

King Jesus and His Mission

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[0:00] So, Matthew chapter 1, we're going to read from verse 18 through to verse 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.

[1:21] He took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son, and he called his name Jesus. This is the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Now, you might want to talk to the person next to you about a couple of... Have a look at the passage with the person next to you, and think about it together. Is there stuff in there that you thought, oh, okay, that's interesting?

Raises questions? What stands out to you? And then we'll preach in a minute. Okay. I know it's not Christmas Day.

We are in the middle of February, but we're looking at Matthew chapter 1, and it sounds very much like a time for a Christmas sermon, but not today. I teach RI at our local state school, Fig Tree Pocket, and as part of the first lesson in the week, in the year, I ask the kids what they think the greatest problem in the world is, and the answers I get from the year five and six kids go something like this.

School. Environment, pollution and poverty. And then I ask my same question to the computer during the week and got an AI summary.

[2:44] And the answers, it said, based on global reports and research said, number one, climate change and global warming.

Number two, strangely enough, artificial intelligence risks. Poverty and incoming inequality. And then war, conflict and inequality.

And the list goes on. Now, they're all big problems, yeah? They're all big problems for sure. But they're not the primary problem in the world. And they are simply symptoms of a much bigger problem in the world.

And God in his word tells us what our greatest problem is. And the greatest problem in the world is S-I-N.

Sin. Your sins and my sins. That is the biggest problem in the world. And God tells us what we need saving from, first and of most importance is from our sins.

[3 : 52] That is the diagnosis. And we see the lengths that God has gone to here in the opening chapters of Matthew. He orchestrated all of human history so that he could save us from our sins.

And the way he would save us from our sins was by bringing his son into the world, the Lord Jesus Christ, the Saviour Jesus, who was born in an extraordinary way, in a miraculous way, and died on the cross and rose victoriously from the dead.

Now, last week we saw his family tree, which is every believer's family tree. It's a family tree full of spectacular, repentant sinners. And since these believers are adopted into that family, they have become part of our family.

There's no whitewashing of scandals in this family history. And there in verses 1 to 17, we see why Jesus came. In this passage this morning, we see that is.

Let's pick it down here at verse 21. To save his people from their sins. That's why he came.

[5 : 09] And at the end of this morning's talk, I'm going to give people an opportunity to become a follower of Jesus and so be adopted into our family as well, into this new family, this spectacular, repentant sinner's family.

Because Jesus came to save people from their sins. So let's have a look at this scandalous birth. Let's look at the events of this scandalous birth for a moment or two.

Mary's engaged, betrothed, legally married, legally kind of married, but not yet living with a husband. That's her situation.

There's no question about their relationship. They were set aside for each other, but they hadn't moved in yet. That was clear. The betrothal was usually for around a year.

And being betrothed was as good as being married. You just didn't live like husband and wife yet. However, she's found to be pregnant.

[6 : 17] It's obvious to all. There's no denying it. The bump is plain to see. But she's pregnant in a very unusual way.

Before Mary and Joseph had any sexual relationship. See, chastity, moral purity and virginity is the expectation before marriage. Sex before marriage is not good for anyone.

God knows it. God intends sex to be enjoyed in marriage, not before and not outside of marriage. Now, these days, there's two ways that people get into marriage, living with each other.

One group are the sliders, right? And the others is the deciders, right? Studies have shown that the breakup rate of those who slide into living together, right?

Everyone who just go in there is higher, right? Than those who don't live together, surprisingly enough, before making a public profession and commitment to deciding to marry and to live with each other.

[7 : 25] See, living together is not a trial marriage. Because a trial implies that it's something you can have a go at before you buy it. And if you don't like it, you can trade it in. Give it back.

That's not marriage. Marriage is a lifelong commitment that begins when you make promises and commit to living together. As long as you both shall live.

Now, for Mary to be pregnant before marriage was shameful. Our society has lost a lot of that. All right? It's lost lots of its Christian heritage.

Sex before marriage is no surprise in our world today. And we're paying the price for it. And pregnancy before marriage is almost normal.

To be clear, God's order for things is marriage first, then sexual relationships, and then God-willing children.

[8 : 21] The potential moral scandal for Mary being pregnant links us again to Jesus' scandalous family tree, doesn't it?

I mean, if she's committed adultery, as Joseph and everyone would have every reason to believe, the full weight of the Old Testament law could call for her to be stoned.

But the truth is, she hasn't committed adultery. She's become pregnant by the Holy Spirit. There's all kinds of spirits in the world.

The reality of the Holy Spirit is a particularly Christian distinctive. She hasn't become pregnant through some pagan ritual where there's some coupling of the gods.

All right? She's a virgin, yet she's pregnant. Now, if we are rationalists, we'll dismiss it as being outright impossible. You know, it's just not right.

[9 : 27] All right? Can't be true. And so we'll dismiss all the scriptures as being a fairy tale. No such thing as miracles. If we're liberals, we'll try and explain it away and say it's just a myth.

But if we love the scriptures and love God, we will trust his word and believe it is right. And here we see God intervening in the cause of the world in a way unknown before or afterwards.

Now, it's technically possible these days. But it wasn't then. So it isn't like the Holy Spirit provided the sperm to fertilize an egg.

It's a miraculous conception. See, he is both 100% man and 100% God. Fully man, fully God.

He is the unique God-man. Now, if God can create the world from nothing, right, I don't have a problem with God becoming man through a miraculous conception.

[10 : 40] But we need to ask the question, why? Why a virgin birth? Couldn't it have just been like every other birth in history? Well, it's not because sex in itself is sinful, right?

Sex in marriage is a good and proper expression of oneness. And it's not to be forbidden by anyone, especially religious leaders. Now, Jesus' conception and birth was in God's sovereign timing.

His choosing, his control of events in accordance with his plans and promises. His plan is not to be forbidden by anyone, right? He is born of God, not Adam, right?

Jesus is the sinless son from birth, unlike every other person who's been born in history.

Unlike all of us. He is the unique, sinless son of God. Now, we're told that Joseph is a righteous man, so he carefully weighs up the situation of what course to take there in verse 19.

[12 : 00] And see her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. Let's think about that for a minute or two.

If he doesn't divorce her, he's tacitly agreeing, right, with the world's verdict that he, Joseph, is the father of this child that she's bearing.

So, being a just man, he needs to take action. Do something, even if he's going to be kind to her. To do nothing would be unrighteous.

So, if he doesn't divorce her and tacitly agrees with the world's verdict that he's the father, it's an offence to which they both could be stoned to death.

Rarely put in practice, but Jeremiah 22 speaks about it. So, he plans to divorce her secretly, divorce her quietly, not to make a big stink about it all, right?

[13 : 02] Not to make a public scandal. Be kind and compassionate. To his betrothed. Go to the priest and divorce her, not publicly but privately.

Numbers 5 makes a provision for that. Though Mary would have to live with the shame of carrying a child to term. It seems the merciful and compassionate thing to do. But then God intervenes again.

In verses 20 to 21. And this time in a dream. Joseph is to marry Mary and give the child the name Jesus.

He's told explicitly by the angel of the Lord that her conception is of the Holy Spirit. Matthew emphasises this by repeating it again for us to hear.

She's pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Don't get it wrong. He's not to be afraid to marry her, to take her to be his wife.

[14:02] Now, why would he be afraid to take her? His reputation being tarnished? The gossip that would go around? The law that was seemingly broken and the punishment that might possibly come about because of it?

Nevertheless, he's to go back and take Mary to be his wife. His betrothed Mary. And give the child she's carrying, when the child comes, the name Jesus.

And his name has a meaning, verse 21, which sets up the outcome for his life's work. Jesus will save his people from their sins.

Literally, right? For he, he will save his people from their sins. Jesus and Jesus alone will save people from his sins.

Jesus is the Greek for Hebrew Joshua. Yahweh saves, right? The Lord saves. And how will the Lord save? In the person and the work of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God in the flesh.

[15:13] God the Father will save his people from their sins through God the Son. And Jesus is the one who will save his people from their sins. The sins that entangle, the sins that bind, the sins that hinder, the sins that destroy the relationships.

The sins that are a record of our wrongs, which are deserving of the punishment we deserve. Jesus will save his people from their sins. The sins that demand sacrifice and offering, a sacrifice of atonement at the altar.

Jesus will save his people from their sins. He is a sin crusher. The one we've been longing for since Genesis chapter 1 verse 15. He is the one who will bring God's blessing.

That was to come to the world. That was promised to Abraham. He is the one who will bring God's blessing to all who will believe in him.

Notice it's not Mary, right, who saves us from our sins. She is not a co-redemptrix or a mediatrix. We don't pray to Mary who then pleads to the Father.

[16:23] She is not the dispenser of grace to the world. Nothing could be further from the truth and she would have us do nothing of the kind. See, there is one mediator between God and man.

The man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men, the testimony given at the proper time, we are told, in 1 Timothy chapter 2. Jesus is the one who came to save his people from their sins.

My sins are the greatest problem in my life. And my sins are the greatest problem in the world. It's my sins which cut me off from life.

It's sin which got us kicked out of the garden, out of the kingdom of God in the first place. And it's sin which keeps me separated from God now. And it's sin which rightly condemns me before God's righteous judgment.

My selfish, independent nature. My rebellion against God. My refusal to obey him and treat him as God. My treason in making myself king in his kingdom.

[17:32] Sin is a deadly disease. And sins are the symptoms of that deadly disease. And it's Jesus' life's work to save me from the punishment my sins, our sins, rightly deserve.

That is the primary purpose of Jesus coming into the world. Getting the right diagnosis is paramount in getting the right treatment.

The medicos will know that. And you will know it as well. See, there are mixed feelings though, aren't there, about getting the correct diagnosis. Think about it with me for a minute or two.

There's disappointment and then there's relief. Yeah? See, being diagnosed with diabetes or sleep apnea or celiac disease or hardening of the arteries which I've got or cataracts or any other myriad of chronic illnesses can be a real bummer.

Can't it? A real bummer. But then having the right diagnosis and getting the right treatment can actually lead to you actually feeling a lot better.

[18:54] What do you think your primary problem is? You don't have one? Well, that's your problem. Let me tell you what it isn't.

Your primary problem, my primary problem is not political. It's not family. It's not your children.

It's not your job. It's not your boss. It's not your spouse. It's not your education. It's not your health.

Certainly not your gender. It's not your looks. It's not your age. It's not your wealth.

It's not... It is our... Tell me what it is. Sins. Yeah. See, God didn't send a counsellor.

[19:56] He didn't send a politician. He didn't send a doctor. He didn't send an economist. He didn't send a psychiatrist. He didn't send a social worker.

He didn't send a financial planner. He didn't send a lecturer. He sent his son.

God's diagnosis is this. We have a deadly, deadly disease of sin, seen clearly in our sins, and that leads to death and judgment, and cuts us off from God forever, and sends us rightly to hell.

But he has a cure. Now, it's good to get the diagnosis, yeah? But it's better to actually know the cure.

He sent his son to save us from our sins. Our first reaction might be one of denial. But once we accept the diagnosis, we can welcome the treatment.

[21:08] And that is to have Jesus save us from our sins, which means living with him as Lord and Saviour. Sin is treason.

Sin is making myself out to be God, and denying God is God. Sin is my rebellion against God, and telling him how I know things better. Sin is me saying, I'll make up the rules.

Thank you very much, God. And my sinfulness is demonstrated in my sins. Which are many. Which continue to mount up.

Which by rights condemn me. To God's righteous wrath. But Jesus came to save me from the power and the penalty of my sins.

Of living for myself. He came to save me from my sins, and he came to save you from yours. Our problem is this.

[22:10] We enjoy our sins too much. And we don't see how bad they are. And the dire consequence of not taking them seriously.

Now, sometimes it takes a long time to actually believe God's diagnosis. You might have been struggling against this for a long time.

And yet finally, finally, sometimes we accept that it's true. See, there are costs to gluttony.

There are costs to greed. There are costs to lies. There are costs to drunkenness. There are costs for sexual immorality. And the ultimate cost is death and judgment.

Jesus comes to save us from that. It's a lie of the devil that sitting against God is fine and it's all good and no worries. A life given over to sin is not full of joy.

[23:16] It's not full of freedom. It's not full of happiness. It's filled with regrets. Filled with shame. And filled with dysfunction. Jesus came to save us from that.

Now. And to save us from the slavery to sin. Now. And to save us from the punishment our sins deserve on the day he returns to judge.

And that's all in accordance with God's prophetic word. And we see that Jesus is God with us. Verses 22 to 23.

All 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.

God with us. Jesus is God with us. You want to look at the Bible and find out where the Bible says that Jesus is God with us.

[24:18] Here it is. Can't get much clearer. The one Mary is carrying is going to be born and will be God himself with us.

God himself with his people. The very one who created the universe will walk around with his people. And he comes into the world in the way that all mankind come to the world.

Born of a woman. Born of Mary. God with us. Jesus no one less than God himself will take God it will take God to save his people from their sins.

Only God can do it. Jesus fully God fully man comes into the world to save us from our sins and so it happens. Jesus has promised and then Joseph woke up from his dream and did as the angel commanded him.

Married Mary didn't have any sexual relationship with her until she gave birth to a son. She didn't stay perpetually virgin right? After she gave birth to Jesus they had normal marriage and had other children and Joseph has named his son Jesus.

[25:38] Jesus is born in the most extraordinary way and an amazing way with a purpose in life. He was born in an amazing way by the Holy Spirit and so too are all his people born of the Holy Spirit.

Every one of us here has been born once in the usual way by the world however every one of us who has asked Jesus to save us from our sins has been born into an extraordinary birth by the Holy Spirit.

You want to see a miracle? Well just look around the room. See those who have been born of the Holy Spirit born again. The same Holy Spirit that brought about the birth of Jesus had brought about the new birth into living hope through every one of us who has tasted the Lord Jesus good and believed in him.

! God and you know you need to be saved from your sins you might have been coming to church for a while now checking out Christian things today can be the day that you can have extraordinary birth that you believe God diagnosed the greatest problem in your life and my life is our sins and you ask God son Jesus who is Jesus the God who is the son to save you from your sins forgive you for your sins you decide to follow

Jesus Lord and saviour to be your king and like Jesus you can have an extraordinary birth new birth into a living hope through the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ at the cross saved from the penalty and the power of sin free from shame free from guilt free from dysfunction and the sin in your life now if that's you we're going to pray and you can pray along your own heart with the words I'm going to lead us in and so before you leave today I would like you to tick the box on the connect today thing to tell us you don't or talk to you even better after church this morning say Roy I prayed that prayer nothing would make us better we'll talk to Rod and you talk to somebody brought you here this morning and we'll get in touch with you and help you as a new believer you wouldn't leave a new baby out in the rain would you we want to do that better we'll do better with you so here's the prayer the prayer is always written in our you can open your bulletins up to the back page the prayer is always there on the back page and here's the prayer

[28 : 37] I'll read it out to you and then I'll pray it in the minute or two so it says Dear Lord thank you for your word which teaches! us clearly that Jesus came to save us from our sins so I know that I'm not worthy of accepted by you I don't deserve your gift of eternal life I'm guilty of rebelling against you and ignoring you I need forgiveness thank you for sending your son to die for me that I might be forgiven thank you that he rose from the dead to give me new life please forgive me and change me that I may live with Jesus as my ruler amen so that way the prayer will pray I'm going to let us in prayer right now and if you want to pray this and this is your prayer you prayed long and God will hear let's pray dear Lord thank you that your word which teaches us clearly that Jesus came to save us from our sins I know that I'm not worthy to be accepted by you I don't deserve your gift of eternal life

I'm guilty of rebelling against you and ignoring you I need forgiveness thank you for sending your son to die for me that I might be forgiven thank you that you rose from the dead to give me new life please forgive me and change me that I may live with Jesus as my ruler amen we're going to sing a great song talking about God's mercy his mercy is more then after we'll have a question time let's sing together a