

Remnant Life Church
December 24, 2017
Christmas:
A Line in the Sand of Time
Matt. 1:18-25

- One way to describe what happened over 2000 years ago is to say that God took a stick and drew a line in the sand of the timeline of His creation and all of history
 - As if He was saying ‘that was then, this is now’
 - No event has more drastically impacted the human race and shaped our lives like the birth of Jesus
 - The birth of a child, to an unknown couple, in a backwater town over 2000 years ago, drew a line in time
- And so around this time of year, around the world, billions of people will be celebrating, in various ways, the birth of Jesus
 - Even the hardest hearts and most antagonistic will acknowledge that tomorrow is a special day
 - Those who replace Merry Christmas with Happy Holidays are still recognizing the specialness of the time
 - Anyone who uses the phrases, “the prodigal son”, “turn the other cheek”, and “the bling leading the blind” are quoting the One born on that day over 2000 years ago
 - Every time the year is written we are saying this is how many years since Jesus was born
 - Many hospitals are named after men and women who devoutly followed Jesus
 - We call them saints
 - But they had simply dedicated their lives to the One we honor tomorrow
 - Organizations such as the Red Cross, Compassion International, and World Hope all pattern their ministry statement after the command of Jesus to reach out to the hopeless, the downtrodden
 - Even the atheist who stubbornly proclaims that the belief in God goes against the intellect of the enlightened mind will acknowledge that they received their training a university that was most likely founded by men seeking to know more about God – places like Yale, Harvard, and Princeton all founded as institutions to train men to preach the Gospel
 - Virtually every aspect of our world today is set, in some way, on the birth of a child to an unknown young couple, in a backwater town 2000 years ago
- Yet Jesus did not come to change the world, He came to change people
- **READ – Matthew 1:18-25**
 - The first who were changed were Mary and Joseph
 - No worse scenario could have presented itself for Joseph
 - Engaged, she’s pregnant, scandal is assured, he still wants to do the right thing
 - Overwhelming situation for Mary

- An angel, pregnant in a way no other woman before or since had ever become pregnant,
 - For 30 years Mary would watch her son in a way that no other mother had ever experienced but her words to Gabriel recorded in **Luke 1:38** are what she holds to, *“I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.”*
- Joseph, by all accounts, was a man of means and certainly of the highest caliber or character
 - His life is set, everything is in place for a man of what would become the final years of the BC calendar until his entire world is turned upside down
 - Yet even in his shock, embarrassment, and dismay he obeys the direction of God to do the unthinkable
 - Because he not only foregoes his legal rights, he forgives and even marries this young woman who, apparently, has so callously disgraced him
- Average men had their lives changed
 - Four men in particular, devoted to the hard business of fishing, walked away from it all to follow the man born in a manger
 - One of those men was named Simon
 - Jesus later changed his name to Cephas or Peter (meaning Rock)
 - Jesus made this rough, uneducated man the foundation of His first church
 - Because Jesus was born Peter helped to start what would become a world-wide religion that would influence more thinkers, inspire more painters, encourage more writers, comfort more hurting people, and foundationally change more lives than any other
 - Today, because of the birth of Jesus, hospitals, orphanages, shelters, and relief agencies have changed how the poor, disadvantaged, sick, and destitute are viewed and treated
- And I think we here this morning are represented by yet one more person changed by the birth of Jesus
 - The Bible does not record her name
 - She finds herself in a horrible situation because she has done what she never thought she was capable of doing
 - She has broken her sacred marriage vows and she has been caught
 - The best she can now hope for is a very public divorce, shame, and humiliation for the rest of her life
 - The worst is that her husband would demand her execution – and the law would allow it
 - Instead, just as it seems all is hopeless and lost she is roughly thrown down on the ground before a young rabbi but instead of immediately condemning her He stoops down beside her and begins to write something in the dirt
 - She can’t tell what it is – maybe a list of some kind
 - Are they laws, a list of sinful deeds, perhaps names?

- Then she hears these words - *Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her. (John 8:7)*
 - But no stones are thrown
 - Certainly, like that woman caught in adultery we, too, are guilty of sin
 - And yet on that day Jesus offered that guilty woman 2 gifts –
 - **John 8:10** - *Jesus straightened up and asked her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” “No one, sir,” she said. “Then neither do I condemn you,”*
 - At that moment the first gift was given
 - Jesus gave her the gift of forgiveness from her past
 - Are we not grateful this morning that Jesus has forgiven us of our past sins?
 - But Jesus was not done
 - **John 8:11** - *“Go now and leave your life of sin.”*
 - Jesus then gives her the 2nd gift of a new future – which He still offers to every person today
- The biggest mistake many make today in the church is that we have come to the place of believing we are celebrating an isolated incident that occurred over 2000 years ago
- Sign on my front yard, “Keep Christ in Christmas”
- It is also our responsibility to demonstrate Christ every single day of the year
 - IOW to actually take Christ outside of Christmas!
- I want to challenge you this morning, on the eve of Christmas 2017, to fully embrace what took place over 2 millennia ago
 - It involved the birth of a baby to a very unremarkable young couple, from an obscure town in the middle of nowhere
 - But it was not just a single moment along the expanse of time it was a pivotal event on which all of human existence has turned – and it still changes all of life, your life, my life today, and it continues to impact all of eternity
 - If we can recognize the importance of that in each of our lives - it will be just like someone took a big stick and drew a line across the sand of your life.
- Celebrate this Christmas to the fullest – because God drew a line in the sand, 2000 years ago, just for you