

Remnant Life Church
December 21, 2025
Christmas:
A Line Drawn in Time
Matt. 1:18-25

READ – Matthew 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 ‘everything prior to this event was then, everything after it is something different and very special’
 - 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 small, nowhere town over 2000 years ago, drew a line in the sands of time
- And so around this time each 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 Christmas is a special day
 - Those who replace Merry Christmas with Happy Holidays are still recognizing the specialness of the time
 - In fact, anyone who uses the phrases, “the prodigal son”, “turn the other cheek”, and “the blind leading the blind” are quoting the One born on that day over 2000 years ago
 - Every time the year is written we the timeframe in which 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
 - 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, and the downtrodden
 - Even the atheist who stubbornly proclaims that the belief in God goes against the intellect of the enlightened mind are many times forced to acknowledge that they received their training at a university that was most likely founded by men seeking to know more about God – places like Yale, Harvard, and Princeton were 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 God’s Son
- Yet Jesus did not come to change the world, He came to change the hearts of people
 - The first who were changed were Mary and Joseph
 - As we have examined over the last several weeks, no worse scenario could have presented itself for Joseph

- Engaged, she's pregnant, scandal is assured, yet he still wants to do the right thing
- It was certainly an overwhelming situation for Mary
 - There's an angel, she is pregnant in a way no other woman before or since had ever become pregnant, and none of it makes much sense to her
- Then, 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.*
- Back to Joseph – he was by all accounts, a man of means and certainly of the highest caliber or character
 - His life is set, everything is in place for a man living in 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, to all outward appearances, has so callously disgraced him
- But then other, average men also had their lives changed by the life of Jesus
 - 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 changed this rough, uneducated man and he became the foundation of His first church
 - Because of Jesus 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 fundamentally 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 can likely identify with one more person who was changed by the birth of Jesus
 - While we read her story in **John 8**, the Bible does not record her name
 - She finds herself in a horrible situation because she has done something unforgiveable
 - She has broken her vows to her husband 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 that could happen is that her husband would demand her execution – and the law would allow it
 - Instead, just as it seems that she is without hope 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 listing of her sinful deeds, or 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
 - Perhaps that is why His birth has, in many ways, been pushed to the background amongst all of the hoopla of the season
 - Sign used to be on my front yard now I wear it on my wrist
 - “Keep Christ in Christmas”
 - A reminder of what this truly is all about!
- I am reminded, yet again, that it is our responsibility to demonstrate Christ every single day of the year
 - IOW to take Christ with us outside of the Christmas season!
- I want to challenge you this morning, as we approach Christmas 2025, 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, every life - and it will continue to impact all of eternity
 - If you can recognize the importance of that every day - it will be like someone took a big stick and drew a line across the sand of your life.

- Celebrate this Christmas to the fullest – because God did draw a line in the sand, 2000 years ago, just for you

John McCain was a 6-term senator from Arizona and a 2-time candidate for POTUS; he was a veteran of the Vietnam conflict as a Navy fighter pilot who flew 22 successful combat missions. It was on the 23rd mission that he was shot down and then held as a prisoner of war in Hanoi from 1967 to 1973, a period of 5 ½ years with over 2 years of that time spent in solitary confinement. The place where he was held would later become known as the Hanoi Hilton – known as a place of excessive cruelty, even by war standards.

McCain relates, “When I was being mistreated by the North Vietnamese, many times I found myself asking to live just one more minute rather than one more hour or one more day. And I know I was able to hang on longer as a prisoner because of the spiritual help I received through prayer.”

“One Christmas, I was the cell-room chaplain, not because of my excessive virtues, but because I knew all the prayers that went with a church service, since I had been educated in an Episcopalian boarding school. We had asked for a Bible, but the Vietnamese said they didn’t have any. Later we learned that thousands of Bibles had actually been sent to us.”

“One year, four days before Christmas, I was told that I could copy prayers and stories from the only Bible the Vietnamese said they had available. Our service consisted of a biblical passage that I read, followed by an appropriate song by our make-shift choir. I then talked about the birth of Christ and together we all sang, ‘Silent Night.

As I looked around the room there were tears in every one of those men’s eyes. But they weren’t tears of anger or fright or sorrow or bitterness or even longing for home. They were tears of joy because, for the first time - in seven years for some of them - there was a celebration of Christmas being experienced and shown in their genuine love and care for each other.”

Everything changed when Jesus was born

- Never forget that God loves you and gave us the greatest gift ever given – the gift of His Son, Jesus Christ