

December 19, 2021

- Matthew 1:18-25 -

Christmas; the Love of God”

Introduction:

Today I am beginning a short series for Christmas. We will begin this morning with “Christmas; the Love of God”. On Wednesday Night our message for Candlelight service will address “Christmas, the Coming of Christ” and then next Sunday; Christmas, the Favor Given Mary. The Incarnation is a miraculous event and to know the Christ of Christmas is to live with hope. His incarnation was and is the hope of the world as scripture reveals in John 3:16.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life”. Today I will speak on Christmas; the Love of God.

It was a few years ago a man wearing jeans, a T-shirt, and a baseball cap, situated himself against a wall beside a trash-can at a very famous Plaza in Washington, DC. He pulled out a violin and began to play. In the 43 minutes that followed he performed six classical pieces while over 1000 people passed by, ignoring him. No one recognize him, but the man playing outside the Metro was Joshua Bell, one of the finest classical musicians in the world, playing some of the most elegant music ever written. He was playing on a \$31/2 million Stradivarius. No crowd gathered for the performer. No fanfare was made just crickets. Bell said, “It was a very strange feeling.” Now can you image what God felt when He sent His son to us in an act of love to redeem a lost humanity? The Bible records for us, “He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. John 1:10-11

I God’s Love was Providential: Matthew 1:20-25

1. God’s most Precious gift was sent from heaven and announced by heavenly creatures (vv. 20-21). An angel spoke to Joseph in a dream, convincing him not to do the "logical" thing and divorce Mary. The law stated he could publicly do so. Mary probably had not told Joseph that it was by the Holy Spirit; how could she (or anyone except God) explain such a thing? This was not the angel of the Lord, but simply an angel of the Lord; perhaps Gabriel, who is prominent in the announcements made to Mary and Zacharias (Luke 1:19, 26); yet those were actual angelic visitations, this was presented to Joseph in a dream.

2. Joseph must of wonder what in the world is God doing. Why me? The address of son of David would have alerted Joseph that something was significant here; it is a reference to his legal lineage to the throne of David. God handpicked this young Jewish couple to participate in fulfilling the most important promise He ever made, the promise of the Redeemer.

3. Joseph was a grand example of choosing to be grateful in the face of great uncertainty. Jesus Christ was about to enter his life not spiritually but physical. The incarnation was about to happen and he was told to trust God and take Mary as his wife.

4. He was to name this baby Jesus. The name JESUS ("the salvation of Yahweh") was fairly common in that day, but supremely blessed in our day; as it is said, there is no other name under heaven by which men must be saved (Acts 4:12) Saved from what? He will save His people from their sins; Jesus meets us in our sin, but His purpose is to save us from them; first from the penalty of sin, then from the power of sin, and finally from the presence of sin...

5. Joseph must have wondered what lay in store for this child. This child was destined to bring a sacrifice- or to become one. This child was announced as God. Immanuel is a title of Jesus that refers to both His deity (God with us) and His identification and nearness to man (God with us).

6. Joseph marries Mary after the angelic announcement (24-25) The words "did not know her till" imply that Joseph and Mary had normal marital relations after Jesus' birth; The simple obedience of Mary and Joseph in naming the baby Jesus is worthy of notice; such simple obedience is exactly what being a Christian is all about. Jesus taught us this truth by his example of obeying the fathers will in the incarnation. By this event of history we see...

II God's Love was sacrificial 1 John 4:9-10

In this was manifested the love of God toward us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him. [10] Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

1. The word "manifested" – means to be made visible, the ultimate act of self- sacrifice in His death on the Cross. It was the ultimate act of love: to die in another's place. It is to suffer another's punishment. Some men will die for their friends, but no man dies for the crimes of his enemies.

2. This act of God's love is called the "vicarious atonement." It means to "take the place of another." In the atonement, God's son took our place, receiving the full wrath of God. The climax of this was when the sins of the world were placed upon Jesus. Why did Jesus pay the price of His enemies? because God loves all men. They are all precious to Him! He places value on all human life! Therefore we understand that...

III God's Love is Beneficial v11

1. The "if" here appears like an "if / then" statement but it might better read "since". If God loved us so much, then... we ought...note the rest of this verse. How are we to love? We love with the same love for one another that God has for us. Real Love is an action not a feeling. It produces selfless, sacrificial giving.

2. Verse 14 states that, "And we have seen and do testify that the Father sent the Son to be the Saviour of the world. The Second Person of the Trinity, the Son, became human: was born into the world as an actual man -- a real man of a particular height, with hair of a particular color, speaking a particular language, weighing so many pounds. The Eternal Being, who knows everything and

who created the whole universe, became not only a man but (before that) a baby, and before that a fetus inside the womb of Mary and was born as a man. What love for humanity!

If you want to get the hang of it, think how you would like to become a slug or a crab.
-- C. S. Lewis,

3. God loves you, not because you deserve His love, but because His nature is love. His love for you gives you an inherent worth that nothing can diminish. You are unique and special; you are one of a kind and God loves you. The proof of God's love is that he gave His only begotten son because of His love. **Romans 8:31-39**

Conclusion:

God never loves us because of what we are. He always loves us in spite of what we are. He never loves us because of what we do. He loves us in spite of what we do.

Love should characterize our relationships! For Jesus' sake, for the sake of others, and for your own sake, let God love other people through you. If you're a Christian, if you're indwelt by the Spirit of God, you're a lot better at loving than you think you are.

Let's give a little Jesus to others this Christmas... I got a wonderful Christmas card...it had a poem written by Lisa Englehardt. What do you want for Christmas? How about trying Jesus or giving a little Jesus to others.