

# THE CHRIST-CENTERED LIFE

## God Becomes Man

Matthew 1:18-25

INTRODUCTION: WELCOME - THANK YOU FOR PRAYERS WHILE IN BRAZIL

This morning I launch a new sermon series with you, based on the life of Christ. But while we will move more or less through the life of Jesus chronologically, our purpose will not be to merely learn or review the major moments in the life of the Master. No, our purpose will be to study the life of Jesus with a view toward making Him the center of our own lives.

I pray that as we move through the story of the life and ministry of the Savior that we might weekly make Jesus the center of our lives and to become increasingly like Him.

Today we begin not at the beginning, for Christ has no beginning. He is the eternal God, and as John says of Jesus, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God... All things were made by Him, and without Him, not anything was made that was made."

So we begin, not at His beginning, but at His beginning with us and as one of us. We begin by examining that time when the Son of God became a man.

**Matthew 1:18-25 NKJV** Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. "And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins." So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which is translated, "God with us." Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name JESUS.

This morning we consider the story of the incarnation and ask the question, "Why?" "Why did the Son of God become a man?"

The story of the incarnation is one of the most beautiful to ever be shared with man.

### I. THE STORY OF THE INCARNATION

To picture it fresh and clear, come with me...

- A. To Mary's house, where she lived with her parents
  - 1. A teen, a virgin, engaged to Joseph
  - 2. Angel, protest, assurance, acceptance
- B. To Joseph's carpenter shop, where he wrestled with a dilemma
  - 1. Torn by a desire for justice and the commitment of love
  - 2. Decided to end it privately
  - 3. Angel, faith, action
- C. To the palace room where Caesar Augustus ruled the empire
  - 1. He believed he ruled the world, but God controlled his thoughts.
  - 2. Census, registration for taxation
- D. To the little village of Bethlehem, the humble ancestral home of King David
  - 1. Small but today crowded
  - 2. Inn full, sent to stable
- E. To a simple stable, sanctified by the presence of the Creator
  - 1. Never did such irony occupy a place.
  - 2. The hands that formed the universe wrapped themselves around His mother's finger.
  - 3. The lips that spoke the worlds into being quivered with a newborn's cry.
  - 4. The eyes that could see both eternity past and future as if it were today strained to make out the features of His adopted father.
  - 5. Never had there been anything stranger, more mysterious, more unexplainable, yet more true. The Son of God had become a man, taking upon Himself all of the frailty of humanity without abandoning all of the traits of deity.
- F. To a band of shepherds, settled in a field outside the city
  - 1. Even in these fields the exotic mixture of things earthly and heavenly continued.

2. Ordinary shepherds, dinner completed, ready for bed
  3. Angel, Glory, Announcement, Multitude
  4. Bethlehem
  5. This tells me that Jesus is for ordinary people like me!
- G. To Herod's hall, where magi had sought directions to the King of the Jews
1. Nearly 2 yrs. have passed
  2. Joseph has settled family in Bethlehem
  3. Magi, where is King of Jews
  4. Herod, mad with jealousy, sends soldiers
  5. God warns Joseph in a dream
- H. To a home in Egypt, where God gave Joseph instruction to return to Nazareth
1. After a short while, Herod died.
  2. God sent them back to Israel, sending him back to his hometown of Nazareth where Jesus increased in wisdom, stature, and in favor with God and man.

But I want you to know more than the story. I want you to know the reason for the story, the reason why the Son of God became a man.

## WHY THE SON OF GOD BECAME A MAN

- **To Be Our Sympathetic High Priest**

Hebrews 4:14-16 NKJV Seeing then that 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 cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but was in all *points* tempted as *we are*, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

- I cannot say, "No one understands..., knows..., has ever had my troubles, trials, temptations."
- Jesus has!
  - poverty
  - rejection

- persecution
- moving, always place to place
- ridicule
- misunderstanding, even from Peter, “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. You don’t have to die.”
- One reason He came was so that He could identify with us as human beings and be our Sympathetic High Priest, providing mercy and grace in the times of our need.
- **To Be Our Example**
  - Two false teachings are popular today about the example of Christ:
    - One holds that following Jesus’ example will save us.
      - This is called example atonement. Those who propose this false doctrine say that when Jesus died on the cross He set an example for us of unselfishly giving our all. They then propose that if we follow Jesus’ example and give our all, we will be saved.
      - Proponents will often go so far as to suggest that Christ did not have to shed His blood; He could have died by hanging or whatever.
      - But God’s Word says, “Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sin.”
      - My friend, as we shall see, Jesus did come to be our example; but we are not saved by following His example.
    - The other false teaching says that we should not follow Jesus’ example. It is even more popular today than the first. It goes like this:
      - Jesus lived during the dispensation or the age of the law.
      - The dispensation of the law did not end until Jesus’ death on the cross.
      - Therefore what Jesus said and did before the cross was according to the law.
      - As Christians, we are not under the law but under grace. We should therefore heed the instructions of the epistles and not the teachings or example of Jesus while on the earth.
      - This logic is not only false; it is self-contradictory. Because when the Holy Spirit gave the passages of the New Testament to Paul and others, He

often pointed to Jesus' earthly ministry as an example. For instance in [Philippians 2:5-7 NKJV](#) he says, "Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, *and* coming in the likeness of men."

- My friend the Bible teaches us that while the example of Jesus does not save us, His example is important to instruct and guide us as Christ lives His life in us, and as believers we seek to allow God to fulfill His purpose in our lives that we could be conformed to the image of Christ. [Romans 8:28-29 NKJV](#) And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to *His* purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined **to be conformed to the image of His Son**, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren.

Let me share with you one way that even in the earliest years of Jesus life, He serves as an example to us who believe.

- **Jesus trusted His Father's design for the circumstances of His birth and family.**
  - ❖ Some may say, "Well, I would too if God had sent the glory of God and angels to announce my birth and wise men bringing me expensive gifts!"
  - ❖ Oh, yeh? How would you like the part ...
    - ✓ about being born in a stinky stable?
    - ✓ about the soldiers trying to kill you?
    - ✓ about going back to a home town as a child and everyone believing he was an illegitimate son of his parents who fled town when his mom got pregnant.
  - ❖ If anyone had the right to expect the perfect family, perfect birth, perfect environment... it was Jesus!
    - ✓ Jesus never once complained about the circumstances of His birth and childhood.
    - ✓ He trusted the Father.
- And so should we.
  - ❖ God has set the circumstances not to minimize discomfort but to maximize growing us like Christ.

- ❖ He is still doing that in our lives.
- ❖ Bitterness over family heritage is bitterness with God.
- ❖ God wants to make us like the Lord Jesus.

As we continue to study The Christ-Centered Life, we will often look at the example that Christ set that can benefit us as we struggle with similar problems and issues and seek to grow to be more like Him.

And the most important reason the Son of God became a man is

- **To Be Our Savior**

- By dying on the cross for our sin.
- By rising from the dead.
- By offering us forgiveness of sin, eternal life, and abundant life with Christ living in us!

**CONCLUSION:** Let me conclude by reminding you of one other lesson that comes out of the story of the early days of our Lord. You know it well. It is the story of the innkeeper. Mary was sent to the stable to give birth to the Messiah because the innkeeper said there was no room in the inn.

Some have excused him saying he could not help it if the inn was full. It was a just and honest answer. But what about his room? He could have given that.

Why didn't he? I do not think he was trying to be belligerent or purposefully rejecting the Messiah. I think his problem was the same as the problem of many people in this room today. It has certainly been my problem at times.

I think he was just too busy. Too busy to notice; too busy to care; too busy to attend to the most needful thing in his life right then.

I wonder how many God is dealing with right now. To be saved; to overcome bitterness; to grow in the image of Christ. You are not belligerent, but you are too busy to deal with it now. So in your busyness, you say no to what God wants to do in your life. Put that aside and respond to the Master today.