

Maple Springs Baptist Church

Series: Re-Discovering Christmas

Week 3: Finding Joy in My Discouragement

The Christmas story begins with an **unbelievable, incomprehensible, impossible promise** that the entire world is going to be blessed through Abraham, because God believed the world needed to be blessed. **God made this extraordinary promise because the world needed Christmas.**

MATTHEW 1:18. Matthew lets us know up front as a Jewish man that he believed that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah.

Messiah—Hebrew word; Greek equivalent is **Christ**.

Jesus is a Latin translation from Greek word from Hebrew name **Yeshua**. It's where we get the name Joshua. To understand the significance of the Christmas narrative, you need to understand that Jesus was Joshua. And who was Joshua? Joshua was a warrior, a general, a military man. Not another Moses.

MATTHEW 1:18: She was pledged to be married to Joseph and she and he finds out that she was pregnant. What do I do with this woman that I'm supposed to be married to?

MATTHEW 1:19: The law says you can't marry her; you have to shame her. He's caught between, law and grace. He could go & break this contract.

Matthew 1:20 ...: The angel is reminding him he's in the lineage of David. The idea of a virgin birth, nobody was expecting this. Everybody expected the Messiah to become from the line of David. In Greek mythology the gods were always mating with beautiful human females to have offspring like Hercules. This was not Jewish. That was Greek. Nobody is expecting a virgin birth. **For Matthew to have manufactured this story, or for anyone to have manufactured the story of virgin birth does not help the storyline. It hurts it because it's weird. Nobody's going to believe it. The only reason, practically speaking, that this story made it into the narrative is because it's true.**

Yet Matthew tells us ... Drum roll. **MATTHEW 1:21.**

For hundreds of years they were oppressed by Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Greece and now Romans. I know why the Messiah is going to be born into this world. I know what he's going to save his people from. What? We need saving, but this is not what we need to be saved from.

Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs. We need to be safe from some things, but sin doesn't even make the list. Besides we have a very sophisticated save you from sin system already in place called the temple. We do not need another system to help us be saved from our sins.

But, ... I'll tell you who needs saving. **Rome needs to be saved from their sins.** and **we need saving from Rome.** What **we need is a savior with the sword.**

When Joseph woke up, there was no doubt in his mind what he was about to do. Joseph did what any of us would have done if an angel had spoken directly to us. **MATTHEW 1:24.**

Do you know why so many of us are not moved when we hear that God sent Jesus to save us from our sin? **MATTHEW 1:21b.** But that's not what we hear. What we hear is: "... ***He will forgive His people of their sins.***" **We reduce Christmas to Forgiveness.**

In fact, perhaps your entire Christian experience, or perhaps your entire religious experience has basically been this: **Nobody's perfect, but God Forgives.** I mess up. God Forgives me. But the message of Christmas, of the Gospel is so much bigger than merely forgiveness.

Because **Jesus came to deliver us NOT simply from the penalty of sin or the consequence of sin.** In fact, in most cases we are not delivered from the consequences of sin. **Jesus came to deliver us from the POWER of SIN.**

JOHN 8 Story of woman caught in adultery. He says two things. He says to her, "**Neither do I condemn you.**" Basically, Jesus said you're forgiven. And then He said: "... **Go now and leave your life of sin.**" To which we ask, "**Is that possible? Can we leave our lives of sin? Can we sin no more? Can we leave captivity to sin? Can we actually say no to sin?**"

Jesus talking to the Pharisees: **JOHN 10:10a.** He contrasts the thieves that everyone knew to Himself. **JOHN 10:10b.** That sounds bigger than forgiveness, doesn't it? Forgiveness just puts me back at 0. I've come to do more than forgive you from sin. I have come to free you from sin. **I have come to deliver you from something, not simply forgive you for something.**

Paul's command **ROMANS 6:12a:** Do not allow sin to continue to be your king, your master, **ROMANS 6:12b:** You have a choice. It's why Jesus came to deliver His people **from our sin.** **ROMANS 6:13a:** If your entire Christian experience has been sin—get forgiveness ... perhaps you've missed part of the reason Jesus came. **ROMANS 6:13b.**

ROMANS 6:14: Sin in you is no longer your master if you are in Christ. He summarizes it: **ROMANS 6:23a**

Here's what we know: **Sin kills things. Wherever there is sin, something always dies.** And **even forgiven sin kills things.** Jesus came into this world not simply to forgive us of sin, but to be Joshua, to be the warrior-king, to deliver you from the dominion, the power, captivity to sin. Because the wages of sin is always, always, always that something dies. **ROMANS 6:23b:** I get to go to heaven when I die. Not what he's talking about. Because the gift that you receive when you place your faith in Christ is a gift you receive right now.

The gift of God's life, **eternal life frees us from sin's control. That was the gift of Christmas.** Not just **Forgiveness for**; **Freedom from** the power of sin through Christ.

Which means **if you're a Christ-follower ... failing & getting forgiveness, trying.** You are like Dorothy in the Wizard of Oz wandering around with Ruby red slippers. You can go home anytime you want. You can be free from sin anytime you want. You can say no to sin anytime you want. And maybe like Dorothy, you just need somebody to tell you? **Sin is not your master.** Lust is not your master. A lack of self-control in some area of your life is not your master. Alcohol is not your master. Prescription drugs are not your master. Your anger is not your master. Your jealousy is not your master. Your habit is not your master.

Jesus came into this world to do more than forgive you of your sin. He came to set you free from sin. **Sin is not you. You can go and sin no more.** Truth: **I do not have to live as a prisoner to sin because sin is not my master.** You can speak to me, you can taunt me, you can bate me, you can tempt me. But sin you are not my master.

If you're not a Christian ... Sin does not have to be your master either. If you ever get fed up with you. And if you ever get fed up with something that seems to control you. If you ever get fed up with the self-destruction that you bring on yourself and the self-destructive habits that destroy the relationships that are most important to you. **Christmas is a standing invitation from your Father in heaven.** You have been invited into a relationship where sin no longer has to be your master, because you're not under law, you're under grace. You are a candidate for the gift of Christmas. **MATTHEW 1:21:**

TRUTH: God wants to replace your Sin with Great Joy.