

New Life
Virgin Birth • Message 4
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A. Introduction (Matthew 1:1)

Welcome back to our series entitled *New Life*. Big idea: God brings life. He brings new life where there is no life, and honestly, there shouldn't be any life.

This week, a holiday is occurring, and the holiday that we celebrate and usually do it in a big way. While I have been public in my criticisms of this holiday, I do want to make sure that we all understand one thing. The central theme or purpose of Christmas is to take time and celebrate the birth of Christ.

And this birth is a miraculous one and one that should not be minimized. In fact, I agree with many scholars that the birth of Jesus is the central miracle in the Bible. Not only is it the central miracle, but this miracle and movement that God makes towards humanity is the central theme of reality itself.

As the Scriptures say,

He is before all things, and in Him all things are held together. (Colossians 1:17, WEB)

The story that we celebrate at Christmas is that God came to earth to become like us and to suffer and die on our behalf.

This is the Gospel. God, throughout the Scriptures, revealed Himself through the relationship that He established with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob and David. God was supremely clear that in order to rescue and redeem us as humans, there would need to be a man, a son, the king, who must suffer and then reign over all creation as God's representative.

This man must live in obedience, must suffer the curse of rebellious humanity and then must rule as God's king in God's way over the earth.

Jesus' birth is the moment in time where this central character is revealed to the earth.

But as we study this story, we should ask, as many have before, including Anselm of Canterbury stated, around 1094:
Why did God become a man?

In the Gospel account of Matthew, the story of Jesus begins with a genealogy.

This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham:

Matthew 1:1 (NLT)

This phrase is only mirrored one other time in the Bible.

This is the written account of the descendants of Adam. When God created human beings, He made them to be like Himself.

Genesis 5:1 (NLT)

Matthew is showing us something unique here and something that we must not miss. Just as the story of the world began with Adam, this new story of Jesus being born on earth is the story of the second Adam.

And we see this unique element to this story that this child is not only fully human, but something more than human. He is miraculously born through a virgin.

3 things I'd like you to see about the Virgin Birth today.

1. Miraculous POWER.

(Matthew 1:18-21; 1 Timothy 3:16)

This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the Child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a Son, and you are to name Him Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Matthew 1:18–21 (NLT)

To consider Jesus' birth as anything other than miraculous is to miss the overall meaning. If you dismiss this and say that a birth of a human baby is impossible through a virgin, you must dismiss every miracle in the Bible.

This moment is the central miracle. This idea of God bringing life where there shouldn't be life that we have talked about in this series is directly aimed at this idea. A virgin should not give birth.

And yet that is what the Scriptures and those who have placed their faith in Jesus attest.

Jesus was born with a human body and developed just as other human beings develop. He grew physically. He had a head, hands, feet, blood and bones. He would have grown inside His mother's womb and would have moved from childhood to adulthood.

Jesus also had a mind, will and soul, as expressed through the instances in Scripture as His inner life is revealed to us. You see the compassion towards those experiencing suffering in this life. The frustration at those who just don't seem to get it. The grief at losing a loved one. The pain of submissive obedience to God's will that will certainly lead to suffering. The joy of seeing one's faith that surprises Him!

We must see that through this miracle, God has the power to change your life. Where there was no life, God made life. If He can do that, he can fulfill His promises to His people, and He will.

Today, you need to dig in and be reminded that God can do the miraculous.

Why though? Why did God send His Son to go through the rigors and disappointments of human life? Why not send Him as a 33-year-old and fix it through His death? Why be born a baby?

Before answering, this is what the Scriptures call the mystery of Christ.

Without question, this is the great mystery of our faith: Christ was revealed in a human body and vindicated by the Spirit. He was seen by angels and announced to the nations. He was believed in throughout the world and taken to heaven in glory.

1 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)

But why a baby? Why through a virgin in a miraculous birth? This brings me to the second thing I want you to see about the Virgin Birth:

2. Marvelous PURPOSE.

(Matthew 1:22–23; 1 Corinthians 15:22)

All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through His prophet: "Look! The virgin will conceive a Child! She will give birth to a Son, and they will call Him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"

Matthew 1:22–23 (NLT)

This prophecy was delivered through the prophet Isaiah and comes with one of the purposes of this baby Jesus.

Immanuel - God with us. This purpose is a summary of the life of Jesus and the desire of God since the beginning. God does not want life isolated from human interaction or dependence. We are wanted by God.

I would recommend to deep dive into Hebrews 2 for the answer to this. But a few insights:

General Purpose of Miracles:

It is good to be reminded that the purpose of every miracle is to advance God's kingdom.

This miracle is certainly doing that. Jesus, by living an entire human life and developing as a human being, would certainly show us God's original design for human beings. We can see how Jesus lived to model our lives after His.

Jesus also was made complete, the Scriptures say, by suffering.

What we do see is Jesus, who for a little while was given a position "a little lower than the angels"; and because He suffered death for us, He is now "crowned with glory and honor." Yes, by God's grace, Jesus tasted death for everyone. God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that He should make Jesus, through His suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation.

Hebrews 2:9-10 (NLT)

In many translations, the phrase *made perfect* is used. In the NLT, it actually translates this the best. Hebrews is not saying that Jesus was sinful and thus not perfect, but instead that by becoming human and growing as a human, he became fit for his office.

My dad said to me, your people need to know that there is no task or responsibility that you are not willing to do.

Remember, no royal family or privilege. On the run from kings who desired to stop Him. Preparation for 30 years before His ministry began publicly. Doubters, temptation, government overreach, religious corruption, manipulative leaders, human suffering were all things that Jesus lived through and experienced personally, not in a book or through hearing someone else's experiences.

Jesus also took on human flesh to destroy the works of the devil.

Because God's children are human beings—made of flesh and blood—the Son also became flesh and blood. For only as a human being could He die, and only by dying could He break the power of the devil, who had the power of death. Only in this way could He set free all who have lived their lives as slaves to the fear of dying.

Hebrews 2:14-15 (NLT)

We must remember that death was not originally in the cards for human beings, but it was brought on by our sinful choices. And so, we need a Savior who can effectively overcome sin, death and the devil and by becoming human, Jesus does just that.

For, as death came upon the human race by the disobedience of man, it was fitting that by man's obedience life should be restored. And, as sin, the cause of our condemnation, had its origin from a woman, so ought the author of our righteousness and salvation to be born of a woman. And so also was it proper that the devil, who, being man's tempter, had conquered him in eating of the tree, should be vanquished by man in the suffering of the tree which man bore. Many other things also, if we carefully examine them, give a certain indescribable beauty to our redemption as thus procured.

Anselm of Canterbury

This is the miracle of the virgin birth. In my studies this week, I came across a thought I had never had before. Did you know that this was the first time that anyone, anywhere, had ever seen God?

Not even angels, who reside in the heavenly places, had seen God. Why? Because God is invisible. Moses only caught a wind from God's backside, and it gave him a glow that he had to hide in the presence of others.

But this newborn, baby Jesus was there. Why was there such a ruckus, why an angelic choir? This was the first visible appearance of the God in whom the angels worship.

Just as Adam and Eve enslaved humanity through their disobedience to God and alignment with Satan, one man, this baby, would give us new life.

His purpose was to seek and to save those who are lost. And He could not fulfill this purpose apart from living the full human experience. And just as we experience this life and sin, rebel, and want life on our own terms. Jesus came to show us another way.

Just as everyone dies because we all belong to Adam, everyone who belongs to Christ will be given new life.

1 Corinthians 15:22 (NLT)

Last thing I want you to observe about the virgin birth is this:

3. Meaningful OBEDIENCE.

(Matthew 1:24-25; Luke 11:28; John 14:15)

When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. But he did not have sexual relations with her until her Son was born. And Joseph named Him Jesus.

Matthew 1:24-25 (NLT)

If you see and believe what God does through this miracle of giving birth through a virgin. It changes you. It creates in you a desire to do His will. If all things are possible with God, I must obey Him. If He loves me, I must trust what He says and do it.

Joseph did just that. In fact, we saw in the text Joseph's original plan, divorce her quietly as to not embarrass her publicly. But now his plan has changed. He married her and refrained from sexual activity with her until Jesus was born.

Joseph humbly obeyed after hearing the Word of the Lord delivered to Him.

It is important to note that Joseph had a plan to not embarrass Mary even though, in his mind, she had committed adultery and would bring shame on him and their family. He was doing the right thing regardless of personal cost. Yet now, He was given revelation through the Spirit of God in a dream.

The same is in our lives right now. You may have come in with a plan today. You may have come in with your ears closed and your mind made up. But God may be shaking you right now to your core with who He is and what He wants to do.

You have an opportunity to receive Christ and believe right now. But it comes with a price tag, and that price is obedience.

Jesus replied, "But even more blessed are all who hear the word of God and put it into practice."

Luke 11:28 (NLT)

This obedience brings about blessing. It is not enough to only hear the Word of God but no, it must move us into obedience. Do you want to have an ever-growing love and dependence on Christ? Do you want to warm your heart by the fire of God's presence?

That doesn't come from anything other than hearing the Word of God and doing what it says. That is the very essence of love to God, He says.

"If you love Me, obey My commandments."

John 14:15 (NLT)

It would be wrong to say that you love God, but you do not obey Him. But today, as we move into Christmas this week, we all have an opportunity to prepare our hearts as we remember that God miraculously provided a way for Jesus to identify, understand, redeem us and provide a pathway to be transformed into His likeness.

That is the true gift of Christmas.

As we close today, I want to invite you to our services this week and remember afresh the Gospel of Jesus and I also want to encourage you to be proactive in your family gatherings. Enjoy this time with your loved ones but share about the hope you have in Jesus. Share about the gift that God has given to us.

Let's pray.