.

Two weeks ago when I was with you last, we looked at the birth of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was a man who was prayed for by his parents.

There was a grand announcement about his birth through an angel. There was much excitement and anticipation at the pregnancy of Elizabeth. In fact, Luke 1.25 tells us that the words, these are Elizabeth's words.

She says, thus the Lord has done for me in the days when he looked on me to take away my reproach, which means disgrace among people.

Luke would also record in verse 57, Now the time came for Elizabeth to give birth and she bore a son. And her neighbors and relatives heard that the Lord had shown great mercy on her and they rejoiced with her.

[12 : 35] These were the events of the forerunner. He came under great excitement. People were joyful for Elizabeth and her husband, Zachariah, as they bore a child.

However, have you considered when it comes to the one who John was a forerunner to, that Jesus did not come in the same way?

It seems God, in his infinite wisdom, almost goes out of his way to create a scenario that would do away with any joy around the birth of Jesus Christ.

That he goes out of his way to make sure that Jesus had no favor. That he was not given any advantage of anyone that any accusation could be made against him.

If anyone, if anything that we can understand from the birth of Jesus Christ is that it was probably one of the most human births that one can experience.

[13 : 52] The story of the birth of Jesus is a humiliating story. It is a story of shame. It is a story of rejection. It is the story of anger, disbelief, hurt.

It is filled with broken relationships. And even from the beginning, the anticipation of the birth of Christ was despised and he was not esteemed.

Rejection will be the hallmark of the life of Jesus Christ. And we will see this from the very beginning. So this morning, I want you to consider the story behind the story.

And my goal today is to demonstrate to you through the Christmas story, the pain that happened and occurred around that simple birth that happened in that little town of Bethlehem.

The reality is we know the Christmas story well. Usually before Christmas, many churches, we will watch videos or see child, children acting out plays.

[14 : 59] We see the story of an angel appears to Mary. The Holy Spirit instructs her that she will conceive a child and he will be the savior of the world. Joseph will also have an angel appear to him and to let him know that she is pregnant with the Redeemer.

So don't divorce her. We understand that for the census, they travel to Bethlehem. And just in the nick of time, as it were, as they're on, when they arrive there, Mary gives birth and the only place that will host them is a manger because all the inns are full.

Shepherds show up, wise men bring gifts, and they all live happily ever after, right? Is that pretty much sum up the Christmas story that we hear? Well, the first aspect of the Christmas story that I want to examine for you is the relationship between Mary and Joseph.

Please turn with me to Matthew 1.18. Matthew 1.18. This is the first thing that I think we really need to get our arms around.

There is this idea that we have that Mary and Joseph were engaged. In fact, Mary and Joseph were indeed married at the time of the announcement of the birth of Jesus Christ.

[16 : 19] I'm going to demonstrate it to you through this text. Matthew 1.18. Now, the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph.

Now, if you have an NIV, it probably reads, pledged to be married. The New Living Translation will say engaged. And if you have a King James Version in your old school, it says espoused.

But the idea is that in our context of our culture, we see that as being engaged. However, in first century Jewish culture, they were indeed married.

And I'm going to explain to you briefly how this and why this is so. Today, a man might ask a girl to marry him. She says yes.

However, after a few months of dating, maybe a few more bad dates, a bad uncle shows up at the family dinner. The engagement, it's off and it's no more. And that's all it is, right?

[17 : 19] No big deal. But in Jewish culture, once that situation of marriage had begun, the only way you could break it is by divorce. And I want to explain to you why.

First of all, we are a very individualistic society. Many people here live in Squamish with absolutely no extended family.

In Israel, first century, pretty much all your neighbors, all the people around you in your town were extended family. You lived as a clan, okay?

You had a family unit. And the marriage was essentially a two-step process. The goal of your family, of your clan, was to strengthen your clan.

Whether it be financial, numerically, prestige. And the number one way to do that was marriage. To invite someone to come into your clan, marry them, and have many babies and add to the number of your people.

[18 : 27] So when a man got to be of a marrying age, so here is Joseph. He's now ready to be married. A representative of his clan, who would know him well, would go and petition one of the other clans.

Perhaps he knew Mary from the synagogue. Or maybe it was Friday night sheep herding dates. I don't know. But in that first century, they would have that rep go over to that family and say, Hey, we've got an eligible young man.

He would like to marry. Or we would like to marry someone from your clan. Mary gets put forth. So what they would do, the heads of the clans would then make this contract.

And that contract would stipulate these two people are going to marry. The first phase in this contract is when the marriage would happen. It would generally happen within a year's time.

And two, we need to figure out the cost of the dowry. Now, the dowry is based on, if I'm taking a woman from a clan, guess what that clan's doing?

[19 : 34] It's losing. It's losing a member of the clan. A family member. So what you would do is the dowry would represent a thank you for raising this woman in, Lord willing, a godly fashion.

And we're going to pay you the money of the cost that would have covered those 14 to 16 or whatever years of marrying. So that was how the dowry functions. So that kind of seals the contract.

You with me on that one? So that's how a dowry functions. Thank you for raising that good woman. I know she's coming to our clan. We're going to reimburse you with this money. It could be money, land, animals, anything to cover that cost.

So now there's a second phase, which is the marriage itself. But before you get to that phase, two things need to happen. News is going to go out.

There's a marriage happening. And if there's anything that we know and understand about first century Jewish culture is that there's nothing more glorious than a wedding. Amen? The same with us.

[20 : 43] It's a time of celebration. It's a time of getting together. Old family comes in. And in fact, they would send out letting people know that there is going to be a marriage coming.

Three things needed to happen before we hit that marriage date. One, the wife's responsibility or the bride's responsibility would be to prepare herself for marriage.

A lot of the times it would be making herself look beautiful. And it's not just the physical, but maybe some other things she needed to grow up in. Her mom needed to instruct her in certain things before she left.

It would be that time, whether it's the family secret recipes, whatever. There would be all that time that she would be done. The husband-to-be would be at his family's home place and his responsibility was to build his home.

Whether it's an attachment onto the house or another building on the lot of their land, they would be in preparation for that. And the other responsibility that they both had before the people and their God was their role to maintain their purity until they came together for the final part of their marriage.

[21 : 56] The marriage would have been a grand, festive occasion. The groom would go over to the bride's home. He'd probably have some of his friends.

She'd have her friends. And then they would walk through the city. And they would do so slowly. They'd be celebrating. People who would not even be invited to the wedding would be there celebrating with them.

There'd be musicians. There'd be dancing. There would be singing. It would be a very public and festive time. And then they would arrive at the groom's home.

And a meal would be spread out for those who were honored to be there. And they would come together and they would celebrate. They'd thank God for the two people coming together. And then husband and wife would go on to consummate their marriage as their wedding night.

And they would live happily ever after. So a wedding wasn't a private event. It was an exceptionally public event. And people would be knowing there'd be an expectation of these family units, these clans coming together.

[23 : 07] Now take a look at... I'm just going to bring you... You don't have to look at this yet. But it's the elements that Mary and Joseph are represented. So Luke 1:38 tells us the angel has spoken to Mary.

He gives her the news that she is going to bear a son. The Holy Spirit will impregnate her. And her response is, Behold, I am the servant of the Lord.

Let it be to me according to your word. When Mary makes that acceptance... And don't kid yourself.

The first person who ever had to accept the Lord Jesus Christ into their life was Mary on this moment. Mary's life is changing forever.

And there is this wonderful humility we read in the Magnificat, which Chris wrote for us. This complete surrender of her heart, soul, and will to God.

[24 : 08] But she knows this wedding is not going to happen. It's not going to be the joy of the festive occasions of this type of thing that she's going to experience.

She's like any other girl of that age, of that time. Every girl looks forward to her wedding, the celebration. But she's from a Middle Eastern culture.

A Middle Eastern culture is an outward culture. Ours, in case you're wondering, is a very inward focused culture. And what I mean by that is, we're all about the individual.

I do what's good for me and that's what really matters. But a Middle Eastern of that time, what you do represents your clan. All right? Some of the most extreme outward existing cultures in our day-to-day is Japan and India.

And if you know, we've read in the news sometimes, we read about, we've heard about honor killings. Right? When I was in the government, there was an investigation in regards to a murder of a young girl outside the city of Kingston.

[25 : 17] And the reason was she was killed by her two brothers because she was going to marry someone outside the accepted parameters of her family. Because it would have brought shame on the family.

Go back 2,000 years. And this word shame is going to come out a lot. So, a pregnancy before marriage is not simply a matter of not being pure, which would have brought shame on both Joseph and Mary.

But the shame is even compounded by the fact that the child is not even Joseph's. So, there's that added layer that's brought to bear on this story.

Then Joseph has to go through a whole other level of shame, embarrassment. Who chose this woman? How could I have been so wrong? But in Mary, we read about a woman who accepts her faith before the Lord.

Luke 1.39 tells us she goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth who lives in the hill country. One can't help but think that Mary went to stay with her cousin to share the wonderful news.

[26 : 42] For who else are you going to share that news with? The Messiah isn't on the way. What great news. It should have been a cause for the greatest celebration on earth.

There would be hope. There would be favor. And at the same time, what is my family going to think? What is this man that I'm engaged to, what is he going to think?

What about her friends, her family, the family and friends of Joseph? What kind of scorn, shame, public humiliation? What type of gossip will occur?

Kind of leads us to think that maybe Mary is visiting Elizabeth. Joseph, just to hold off on some of the accusations. The slander. The hatred.

But after she's there for three months, and most certainly ready to show, she returns to Nazareth. She finds Joseph making himself busy by preparing a home, as Jewish culture would dictate.

[27 : 49] And then she has to face Joseph. I have this story I want to tell you. An angel appeared to me and told me that I will bear the Messiah.

She provides him with this story, and I'm sure there's some, a bit of hope there. But if you look at Matthew 19, 1-19, it tells us that Joseph was resolved to divorce her quietly.

Think about that for a second. She's come to him with the story.

Do you think her family is accepting her? They're not taking her back. Her parents, the home that she lives in, you're entering disgrace into your home to accept her with the pregnancy.

She goes to her groom, the man who loves her, who's promised, who's already started the marriage, the process. Joseph, I have this story to tell you.

[29 : 09] He rejects the story. He doesn't believe the story. In fact, he hates the story so much, it says that he is resolved to divorce her.

And what's interesting in this story is that he feels so strongly, he disbelieves his wife-to-be so much, God has to interfere in the story.

Have you ever thought about that? Like, God's got to step in to get him to see the actual truth that's going on. He's already gone through the distrust of his bride.

He's already dealing with the shame and humiliation before his family and friends. But notice verse 20, it says, But as he considered these things, behold, thank God, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear.

Do not fear. That's a loaded term. She shows up, she announces that he's got a child. The whole fear is rooted, is that my life is over.

[30 : 21] I'm going to be mocked, humiliated forevermore. The one who chose the bride, who it's not that it was our purity that we wouldn't hold, but she was with some other guy.

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. If you're using an ESV Bible, you read, he took his wife.

That means she's already his wife. So the point that I am making here is that they are married when this happens, this occurs.

Verse 25, But knew her not until she had given birth to his son, and he called his name Jesus.

[31 : 25] And everything was great. Now we're going to turn to Luke here, because Luke is going to give us more color around the story about what Mary and Joseph went through.

Remember, Christmas story, it's the time of census. They traveled at Bethlehem, just in time to have a baby. There's no room in the inn, so they're able to find a place where animals meet.

They settle there, and they have the child. But today, I actually want us to see some things in the text you may not have noticed. So let's take a look at Luke 2, verse 1.

It said, In those days, a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria, and all went to be registered, each to his own town.

All right, this is Luke. Luke's the historian. He's going to give us a few more details. And in these details, he's actually given us a situation. Remember John the Baptist said, time of Herod. This is only six months later.

[32 : 29] Why is he not saying, in the time of Herod? And we're going to get to this, and this is just so amazing how Scripture weaves this truth through there.

But the contention is, at this time, Herod is so crazy, while he's on the throne, and we're going to look at it, that Rome did not favor him anymore. And Judea was in such a mess that they asked, the governor in Syria had to start the situation of getting the census.

The purpose of a census is, you count the people, and you know how much to tax them. That's really what it's really all about. Okay? So there's this speculation. The census was done by Rome, because they knew Herod's days were numbered, and they wanted to make sure that the money was still going to Rome.

But this is where it gets interesting. Verse four. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, which is married, who was with child.

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes and laid him in a manger because there was no place for them in the inn.

[33 : 56] All right. I'm going to ask you guys a few questions. If Joseph was going to Bethlehem to simply register for a census, why is he bringing Mary?

Okay. Why on earth would you bring someone? Now the trip from Nazareth to Bethlehem, probably about four or five days, maybe a little bit slower. But if your wife is to give birth to a child, would you really be making that trip with the wife?

If the reason was simply to do the census, he would just kind of go down and head back. But there's a reason that Joseph takes her down there.

And what I'm going to argue for you today is that the decision that Joseph and Mary made to bear the son of God meant absolute and complete rejection by both of their clans and they chose to move to Bethlehem and leave Nazareth behind.

You with me on that? Okay. And I'm going to prove this to you and it's going to show you in the text. But I want you to start seeing the humanity that Jesus Christ is born into.

[35 : 28] He's got parents that they have now, because of angelic interference in their life, are following after God and everybody else is rejecting them.

Now why do I believe that they chose to move to Bethlehem or already there? So why Bethlehem?

Well, the other question you need to ask is why did they live in Nazareth? If Bethlehem was the home of David and Joseph's family, why were they in Nazareth? Remember a couple of weeks ago, we said that Herod enriched the land on doing great building projects.

History tells us with about a hundred years before this time when the Hasmoneans had gone through and that's when the Jews reclaimed their independence of Israel, they started settling back in the northern part of the land.

Susan, this goes to your question from a couple of weeks ago, you asked me. So they started going out. So they started going out with some of their clans to get work. All right? That's simply what we believe happened.

[36 : 34] There's history, tells us in different towns are created around work that's going to be. Joseph's father was probably a tradesman. He's tradesman. He's going to train his son, Jesus, to be a tradesman.

It's all up there. That's where the work is happening. But now that they're about to have a child in that close clan who all live together, work together, my contention is Joseph is not seen as the most stable of individuals.

Imagine his father telling him, Dad, I'm going to marry this pregnant woman. An angel came and told me that this was going to happen. What's the father going to think?

Right? Joey, we need to have a talk. Right? You mean to tell me this woman who's now brought shame upon her family, your family, all of us, is pregnant, but you're still going to take her into our home?

Not only that, the woman is actually saying she got impregnated by an angel. So not only are you bringing a pregnant woman outside of marriage into my home, but she's crazy as well.

[37 : 49] Think about it. You're going to put that woman in my house. This is the situation that is evolving around here. So take a look at verse 6.

And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. So there's this understanding that they're there for a period of time.

There's nothing in the text that says they just made it. The contention is perhaps they were there for weeks and months. We don't know the exact time, but they were there. So what does it tell us about the inns that were full?

A couple things about inns. One, Bethlehem was a small town. Two, scholars debate if there was ever anything called an inn at that time. They did not have the executive inn. They did not have the Sandman Inn or the Ramada Inn.

There was nothing like that. In fact, the word that is used here is used in two other places in the New Testament, Mark 14, 4 and Luke 21, 22, 12.

[38 : 48] And the word that is translated there is guest room. So the inn can be seen as a guest room. So when they moved there, David, Mary, connecting with their old family, have to find a place to live.

Let's find a guest room. Now the way the houses were structured, there was one level buildings and two level. Often, families would keep a lean to, a booth on the top of their home for when guests were coming through, mostly family members, that would be able to stay there.

So when Joseph and Mary are coming to live in Bethlehem, there's really nobody who's got that place. But what a lot of homes had, though, on the bottom floor was a place for the animals.

A manger. A place that you would have them live comfortably. Sadly, it's going to be with a few sheep, goats, and other things. Or, they had these caves cut out of their land because around Jerusalem and Bethlehem at the time was limestone and they would create these caves and they would put the animals in these caves.

So, some family member loved on them enough to make sure that they had a roof over their head. So that idea that there was this humiliating story that nobody wanted to take them in and all the inns were full and the doors were closed in the face.

[40 : 17] Let's be honest. That is nothing compared to the real shame and humiliation that they dealt with. Do you get that? To be turned down one night, there's really no true shame in that compared to being completely rejected from your family.

Had they really been pregnant, about to give birth, what we know about Jewish customs at that time is no person in the world would ever turn away a pregnant woman.

So the idea that they would be kind of going, place to place, please help us, please help us, would never happen in that area. They would be brought into the home and cared for.

We have every reason to believe that's what happened with this manger. So, we've already said, why did they move to Bethlehem?

What is the reason that would compel them to do so? My speculation is that Joseph does it simply to love his wife and protect his wife from a culture where she would not have been welcomed.

[41 : 33] Alright, so there's that first element. Two other compelling reasons I want to show you here in the text that demonstrate why they moved to Bethlehem.

And they are both found in the second chapter of Matthew. Alright, let's take a look. Jesus Christ is birthed. Second chapter of Matthew begins, now after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of, oh, all of a sudden we're back to the days of Herod the king, so he's still going to figure in here.

Behold, wise men from the east came to Jerusalem. You know the story of the wise men, right? They show up, they're looking for Jesus, they go to Herod, they tell Herod the story, Herod says, hey, go tell me the rest of the story and where I can find and come worship this king.

So the wise men go, they find Jesus, they celebrate. Now notice, they go to Bethlehem, not Nazareth looking for Jesus. Why does that matter?

Just a little further on in the text. Let's look at verse 7. So he summons the wise men. Let's look at verse 13.

[42 : 49] Now, when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, rise, take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt.

Take the child and his mother and flee to Egypt and remain there until I tell you. For Herod is about to search for the child to destroy him. And he rose and took the child and his mother by night and departed to Egypt and remained there until the death of Herod.

This was to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet. Out of Egypt I called my son. Now, I want you to take notice of verse 16. Then Herod, when he saw that he had been tricked by the wise men, became furious and he sent and killed all the male children in Bethlehem in all that region who were two years old and under.

What that leads us is that by the time the wise men show up before Herod, there had been about a two year time lapse because Herod wants to be thorough.

So there had been this time frame that happened before the birth of Jesus and the wise men came. You with me on this? This is going to make sense a little bit more. But there's these two years that occur and the wise men, like I said, go to Bethlehem, not Nazareth.

[44 : 10] So even after the birth of Jesus, Joseph and Mary are remaining in Bethlehem. So we see that as one of the compelling reasons that it sows the two years, two years and under.

Then it says, why did they go to Bethlehem? Because that's where they were living. What's interesting is skeptics have often stated that there was no way Herod or any king would have gone into a town of Bethlehem.

That is absolutely crazy talk. Herod was so crazy that he actually killed his three sons at the end of his life. Right?

This is a man who wanted his throne. He suspected they wanted his throne before he died. Kills them all. Secondly, his father marries a woman who's related to the high priest.

Herod, filled with fear that Rome might make the high priest ruler over Israel. What does Herod do? He actually goes and kills that high priest. So if there's any speculation that this king would ever go into a town and kill all the unknown babies that are under two years of age or under, history tells us this is the exact thing Herod would do.

[45 : 31] Alright? So we have this situation. Joseph runs. He's away and he's being hunted but Jesus is safe. Now let's look at verse 19.

And this I believe is the strongest reason why we understand that both Joseph and Mary had made Bethlehem their home. But when Herod died, behold an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt saying, Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel for those who sought the child's life are dead.

And he rose and took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. Now notice verse 22. But when he, this is Joseph, heard that Archelaus, Archelaus was the son of Herod the great.

Okay? Who was an absolutely horrible man who was so cruel that Rome removed him from leadership and installed a provincial governor who would eventually be Pilate.

Alright? So this history is all interweaving into this truth. But Archelaus was so cruel that he killed 3,000 Pharisees to spite the ruling religious people of Israel.

[46 : 59] But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning over Judea, now Judea is where Bethlehem is, in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there.

So when Joseph was given the okay to go home, he's going home to Bethlehem. You with me on this? He's going back to Judea. That's the intent of his heart.

It's to go to Judea, but was afraid to go there. And being warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee. First choice was Bethlehem.

That's where he had set himself up. That's where Joseph and Mary are going to raise Jesus. We're going to be in Bethlehem. We're going to not deal with the shame and all this type of stuff. And then we get to verse 23.

And he went and lived in a city called Nazareth. So that was spoken by the prophets might be fulfilled that he would be called a Nazarene.

[47 : 59] So why does this matter? Why am I even bringing this up? I think it's really important when we begin to look at the story of Jesus is to see how desperate the story is.

The shame that was poured on right from the very beginning. The words of Isaiah again, he was despised and rejected by men.

and we esteemed him not. And it's like I said before, the inns being closed and having to be born in a manger are not the humbling aspects of the story.

The humbling aspects of the story are two teenage kids who are being called by God to carry the Savior of the world.

And they make this decision to follow Jesus and say no to the world.

[49 : 13] Rejected from their homes, their families, their way of life. If you don't think that life in Nazareth isn't tough, we're going to read later on that when Jesus first makes his public proclamation, the public still question his parentage.

Thirty years later, this stigma has lived over the head of Jesus Christ. Sometimes I don't think we get this.

I remember when I was in university and one of my good friends didn't return for the second year. This was before email. We wrote letters. We asked her, where are you? Did you transfer? What happened?

The next summer, over a year later, I get a letter from her and she's letting me know what's going on and she tells me I am in the, she says, I'm in the sun with my child and enjoying the gifts of a newborn baby.

She wasn't married. This is 30 years ago, I guess, when I was in university. And what had happened was she got pregnant and she moved to a place that was a ministry for Christian girls who got pregnant out of wedlock because they couldn't stay at home because they weren't safe in their own homes because of the shame that would happen through their families and their churches.

[50 : 42] This is just 30 years ago. Today, getting pregnant out of marriage is a bit of a shame. They usually call a shotgun wedding. Or something like that. But this is still an issue today.

Think going back 2,000 years and the pressure that would have been put on Mary and Joseph. But this is the beautiful thing about it. To accept Jesus Christ and your Lord as Lord and Savior means you no longer get your agenda.

Get what I mean by that? You don't get your agenda. God's love. The greatest amount of counseling that Dave and I have to do with people here in the church is usually with people who are trying to have their agenda and follow Jesus too.

Do you get that? Now, they're not always because I want my sin. God's love. But the greatest number one thing that I see in the lives of believers today is the idea of shame which permeates their life.

Shame of what their parents are going to think. Shame about what their friends are going to say. And words that happen in their past continue to affect who they are now.

[52 : 02] and they're trying to bridge what it is to come after Christ and still live life with this tension. I think we see clearly in the life of Joseph and Mary is sometimes we need to cut clean of that life.

That to follow Jesus Christ means to go all in and not know what's going to happen. That's why I believe it's so clear the angel says to Joseph do not fear.

My friends the call of Christ is a life of denial. It is a denial of self. It is a denial of your life.

It is denial of all the things that you think good to live a life that God calls good. And sometimes when we think about these problems of life we're fearful.

You see the peace of God begins with putting the old life to death and accepting the new life with Christ. Christ. It's to understand that accepting Jesus Christ means it's not something we do on our terms but we're doing it on the terms of Jesus Christ.

[53 : 38] When we accept Jesus Christ as our Lord and Savior it's to know that we are now his child and we now no longer need to live with the guilt and shame that plagued our last life.

my friends many of you have already been born into this new life of Jesus Christ. It is a glorious life but many of you are plagued by the fear, shame, and embarrassment of trying to live in that other world.

My encouragement to you in this story is when we call out to Lord Jesus Christ this is a man who lived on this earth who is truly understanding of what rejection, shame, brokenness, scorn, and the worst things of society could throw at him.

So when we come to him in prayer the life of Jesus Christ has been so perfectly prepared that even the most vulnerable people in our lives, what's more vulnerable than a single woman getting pregnant who's a teen?

Think if that happened today, the savior of mankind, woman shows up, I'm going to bear the Messiah, I'm 16 years old, an angel told me, first thing we do, trying to show mercy on her, would give her an abortion, right?

[55 : 17] We would kill any attempts and stop the Messiah from actually being born, the Messiah that we actually need more than anything else.

So my hope is through this meandering sermon is that there'll be some element that you will be able to connect with the life of Jesus in such a real way because as I said when I began this series, the life of Jesus happens in real history because they were real people who experienced real problems.

And I think when we can get our hearts into that, we can understand the full impact of the decisions that Jesus Christ makes along the way. let me pray.

Dear Lord, Heavenly Father, I know this sermon seems more like an argument to prove that they were scorned and rejected, but we see in the text that there was decisions made because of outside forces.

Father, I think every single one of us knows that we have made decisions that have dishonored you because of outside forces. Whether we did something because someone told them they loved us, or we loved them, or we chose to follow our fleshly desires rather than spiritual desires.

[56 : 48] Father, the fact of the matter is we live in a sinful world and we are broken people. And God, on this day, I thank you for the cross more than anything else. I thank you that this is the safe place.

As Joseph and Mary went to Bethlehem to hide from the scorn, we can come here without fear of rejection. No matter how great our sin is, no matter how great our shame is, no matter how great our disobedience is, the fact the matter all are welcome at the foot of the cross.

Father, this week just as I pondered upon these things, I don't know what it would have been like to be Joseph so hurt and devastated to find the woman that he loves and he wants to marry who's pregnant with another man's child.

The devastation that would upon his heart and his soul as he contemplated and he wanted to divorce her because that would have indeed been the just thing to do at that time.

But Father, we thank you that he was willing, able to put away his fears and follow you. Father, we have in you a mediator in which we can bring those fears, we can bring that shame, we can bring that hurt to you to be cleansed, to be removed and to walk in the newness of life of a child of God.

[58 : 29] If there's anything my heart desires for this church is that they would be known as children of God, a group of people who walk together in humility, love. We're not here to judge, but we're to call others to the one who saved us from the disasters of our lives.

Our foolish decisions, our rebellious decisions. And there was no condition to be had except to place our faith in you. But it's a hard call.

It's a strict call. You do not suffer any other gods. We're not to take any idols.

We're not to take in any fears. We are to be yours and yours alone. I thank you for Joseph and Mary and the testimony that they were born.

As teenagers, they followed the way. I pray that all of us here today would be those who follow the way. In your name, amen.