*Introduction:* Welcome. Please open your Bible to Matthew 1:18-25. That’s page \_\_\_\_ .

Every Christmas season we are bombarded with advertisements. Some of you love it, some of you can’t stand them. Businesses spend thousands, and sometimes millions of dollars, on grabbing people’s attention in order to communicate the value of their product or service.

Now, if we’re being honest, many times these advertisements are effective. They peak our interest and may lead us to make a purchase, but at some level most products never live up to the hype portrayed in the advertisements we see. For one reason or another, the products don’t shine or function exactly in the ways we expect.

But this is not true with God’s communication strategy, because Jesus is God’s communication strategy. If you want to know what God is like, look at Jesus because he is God! This is what we celebrate in the Arrival . . .

**“The Arrival of the Son of God”**

**Matthew 1:1-25**

Throughout history people have drawn many different conclusions about the significance of the arrival of Christ.

This morning I want to argue that the most important birth in history occurred two thousand years ago in a little town called Bethlehem. The arrival of Jesus stands unrivaled for so many reasons, and this morning I want to give you four of them … #1 . . .

**I. Jesus stands unrivaled in his origins (1:1-17)**

*Read 1:1-17*

* Look back at *verse 1.* In Jewish history, it does not get any bigger than Abraham and David! Let me explain. Jesus is first described as . . .
* “The Son of David”
  + Why is this a big deal? Why start with these words? Son of David?
  + Because in 2 Sam 7, God made a huge, covenant promise to David: **“I will raise up your offspring after you, who shall come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.” (2 Samuel 7:12-13)**
  + Matthew is going to show us how Jesus is the promised Davidic King. He is the Messiah!
  + But one of Matthew’s primary concerns (and we will see this more next week) is to show the Davidic king was not simply for Israel. His mission was cosmic in scope. Check this out.
  + Before God made a covenant with David, he made a covenant with one of David’s ancestors, a man named Abraham
* “The Son of Abraham.”
  + God chose Abraham to enjoy a special relationship with him where he promised not only that he would have more descendents than the number of stars in the sky, but he also said: **“in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.” (Genesis 12:3)**
* So when Matthew starts his gospel by saying: “The book of the geneaology of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham,” his audience, who was primarily Jewish would have listened up.
* Son of David = Shockwaves! Son of Abraham = Shockwaves.
* Matthew, by exposing the genealogy of Jesus, just lit up all the promises found in the 39 books of the OT and said, get ready for their fulfillment in this one known as Jesus Christ.
* But let’s not miss one other very important feature of Jesus’ genealogy. It contains the names of four women, and three of the four had a promiscuous background, as if to say, this Messiah, this Savior will be full of grace.
* Do you know two of the main reasons people choose not to follow Christ? 1) Some people think they don’t need God. They think they are *beyond the need for God’s grace*. 2) But others think that God would never accept them. Because they have done so many horrible things, they think they are *beyond the reach of God’s grace*. But *we all need* God’s grace *and* *not one of us is beyond* the reach of God’s grace! God takes us just as you are and then transforms us to be like Jesus.

T: Now, some of you astute listeners will say, “Hey, you said he was unrivaled in his origin, but there were THOUSANDS of people born of the Abrahmic and David Lines.” . .That’s true, but the text doesn’t stop there! Verses 18-20 teach us that . . .

**II. Jesus stands unrivaled as the divine Son of God (1:18-20).**

* Verse 18 begins by simply saying: “Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way….”
* The word translated “birth” actually could be translated “genesis,” referring to the origins of Jesus’ earthly life, and it is vital for us to grasp. What were his origins?
* While his soon to be parents were betrothed, which referred to a legally binding pledge to be married, there was one major problem. Joseph discovered that Mary became pregnant “before they came together,” and we all understand what that means. (Some of you husbands just wrote that down.)
* Joseph must have been sick. The only explicable reason for Mary’s pregnancy was that she had been unfaithful. What was he going to do?
* Verse 19: “And her husband Joseph, being a just man…” He could not in good conscience marry an unfaithful woman, but he did not want to embarrass Mary.
* Thus, he decided he would “divorce her quietly.”
* But God intervened in *verse 20* by sending him an angelic message in a dream… *Read 20.*
* Here we have one of the great truths of the story of Jesus. His earthly origins were divine.
* The virgin birth of Jesus is a mend-bending truth, but one of the most remarkable features of Matthew’s mention of the virgin birth is just how unremarkable it reads. This narrative simply states it as a matter of fact.
* Though many deny it and many others who doubt, let me just say if you can accept very first verse of the Bible, Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” then you can accept the virgin birth.
* The early church did! All the major creeds state the virgin birth as a fact. **The Nicene Creed:**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,**

**the only son of God,**

**eternally begotten of the Father,**

**God from God, Light from Light,**

**true God from true God,**

**begotten, not made,**

**of one being with the Father.**

**Through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation**

**he came down from heaven:**

**by the power of the Holy Spirit**

**he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,**

**and was made man.**

* Being born of Mary, Jesus was fully man. Being conceived of the Holy Spirit, Jesus was fully God.
* This was predicted long ago! Verse 23 is a quotation of Isaiah 7:14, penned over 700 years before the birth of Jesus.
* Isaiah had to be pointing to the miraculous birth of the Messiah because goes on to say in Isaiah 9:6-7: **“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will do this.” (Isaiah 9:6-7)**

The magnitude of this moment, in the Incarnation, is impossible to calculate. Yes, Jesus is the Son of David. Yes, he is the Son of Abraham. But Jesus is also, the eternal Son of God!

*T:* But Matthew doesn’t dwell on the Incarnation. His purpose is to focus on the why of his coming more than his coming itself. That brings us to our third point this morning:

**III. Jesus stands unrivaled as the Savior of all people (1:21).**

* The angel gives Joseph specific instructions in verse 21. You shall call his name “Jesus.”
* Why? After all, Jesus was a common name in 1st century. Parents loved this name because it was a loaded with meaning: Joshua led the people of God into the Promised Land after the death of Moses. Even more than that… the meaning of the name Jesus was “Jehovah saves” or “God saves”
* But… there is something distinctly different about this child receiving the name Jesus, and Matthew tells us at the end of verse 21: “for *he* will save his people from their sins.”
* It’s one thing to say that God saves. It’s a whole different thing to say this baby born in Bethlehem is the Savior of the world.
* His earthly name signified his divine rescue mission. Jesus came to rescue us from the mess we find ourselves in, and he came to save us comprehensively!

COSMIC

* We live in a broken world. The Bible says tells us our world is riddled by the tragic effects of the curse of the fall. The curse came when our first parents (Adam & Eve), like us, failed to trust and delight in God’s love and rebelled against him. Now our world riddled with disease and disaster, oppression and injustice, financial and relational problem, frustration in our work, and many wounds that run very, very deep from a variety of experiences.
* None of that was part of God’s design!! One of my favorite verses in all of our Christmas hymns is in the familiar song “Joy to the World”:
  + **“No more let sins and sorrows grow,  
    Nor thorns infest the ground;  
    He comes to make His blessings flow  
    Far as the curse is found.”**
* We need a Savior who is powerful to save us out of the comprehensive mess we experience all around us!

PERSONAL

But that is not all. Not only is there mess *around us*, there is a troubling mess *within us*.

* Our hearts riddled with brokenness. We have an uncanny ability to reject God and his amazing love. As a consequence, our sin brings physical death and spiritual separation from God.
* Apart from grace we are in a dreadful place.
* But this is what the gospel is all about. It announces an alternative, a way out, a great escape from the consequences of our sin.
* Jesus came to save people like me and you. . .

“From their sins…”

* Sin refers to missing the mark of God’s intention for our lives, but at its core, sin is placing our ways above God’s ways and our wisdom above God’s wisdom. When we sin we essentially say: “God, you really don’t know what’s best for me.”
* And our sin is of such magnitude against the holiness of God, that God himself had to deal with it!
* Every stroke of impatience. Every hint of jealousy. Every self-serving move. Every cruel word. Every time you neglected the good you knew you ought to do. Every ounce of pride. Jesus died for all of it!
* The good news for us this morning is this: by turning away from our sin and placing faith in Christ, we can be forgiven. Because Jesus “lived the life we should have lived and died the death we should have died” on the cross, we can now be united to God though we were once separated.
* We can experience a totally different life: full of purpose, vitality, and joy!

*T*: The name Jesus *tells* *what this baby will do*: he will save us from our sin. But the next title we find in verse 23, *tells us who he is*, which brings us to the fourth magnificent reality of our text….

**IV. Jesus stands unrivaled as God with us (1:22-25).**

Let’s start in *v. 22-25*

* Not only is Jesus our great Savior, he is also “Immanuel,” God with us.
* Jesus was not simply a great teacher, nor simply someone with moral superiority. He was God in the flesh. This claim is essential to Christianity.
* Remember, Jesus communicates the very nature of God. In God the Son, God the Father made himself known. Let’s look back to the Gospel of John for help.
  + **“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” (John 1:1)**
  + **“And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.” (John 1:14)**
  + **“No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.” (John 1:18)**
* Like my boy Kevin Burgess said, some of you know him by his artist name (KB), *“If you think this is boring, you got crooked sight.” – KB*
* Jesus did not simply bring God to us. He was not “a God-intoxicated man” as some wish to claim. He was God among us.
* Sometimes we can focus so much on the divinity of Christ that we neglect his humanity.
* Jesus understands being tired, hungry, alone, frustrated with friends, tempted, grief, and rejection.
* Most religions have a notion of the transcendence of a supernatural power, but you will not find another religion that has a God both transcendent and immanent like we have in Christianity.
* No matter how joyful this season is for you, or how hard it may be, Jesus is with you.
* God’s gracious presence with us - - strengthens us, sustains us, and enables us to point to how great God is.

*Conclusion*:

* Jesus is the greatest gift the world is ever known. In his arrival, we have a gift that is *more than* everything we could have ever hoped for and more than we will ever need.
* But the nature of a gift is that it must be received. My greatest encouragement to you today is to

**The Point: Embrace the arrival of Jesus and the salvation he brings to the world.**

* Would you please ask yourself: How can I hear these things and not want what God offers me in Jesus?
* Augustine, one of the greatest theologians in the history of the church, wrote this about the Arrival of Jesus, the Christ:

**“Man’s maker was made man,  
 that He, Ruler of the stars, might nurse at His mother’s breast;  
 that the Bread might hunger,  
 the Fountain thirst,  
 the Light sleep,  
 the Way be tired on its journey;   
that the Truth might be accused of false witness,  
 the Teacher be beaten with whips,  
 the Foundation be suspended on wood;  
 that Strength might grow weak;  
 that the Healer might be wounded;  
 that Life might die.” - Augustine of Hippo (Sermons 191.1)**

That Life died so that we would have life. That is the gospel and that is what we celebrate as a church. Today, we also going to celebrate the significance of Advent through baptism. Jesus told his followers to baptize everyone who chose to follow him.

And why did he do that? Let me give you two reasons:

1. Because baptism is a drama of salvation. (Explain) “outward expression of an inward change that God has brought to a person’s life.”
2. Baptism is a declaration of salvation. Baptism is an opportunity for someone to say God has made me clean and given me life through Jesus Christ my Lord. This is so great because just as Jesus was God’s communication strategy, Jesus sends us out as his communication strategy: **“As the Father sent me, even so I am sending you.” (John 20:21)**

That’s what these friends have come to do today. They are declaring: Jesus is the Son of God. He is the Savior. He is God with us.

Let’s pray.

Introduce Larissa Turra & Grace Hall.