



Potomac Hills

Presbyterian Church, PCA

By Grace Alone ~ Through Faith Alone ~ In Christ Alone

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Matthew 1:18-25

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English Standard Version

"The Birth of the King"

The 2nd Sermon in a series on the Gospel of Matthew entitled
"The King and His Kingdom!"

Matthew 1:18-25

"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."

Heavenly Father, thank You for giving us the Scriptures and making us Your people. You have brought us to this amazing Gospel to learn more about your Son, Jesus Christ, and to use this Gospel to cause us to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. This Gospel is a profound word, a deep Word. Even as it is a simple word. Make it understandable to us, and cause us not only to see it, not only to understand it, not only to grasp it, but cause our

hearts to be obedient to it. Cause our wills to be molded by it, challenged by it, encouraged by it, strengthened by it that we might glorify you in our minds and in our lives. So by Your Spirit open this Gospel to us and help us to see Jesus anew, help us to come to know Him more, help us to follow Him fully, and, as always, for this we need Your grace. Give us the desire to learn from You this morning, in the name of Jesus we pray, Amen.

INTRODUCTION: *The Forgotten Man of Christmas*¹

If you were given the opportunity to meet any person in the first Christmas story, who would you choose? I've been thinking about that this week, and it's not easy to decide. There are so many fascinating people:

1. You could choose **King Herod** — That wicked old false king squatting on the throne of Israel, insanely jealous lest a baby steal his glory.
2. How about **The Magi** — The Wise Men from the East. Who were they? Where did they come from? Were they astrologers? How did they know about the Star?
3. Perhaps you'd choose **The Innkeeper** — I can see him in my mind's eye. A good man, harried, frustrated to turn away business. Did he ever discover who he turned away? We don't know.
4. Or maybe you'd pick **The Shepherds** — Here's something you probably didn't know. Nearly all the shepherds in **modern** Israel are teenagers — many of them girls. There's good reason to think that the shepherds were not the old men of tradition but teenagers who were 14, 15, 16 years old.

There are so many others. Anna the prophetess. Simeon who took the baby Jesus in his arms and blessed His parents. And then there's Mary. Luke wrote his story about her. Wouldn't you like to meet the mother of Jesus? I would.

But there's someone else I'd like to meet even more. He's the forgotten man of Christmas. Matthew wrote his story about him. His name is Joseph. He's the husband of Mary and the earthly father of Jesus. He's the person from the first Christmas story I would most like to meet.

When I call Joseph "*the forgotten man of Christmas*," that's not an exaggeration. Not much is said about him in the Bible. Not many sermons are preached about him, except at Christmas. As a matter of fact, there's just not much written about Joseph at all.

This week I flipped through the Trinity Hymnal to see how many times his name is mentioned. This is what I discovered:

— Mary is mentioned by name at least 7 times (I'm sure I missed some).

— Joseph **is never mentioned ... not even once!**

In the great hymn "*Angels We Have Heard on High*," there is a verse that mentions him, "*See within a manger laid, Jesus, Lord of heaven and earth! Mary, Joseph, lend your aid, sing with us Messiah's birth.*" Unfortunately the Trinity Hymnal omits that verse, which means that Joseph is left out completely.

Let me briefly list for you the things we know about Joseph:

1. His father was named Jacob.
2. His family hometown was Bethlehem in Judea but he lived in Nazareth in Galilee.

That meant that Joseph and Mary had to travel about 95 miles, by donkey, while she

¹ The Introduction is adapted from the sermon, "*Joseph: A Teenager's Dilemma*" by Rev. Ray Pritchard, 12/2/1990, www.keepbelieving.com

was expecting, in order to register for the census.

3. He is from the royal line of David. As we saw last week, the genealogy at the beginning of Matthew, chapter 1 makes that clear.
4. He was a carpenter by trade.
5. He was a poor man. We know that because when he and Mary presented Jesus in the Temple, they brought a turtledove to sacrifice. Jews only did that when they couldn't afford a lamb.
6. He was a religious man, a devout keeper of the Law, a fact we'll observe more closely in just a moment.
7. How old was Joseph? We don't know the answer for sure, tradition says he was much older than Mary, but most scholars agree that he was probably a young man, though still 3 to 5 years older than Mary. If we said 18-20 years old, we would probably be about right.

But before we get into Joseph's story too far, it would be good for us to first ask why Matthew wrote this book in the first place. And to do that, we have to first consider ...

BACKGROUND: *The Gospel and the gospel*²

We begin today a study of **The Gospel and the gospel**. We use that word, **gospel**, in different ways. Sometimes we use gospel with a capital G to refer to one of the four books which begins the New Testament. Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John are all called **Gospels**. That is, they are books which record the message of the work of God for the salvation of His people. Gospels are not biographies in the modern sense. In most places they do not give us a complete account. Often times, we're left wishing that the author had told us more. But Gospels are not written simply to give us a biographical account, they are written for **a redemptive purpose**. A Gospel is a record of what God has done to save sinners — through the incarnation, the earthly life, the mighty acts and the suffering and death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus Christ. That's what a Gospel is. And that's why John says, if he were to write everything that he could write about Christ, that he supposed that the world could not contain all the books. He didn't do that. He gave us a Gospel (capital G). He gave us a book which recorded **specific** things for the benefit of our **salvation**. Not simply to arouse our curiosity, not to scratch our historical itch, but to help us in **our saving knowledge of God**. That's what a Gospel is. Not a biography, but a record of the saving acts of God.

The Gospels (big G), of course, contain the gospel (small g). And when we use **gospel** (small g) to refer not to a book, but to **the message**, we mean this: **The gospel is the good news of salvation addressed to a world lost in sin**. That's what the gospel is. Its good tidings of great joy brought to those who deserve to be condemned, but who, through the mercy of God, have found salvation through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. The gospel is the good news of salvation addressed to a world lost in sin.

It's often said that the various Gospels in the New Testament are aimed in particular directions. It's said, for instance, that **The Gospel of John** is specifically written to show that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world. For the most part it's written to the church, the church that's not only made up of the Jews, but of Gentiles as well.

It's said that **The Gospel of Luke** is written specifically to convey the Gospel to the Greeks.

2 The Background is adapted from the sermon, "Jesus, the Christ: Son of David, Son of Abraham" by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, 1/5/97, www.fpcjackson.org.

And it's said that **The Gospel of Mark** is written explicitly to convey the gospel to the Romans.

As for **The Gospel of Matthew**, it's written to convey the gospel to the Jews. It's written in a language and in a style designed to appeal to those who knew the Old Testament and whose thinking had been formed by an allegiance to the God of Israel. Whatever the **narrow** purpose of Matthew is, the **broad** purpose of Matthew is clear. I would like to suggest four things that Matthew's trying to accomplish as he sets down to write this Gospel ...

First of all, Matthew's interested in conversion.

Matthew doesn't simply want to tell you an interesting story. He doesn't simply want to give you an account of sort of strange facts that occurred in his day and time. He wants what he tells you **to convert you**. Throughout the book, he, in fact, records instances where people knew the Bible, but rejected the teachings of the gospel; however, they were eventually converted to it. Matthew is no detached historian. What he says is true but he doesn't tell it to you simply to tell you something interesting. He tells it to you because he wants it to grip and change your life. He's **aiming** for conversion.

Second, Matthew is aiming for sanctification.

Much of the teaching included in Matthew's gospel tells us the basics of Christ's life and death and resurrection, surely to encourage us in that conversion. Isn't it interesting, though, how much of this gospel is given over to teaching how we should live? Think of Matthew's long record of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. From Matthew 5 to Matthew 7, he gives us the account. And what does that sermon tell us, but how to live a kingdom life in a fallen world ... how to be Christians in a world impacted by sin. Matthew is very concerned that we are not only converted, but we are actually changed.

Third, Matthew is interested in vindicating Christ and Christianity from false charges and false teachings.

Throughout the gospel, people make various charges against Christ and against the claims that He makes. And then make various charges against Christians about their teaching. And Matthew is interested in vindicating both Christ and Christianity from false charges and false teachings. He's doing basic Apologetics. He's defending the faith.

The fourth and final thing that this book aims to do is focusing upon evangelism.

Conversion, sanctification, vindication, and evangelization. All four of those things make up the purposes of Matthew. Now if you went back to an older copy of the King James Version, you would discover that this book isn't called, **The Gospel of Matthew**. No, the title of this book is **The Gospel according to St. Matthew the Evangelist**. Matthew records for us the full scope the Great Commission of our Lord and the spreading of the gospel to the ends of the earth. All of those things are in view as Matthew sits down to write.

Why does he begin this book ... a book intended to induce conversion, sanctification, to vindicate the faith, and to promote the evangelization of the world ... why does he begin it with the line of Jesus and the story of Joseph?

Well, to answer those questions, we have to get into our passage for today, Matthew 1:18-25, which we'll start by looking at ...

v. 18-20, 24-25: THE KING'S PARENTS ³

3 The Exposition of the text is adapted from the books, "The Gospel of Matthew: God With Us" by Rev. Matt Woodley, Resonate Commentary Series, pages 28-32, "Marry a Pregnant Virgin" by Rev. Frank Honeycutt, pages 34-38. And the Sermons, "Joseph: A Teenager's Dilemma" by Rev. Ray Pritchard,

“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. ... 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.”

Well, it seems that once upon a time, a dedicated carpenter lived in the little burg of Nazareth. He was honest and kind, righteous and **just**, according to verse 19. And that means he obeyed and upheld the law — God’s Law. He’s an upstanding citizen, engaged to his sweetheart, probably saving up a little nest egg from the sawdust, shavings, and sweepings of his shop.

It’s interesting that Joseph never says a word in any of the Gospels. We’re told that he talks, but none of his actual words are recorded for us. Stoic and serious — my guess is that he was respected as a man who knew what he believed and lived it out, not easily swayed by popular opinion.

So when Joseph hears that Mary’s pregnant, well, you know what he’s thinking. In Joseph’s day, safe sex meant **no sex** until after the wedding and that can only mean one thing ... Mary’s been with someone else. After all, you don’t get pregnant by drinking the water. I imagine that Joseph is really hurt by all of this and struggles with the idea that Mary’s been unfaithful to him. It’s a simple judgment. The whole town will know soon enough.

In the movie *Saved*, largely a parody about self-righteousness in the church, a young teenage girl named Mary becomes pregnant and the friends she once thought she had slowly vanish. She sits in church for the annual Christmas play and listens to the pastor read the traditional Christmas story about a virgin giving birth. Viewers overhear the Mary in the film thinking to herself about the other famous Mary: “I know this is totally wrong,” she thinks. “But don’t you ever wonder if she made the whole thing up? I mean, you have to admit it’s a good one. It’s not like anyone could use Virgin Birth as an excuse again. I don’t really think she made it up,” this Mary concludes, “but I sure can understand why a girl would.”

Now you can’t forget what I just said about Joseph. Joseph was a just man ... a righteous man. He kept the Law, he’s the kind of guy who does the right thing, he knew the Hebrew Scriptures. And so it’s logical that he would know what he was “supposed” to do, **Deuteronomy 22:23-24**, “*If there is a betrothed virgin, and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, ²⁴ then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city, and you shall stone them to death with stones, the young woman because she did not cry for help though she was in the city, and the man because he violated his neighbor’s wife. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.*” **The Word of the Lord.** It’s right there in black and white. Joseph was a **righteous** man and the **righteous** thing to do was to follow the letter of the law. And here Joseph makes a decision, verse 19, “*...her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.*”

12/2/1990, www.keepbelieving.com; “Jesus Virgin Birth: According to Scripture” by Dr. J. Ligon Duncan, First Presbyterian Church, Jackson, MS, 1/12/97, www.fpcjackson.org. **And the Article**, “The Adoption of Jesus” by Ra McLaughlin, *Reformed Perspectives Magazine*, Vol. 7, Num. 35, 8/28-9/3/05, www.thirdmill.org.

Joseph could have dismissed her loudly and publicly, he could have embarrassed and humiliated her ... but he doesn't. And I don't think that his town is much different than our town — people are going to talk.

That night Joseph has a strange dream. In this dream, which goes against all reason, an angel appears to him (we think its Gabriel, but that's what Luke says, not Matthew). And the angel says, starting halfway through verse 20, "*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.*"

Let me let you in on a little secret. Whenever an angel appears and says, "**Do not fear,**" you can bet your bottom dollar that God's about to do something that will blow you away. The angel tells Joseph to **MARRY A PREGNANT VIRGIN** ... something that went **against** everything Joseph **believed** and **against** everything that Joseph's able to **understand**. But then we read, verse 24, "*When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.*" And he did it without a word. I'm telling you ... the man doesn't speak.

Matthew's retelling of the Christmas story is about a silent but courageous Joseph and how he chooses to receive this unplanned baby. Joseph was a **normal** guy living in a **normal** place working at a **normal** job who wanted to do the "**right**" thing, but wound up doing **a new thing**.

Verses 24-25 are insufficiently celebrated as great Christmas verses. They reveal Joseph's finest qualities, "*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.*"

Every step he takes testifies to his greatness ...

1. **By marrying her** quickly he broke all Jewish custom, but he protected Mary's reputation. She was pregnant and he wasn't the father but he married her anyway.

2. **By keeping her** a virgin until Jesus was born, he protected the miracle of Jesus' conception by the Holy Spirit against slander by unbelievers.

3. **By naming the baby** he exercised a father's prerogative and thus officially took him into his family as his own legal son.

The only other comment I would make is that the story is told exactly as **a man would tell it**. I like Joseph. I wish I could meet him. He strikes me as a very good man. Joseph's change in direction reminds me a lot of what Jesus would do in the Sermon on the Mount, also in Matthew's Gospel, and which we'll get to sometime in the spring. Several times Jesus says, "*You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times ... but I say to you ... you have heard that it was said ... but I say to you.*" Over and over, Jesus quotes a revered truth, then stands that truth on its head, giving us new teachings about loving our enemies and avoiding vengeance. Jesus was doing **a new thing**.

And we can only understand **how** Jesus can do new things if we first understand **who Jesus is**. The **work** of Christ makes little sense apart from the **person** of Christ. And understanding **who Jesus is** begins right here in Matthew 1, where we're first taught about ...

v. 18, 20, 23, 25: THE KING'S NATURE

*"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. ..."*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. ...*²³ *“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call His name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). ...*²⁵ *but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called His name Jesus.”*

Perhaps the greatest thing that we learn in this passage, my friends, is about our Savior Himself, the dual **nature** of the Lord Jesus. Reflect for just a moment on just who it is that the Lord tells us is our Savior. He is born of a virgin. Now let me say very quickly that this is **intended** to be **surprising**. There are many who are skeptical of the virgin birth today. There are many, even within the walls of the church, who question its truthfulness. “How could we believe in a virgin birth,” they say? Well, that’s **the point** of biblical miracles. They’re **supposed** to startle us.

There is a story that one day C.S. Lewis was sitting in his office in the English department when a friend, who was **not** a believer, wandered in. There were carolers below in the courtyard singing Christmas carols and as the two were speaking, they could hear them singing a Christmas carol that contained words about Jesus’ virgin birth. His friend said to C. S. Lewis, “*Isn’t it good that we now know better than they did?*” Lewis replied, “*What do you mean?*”

“Well, isn’t it good that we now know more than they did?”

“I am afraid that you will have to explain,” Lewis said.

“Well, isn’t it good that we now know that virgins don’t have babies?”

C.S. Lewis looked at him incredulously and said, “*Don’t you think that they knew that? That’s the whole point.*”

You see, my friends, the fact that Jesus is born of a virgin is **intended to surprise**. There’s **no other example** of this happening before in Scripture. There’s **no precedent** for this in Scripture. There’s **no precursor** to this in Scripture. It’s **intended** to be completely **unique** to set forth **who Jesus is**. The virgin birth enabled Jesus to be born human without inheriting our sinful nature. The virgin birth sets forth the **divinity** of Christ and His sinless **humanity**.

And without that doctrine of the virgin birth, those two all-important truths are compromised.

Don’t ever let anyone tell you that the doctrine of the virgin birth is unimportant. It’s taught in the Bible and has always been believed by God’s people and it’s important because it sets forth His divinity and His sinless humanity. The very **mystery** of the incarnation is that **in Jesus** divinity and humanity are **united** in one person. If He was fully human **and not divine**, then He wouldn’t have the ability to save us. And if He was fully divine **but not human**, then couldn’t take our place as the perfect sacrificial substitute. He has to be **both** fully human and fully divine or He couldn’t be our Savior.

And Matthew drives that point home by telling us about ...

v. 21-23, 25b: THE KING’S NAMES

*“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). ... And he called his name Jesus.”*

We don’t know whether or not Joseph understood the significance of the details of Jesus’ birth. In all probability he didn’t. During Jesus’ life on earth, even the apostles seem to have been slow to pick up on the connections between Jesus and the Old Testament types that prefigured him.

It does seem likely, however, that he understood that his son would be the Messiah, the king who would restore the throne to the House of David. And at the very least, he understood the role he was to play in God's great plan — he was to marry Mary and to adopt Jesus.

So, when Joseph awoke, he did as the angel had commanded. He took Mary home as his wife, though he still didn't consummate their marriage until Jesus was born. He doesn't seem to have hesitated to obey the Lord. My guess is that he was so relieved to learn of his bride's faithfulness to him, and so excited to hear the news that he would be the father of the Messiah, that he wasted no time in reconciling with Mary. But whatever the case, he remained faithful to the Lord's instructions so that, when the child was born, Joseph adopted the baby as his own, **symbolized by the act of naming**, thereby ensuring that **Joseph's Davidic genealogy** was also Jesus' genealogy.

You see, as is often the case in literature, the point of the story is summed up in its final words. Usually, I don't hear people talk about them extensively. In many commentaries, they go without any significant mention, having been covered back in verse 21. But they are some of the most important words in the chapter, ***“And he called His name Jesus.”***

Joseph **named** Him, therefore Joseph **adopted** Him. And by that act, the Son of God became the son of David, giving him the covenantal right to sit on David's throne, and thereby enabling Him to save His people from their sins.

Now, chances to impact history as greatly as Joseph did come around only once every few thousand years ... and even then they're given to very few people. But God is always working, even when He's not doing things as dramatic as taking on flesh. He's always working to build His kingdom, and to save His people from the presence and effects of sin. And people always play a big role in what God does. Joseph wasn't anyone special, at least not before God chose him to be the father of Jesus. He was just a carpenter, a blue-collar guy who loved a girl. But he was also righteous; he was just and merciful and faithful.

And he obeyed God's will to the best of his understanding of it.

We owe Joseph our thanks. His small obedience made our salvation possible. Nobody who hears these words will ever do anything as significant as what Joseph did. But we all do things every day that impact history. We have no idea which things those are, or what their outcomes will be. But if we are righteous, if we dedicate ourselves to justice and mercy and faithfulness, we can be the type of people who recognize God's will when we see it, and who make the right decisions for the benefit of the kingdom of God.

We serve a sovereign God ... who He often works through the contingency of second causes. That's where we live. We are second causes, and our choices are contingencies. God uses us to build His kingdom, to carry out His work, to bring salvation to the world. He is doing **big** things, **huge** things, **immeasurable** things. And He's using us to do it.

The angel said, *“You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”* The very next verse says that he will be called *“Immanuel” (which means, God with us).* Jesus means **Savior**. Immanuel means **God with Us**.

Jesus came as a rescuer to rescue us from sin. But at what cost? He knew that coming as our savior would mean that He would have to go to the cross and give His life for us. That's the darker side of Christmas. Amidst all the joy and celebration, we remember One who came to save, One who came to be born, but also, to die for us. As someone said, the shadow of the cross falls over the manger in Bethlehem. Jesus, the One who saves.

And what was the other name in our reading? **Immanuel**. And Matthew is very kind to

us, because he tells us what the name Immanuel means — “*they shall call His name Immanuel*” (which means, *God with us*). That’s a wonderful truth.

There are two senses in which God is with us in the Lord Jesus. One is the general sense, what we call the incarnation, that Jesus is God become man, that He left the glory of heaven to get involved with the human race, to get involved in our broken and suffering world. He came to identify with us. That is an extraordinary thing ... that the Lord Jesus should choose to do that, to leave heaven and become Immanuel, God with us. But then also there’s a more personal sense. For those who knew the Lord Jesus, His disciples, His family, He was God with them in an even more intimate and personal way. That can be true now as well.

Jesus means **Savior**. Immanuel means **God with Us**. We need both. We need a Savior for we are sinners. But the only way God could save us was to leave heaven and to live among us. That’s what Christmas is all about. It’s about the truth that God actually came down to earth in the person of a little baby. It’s about the truth that Jesus was born of a virgin named Mary in a village called Bethlehem. It’s about the truth that Jesus was fully God and fully man, the God-man.

CONCLUSION: Bono Explains Christmas ⁴

After a long tour, Bono, the lead singer for U2, returned to Dublin and attended a Christmas Eve service. At some point in the service, Bono grasped the truth at the heart of the Christmas story. With tears streaming down his face, Bono realized, “The idea that God, if there is a force of Love and Logic in the universe, that it would seek to explain itself is amazing enough. That it would seek to explain itself by becoming a child born in poverty, in [filth] and straw, a child, I just thought, “Wow!” Just the poetry ... I saw the genius of picking a particular point in time and deciding to turn on this. ... Love **needs** to find a form, intimacy **needs** to be whispered. ... Love **has** to become an action or something concrete. It would **have** to happen. There **must** be an incarnation. Love **must** be made flesh.”

With poetic beauty, Bono explained Christmas. That’s the message of Matthew 1 and The Birth of the King, “***There must be an incarnation. Love must be made flesh.***” The God who is love enters our broken world, becoming as small and vulnerable as a baby in Mary’s womb. It’s not make-believe; Christians have always claimed that this story is rooted in history. At a particular place and time, God in the flesh was born with a particular human body. Jesus also had two particular people who brought him into the world: Mary and Joseph.

But Matthew wasn’t just interested in history; he wanted us to grasp who these people were, he wanted us to grasp the meaning of Jesus’ birth through His names, and he wanted us to grasp the unique nature of Jesus, the Son of God, the Son of man, and the Savior of sinners.

Matthew doesn’t simply want to tell you an interesting story. What he says is true and he tells it to you because he wants it to grip you ... and he wants it **to change your life**. He doesn’t just want you to grasp **the meaning** of the story. He doesn’t just want you to **understand** who the King is. He wants you to **grasp the King Himself**. Jesus came to save you from your sins, and Matthew wants you to lay hold of Him as your Savior and as your King.

Take a moment to do just that ... You need to pray, and then I’ll close.

⁴ The Conclusion is adapted from “*The Love That Satisfies*” by Christopher West, page 106, quoted in “*The Gospel of Matthew: God With Us*” by Rev. Matt Woodley, Resonate Commentary Series, pages 28-29.

Oh Lord, our Lord. Thank You that You have given us a King. You have given us a King who's fully God and fully man that He could save us from our sins. This Advent we look forward to His coming and we look forward to His saving. We give you great thanks for sending Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us. And so this morning we pray, in the Name of the King, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, One God, now and forever. Amen.

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Matthew 13:53-55a

“And when Jesus had finished these parables, He went away from there, and coming to His hometown He taught them in their synagogue, so that they were astonished, and said, “Where did this man get this wisdom and these mighty works? Is not this the carpenter’s son?”