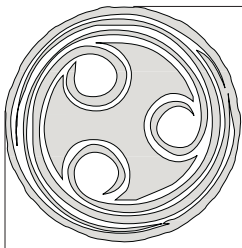


What If God Were One of Us?

Part 2 : Matthew 1:23

“So Jesus said to them again, “Peace be with you; as the Father has sent Me, I also send you.”
John 20:21



sermonnotes

Introduction

Last week we looked at three questions regarding Christ's incarnation. Those questions dealt with the significance of Jesus' name, the uniqueness of His incarnation, and the power of His example (Incarnation) for us as a church. Tonight I want us to take a deep look at the importance of the incarnation. What does it mean for us? Christ's incarnation cannot be separated from who He is (Which we looked at a bit last week) and what He intended to do when He got here. Another way to put it is, “*What was Christ's mission here on earth?*” When Christ said, “*It is finished*” on the cross, what was finished? When Christ said “*I did not come to abolish the law, but fulfill it, what did He mean?*” Tonight, on this eve of the celebration of His birth, I hope to take a look at these questions, because they are pertinent to us as believers. We cannot stop at ogling over the infant Jesus, but we must begin to see His birth as a continuum that began with creation, and ends with Jesus returning and judging mankind in perfect righteousness.

From The Head...

What Does Mary's Virginity Matter?

As we saw last week there is some controversy surrounding Jesus' virgin birth as it related to the prophetic passage in Isaiah 7:14. While there is some question regarding the meaning of virgin in the Old Testament verse there is no such question remaining in our passage. This should lead us to believe that the original intent of Isaiah was “Virgin,” but that has not been the case. There is still a cloud of controversy that remains. I think it is safe to say that both Matthew and Luke (**Luke 1:26-38**) clearly indicate that Jesus was born of a virgin. The question is why? Luke 1:35 gives some answers to that question. In order for Jesus to be “God's Son,” it was imperative that He was not tainted by the sin of man, which comes through the Father (**Romans 5:12-14**), so that He would remain sinless (**2 Corinthians 5:21** cf. **Hebrews 4:15**). At the same time, Jesus is human because He is born of a human, and this is important because He is the perfect substitute for God's death penalty (see **Genesis 2:17**; **1 Peter 2:24**). Jesus' virgin birth does not necessitate the perpetual virginity of Mary. She didn't have to be sinless because sin enters into the fetus through the man. Jesus was clearly conceived by the Holy Spirit (**Luke 1:35**) through the medium of Mary's womb fulfilling God's promise in Genesis 3:15. In a sense it was the world's first cloning procedure.

What Was the Mission of the Christ?

While the virgin birth is a necessity to keep Christ unstained from sin, it has no atoning value. It wasn't Christ's birth that made Him so special, but His redemptive mission that has set Him apart. According to Romans 1:4, it was Christ's resurrection that declared Him to be the Son of God. According to John 17 Christ's mission was to glorify the Father, but that was to be done, by fulfilling His mission to proclaim the gospel to His people. Matthew 18:11 indicates that Jesus came to “Save the lost.” He is an extension of God's mission in the world, which begins with creation and God's mandate to mankind (**Genesis 1:26, 27**; **2:15**), continues through the fall of man (**Genesis 3:15**), and then God's covenant promise to Abraham (**Genesis 12:1-4, 7**; **22:17-18**). His virgin birth is a “Sign” and part of the unfolding mission of God to bring a savior into the world, and complete His story. Simply Jesus is the culmination of God's story. He doesn't abolish God's law, but He transcends it, and interprets it through the lens of God's love and the intention of the law. There is no human law that accurately represents God's intent, and His holiness. Jesus reveals that. When Christ yells out “It is finished,” He is simply declaring God's plan and His will as victor. The transference of sin has been made, and because of God's love, He has killed His Son for the sake of His righteousness, and our salvation. Jesus' mission was to do the will of His Father, by securing the only just way to redeem mankind. And according to John 20:21, we are called to be

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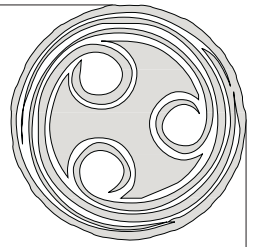
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sent into the world as He was.

As stated above, we too are sent as Jesus was, into the world to glorify God, carry out His will, and be the missional people we are chosen to be, with our eyes fixed on Jesus (**Hebrews 12:2**) and inspired by His mission. We (The church) are called out by God, like Abraham to go out of our world and into the world that He has called us to, to proclaim the good news of our faith, that this celebration of Christmas is a small part of. Christmas affords us the opportunity to speak about Jesus, but it isn't the final part of the story, His death, burial and resurrection, along with His ascension to the "Right hand" of the throne of God, and His final return in glory, depicts the redemption story that God planned before the foundations of the earth were planted. Let's celebrate Christmas, knowing that this tiny babe became a man, so that we could have access to God! Merry CHRISTmas!

sermonnotes

... To The Heart



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