

Sermon Series: The Greatest Gift
Sermon: A Savior to deliver us
Scripture reading: Matthew 1:18-25
Clearwater Bay International Baptist Church
December 9, 2018
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Let's pray together.

In 2017, 50 Nobel Laureates were surveyed and asked this question, "*What is the biggest threat to humankind in your view?*"

- Population rise/Environmental Degradation- 34%
- Nuclear War- 23%
- Infectious disease- 8%
- Selfishness/dishonesty/loss of humanity- 8%
- Donald Trump/ignorant leaders- 6%
- Artificial Intelligence- 4%

These are some of the answers from what some might call the smartest people on the planet.

You ask anyone on the street, "What is mankind's greatest need?" Some might say:

- world peace
- better economics
- development
- better government

**Are these the things the biggest threat to mankind?
Are these the things that mankind need the most?**

I talked to a friend the other day and he seems to think that what we all really need is to know ourselves better.

Better counseling.

Better mindfulness.

Learn how to live in the moment.

We just need to be fixed..... and the way to be fixed is to be a better version of ourselves

Well, up against all of those things we have the Bible.

If you are having any conversations with people these days, you'll know just how different the Bible's answers are to life's greatest questions.

It's Christmas time. That time of the year when the world celebrates a season about our God.....but many are clueless or even opposed to the real message of the Christ of Christmas.

Who was Jesus?

Why was he born?

Why does he matter?

What does he say about mankind and life's problems?

Turn in a Bible to **Matthew chapter 1**.

The first pages of the New Testament begin with these words, **“The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.**

And then we get a long list of names from Abraham all the way to Jesus’ parents. Now the purpose of this list is twofold:

1. We see that Jesus is in the lineage of Abraham and King David. That needed to be the case because the ancient prophecies talked about a coming Deliverer, Savior and King....who would be in that ancestral lineage.
2. We also see in the list that a lot of these people were quite wicked. They were just ordinary people, born like the rest of us, and they were sinners...like we everyone else.

But we come to verse 18 and it begins with the word **Now** and also means..**But**... So, there’s something different about this birth, something different about this person.

We want to read the account of his birth and see what the Bible says about him.

18 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. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 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.

21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

23 *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel”*

(which means, God with us).

24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

We see from the very beginning that Jesus’ birth is not like any other. Matthew makes it very clear in this passage.

There is a woman named Mary. She is *legally* engaged to be married to a guy named Joseph. And this Joseph is the one we see at the end of that list of names in chapter 1:16. This Joseph is an ancestor of King David and Abraham.

But this isn’t a pretty little story. We see that in 1:18. Because, Mary is found to be with child before they are married and it’s not Joseph’s baby. If it was, it would have still been a big problem in that day.

This account of Jesus' birth in Matthew is screaming at us, "This baby is unique."

I. Jesus was born of the Holy Spirit.

"before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit." (verse 18)

And again the angel confirms this to comfort and redirect Joseph from divorcing her by saying, **"Do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."** (verse 20)

"We have in Jesus not simply the birth of a baby but the incarnation of God, the second person of the trinity." R.C. Sproul

Every single baby who has ever been born is a miracle. But this birth was different. It was miraculous. It was supernatural. It is not explained by science it is believed by faith. But it had to be this way.

For one, Jesus would have been human if Joseph and Mary were his biological parents. And he would have been a sinner because all humans are sinners.

But this is God becoming human flesh.

His miraculous birth is tied to the purpose of his coming.

II. Jesus came to save people from sin.

“she will bear a son, and you WILL call his name Jesus, for he WILL save his people from their sins.” (verse 21)

The angel tells Joseph ‘you will’ ‘you shall’ ‘you must’ call his name Jesus...because in his name is his purpose. Jesus means ‘Yahweh saves.’

Without this verse, the celebration of Christmas is just a big fanfare to eat and give each other stuff. This verse is what puts the Christ in Christmas. Without this verse, we have a Christ-less Christmas.

This is THE reason Jesus was born. This is THE reason he came... **‘he will save his people from their sins.’**

Toward the end of Matthew’s book, Jesus himself says, **“Even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give him life as a ransom for many.”** (Matthew 20:28)

So, in the rest of our time I want to ask some questions of this text and see what the Bible has to say to us about **The Greatest Gift** ever known; the gift of Jesus Christ.

Question 1: If Jesus came to ‘SAVE’, saved from what?

Saved in the dictionary means, *keep safe or rescue someone or something from harm or danger.*

Well, is mankind in danger? In danger of what? Rescue from what?

John 3:16-18 tells us, **For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe is condemned already**

Saved from what? **Perishing. Condemnation.**

Wow. That's not very nice! It's not very Christmas-y to talk about these things.

'You will call his name Jesus, for he will SAVE'.

Save from what?

Save from perishing. Save from condemnation.

Why am i condemned? Why will I perish?

'You will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

Someone might say, "I'm not a sinner." "I'm a good person. Yeah, sure..I make mistakes like the rest of us but I'm not a sinner."

Romans 3:10 says, “None is righteous, no, not one; no one understands; no one seeks for God. All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

Romans 3:23 says, “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”

Romans 5:12 says, “sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin and so death spread to all men because all sinned.”

Romans 6:23 says, “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

So, **question 1...Jesus came to save us from what?**
From our sin...and the punishment and condemnation we deserve from God for it. But don't miss the good news!
Jesus came to save us from that!

Question 2: How did Jesus save us?

I mentioned before what Jesus said. Take it from his own lips.

Matthew 20:28 “Even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

1 Peter 2:24 says, “**He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed.**”

Hebrews 9:26

He has appeared once for all at the end of the ages to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

Jesus Christ appeared to save ‘his people’ from their sins by giving himself as a sacrificial payment for them. It was a trade off. He took the punishment. They get the forgiveness and eternal life. Why would he do that?

‘For God so loved....that he sent his only Son’

‘You will call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’

Question 1: Save from what? The punishment, condemnation and death that comes from sin.

Question 2: How did he save? It says ‘he will’ do it. He gave his life as a payment. He died on the cross. That was the purpose for his coming. He is the **‘Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.’** (John 1:29)

And the last question...

Question 3: Who are ‘his people’? It says he will save his people from their sins. So, what who will he save? Every person, ever? Who did he come to save? Who are ‘his people’?

John 3:16 told us, **“Whosoever believes in him.”**

Romans 10:9 says, **“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”**

Jesus Christ has already come.

Jesus Christ has already died and rose again.

There is still time to believe and be saved.

The question is, will you be one of his people or not?

Will you believe and give your life to Jesus Christ?

He’s the Greatest Gift the world has ever known.

And what the world needs most is not more money, more development, better leaders....oh yeah...we need some of those things...but what the world needs most is to receive the Greatest Gift; Jesus Christ; and be saved from their sins.