The Birth of the Savior

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[0:00] Amen. If you would open your Bibles with me to Matthew chapter 1. How many of you, show of hands, is Christmas your favorite holiday?

! Anyone? Is Christmas your least favorite holiday? Anyone? Okay, nice. How many of you, Christmas is like, eh, I mean, it's fine, but not your favorite.
Okay, so it's most of your favorites. That's interesting. All right, yeah, it's one of my favorite times of year. I do love the summer, though, so I prefer the summer weather, but I do like the Christmas holiday.
So I'm grateful to spend this time with you guys. If you're open with me to Matthew 1, we'll be in verses 18 through 25 this evening. We've covered Ruth for the last several weeks of the fall semester. Spent five weeks in the book of Ruth.
It's been a couple of weeks, though, because we had Thanksgiving and then Campfire Christmas. So the last time we were in Ruth was a few weeks ago. We looked at the genealogy at the very end of the book of Ruth and kind of looked at the details of who those men were that were listed in that genealogy and then kind of tracked with them, specifically tracking the lineage of David, and then ended in Matthew chapter 1, seeing that this lineage actually leads us to Christ.
[1:19] And so tonight I want to look at the birth of Christ, continuing on in Matthew's train of thought in chapter 1, looking at the significance of Jesus, the ultimate descendant of David.

Now, we always think about Jesus when we're together. We always talk about him. He's the very center of our religion. He's the very center of the gospel itself. So talking about Jesus won't be new to us, but it's not often that we get to focus specifically on his birth and the importance of it.
And so I want to continue thinking with Matthew about who Jesus is and specifically what his birth was and why it was significant. And then next week, I hope to continue thinking with Matthew about how he presents who Jesus is, not just in his lineage, not just in his birth, but in the beginning of his ministry, how he's presented as fulfilling prophecy.
And we'll see some of that even tonight. And so it's fitting during the Christmas season for us to spend time thinking about and talking about the birth of Jesus.
That's what Christmas is ultimately all about. And when we think about the Bible, there are a lot of unlikely births.
[2:36] There are a lot of miraculous births. And in fact, there's a pattern that develops in the Old Testament where there's a woman who's barren. She can't have kids. Through the miraculous intervention of the Lord, she's able to get pregnant and give birth to a male child who ends up being significant in God's storyline.

And so we see this over and over and over again. This pattern develops throughout the storyline of Scripture. And so we've been in Genesis in Sunday school this semester, and we see Sarah in her old age.
She's 90, finally gives birth to a son, and her son is Isaac, the son of promise. Rebecca, who marries Isaac, is also barren, and the Lord opens her womb, allows her to give birth.
And one of the sons she gives birth to is Jacob, the father of the 12 tribes of Israel. And we see this pattern over and over and over again. And ultimately, Jesus' cousin, John the Baptist, is also born in this miraculous way.
His mom, Elizabeth, was also barren. She's visited by an angel. You can read about this in Luke chapter 1. And told that she will give birth to a son, and that they should call his name John.
[3:53] And Matthew, as well as Luke, presents us with the birth of Christ. And it's also a miraculous birth, but it's the most unlikely birth of all. It's the most miraculous birth of all.

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Because Mary is not just a barren woman. She is a virgin. She's not married. She doesn't even have a husband in the fullest sense yet. And this leads to the birth of the most incredible person to ever be born.
The most significant figure in the storyline of Scripture. In fact, Scripture is centered around him. He is the fulfillment of this pattern. He's the Savior.
He's not just a significant figure. He is the Savior himself. And I want to read our text this evening. Matthew 1, verses 18 through 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.
[4:57] And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 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. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.
Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us. When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.
He took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son, and he called his name Jesus.
And so tonight we'll see the birth of the Savior.
And so Matthew sets out in verse 18 to begin to tell us how Jesus' birth took place. And so Matthew 1 really divides into two parts. One is the lineage of Christ, and the other is the birth of Christ.
[6:08] The lineage of Christ and the birth of Christ. And that word birth is actually the word genesis. Jesus, the genesis of Jesus, the beginning of Jesus.

It's the beginning of the one who created the heavens and the earth in the beginning. And so we know that the Son of God didn't begin existing at this point, but this is the point in time when the Son of God took on flesh, when he was born in the flesh.
And it calls him Jesus Christ. Now, it's not his first and last name. His first name is Jesus, but Christ is a title. It's the same word as Messiah or anointed one.
And so Matthew tells us about Jesus' genealogy and then Jesus' birth. And so the first 17 verses explain that he was born, and the next half of the chapter explains how he was born.
It shows us his human lineage, and then our text tonight will show us his divine lineage. And so it says, when his mother, Mary, had been betrothed to Joseph.
[7:18] Now, betrothal is something that we're not familiar with. It's roughly equivalent to engagement, but betrothal went a step further in the ancient world.

So it was actually viewed as a legal marriage. And so to end a betrothal, a divorce was necessary. And so they weren't fully married yet. They weren't living together yet.
But legally, on paper, they would have been considered husband and wife. And this betrothal period, this marriage, would have been arranged by the parents.
And so if parents had a son, they would try to find a set of parents that had a daughter, and they would come to an agreement about their kids getting married. And now this happened when girls were as young as 12, and guys were usually up to a couple of years older, but probably 16 at the oldest.
And girls are like, oh, gross. And guys are like, that would make it a lot easier to find a date. I'll be praying for you guys. But they would have been legally married at this point of being betrothed.
[8:21] But like I said, they wouldn't have yet been living together. In this betrothal period, this engagement period could have lasted for as long as a year. So up to a year, they would have been considered legally married, but not yet living in a home together.

They would have remained living with their parents until that point. And so as I said, to end a betrothal, a divorce was required. So this wasn't just a casual dating thing, easy come, easy go, breakup.
This would have required a legal document to end this betrothal. And notice it says, his mother, Mary. The Bible does not call Joseph Jesus' father, but it does call Mary his mother.
Mary was one who carried him in her womb. Joseph, again, legally would have been his father, but was not his earthly father because of how Jesus' birth took place.

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So Mary was betrothed to Joseph. And it says, before they came together, so before they were officially married, before this betrothal period came to an end, she, that's Mary, was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.
[9:34] And so Matthew notes that they wouldn't have known each other sexually yet. They would have still been in this betrothal period. And so this pregnancy that Mary has is miraculous.

It's from the Holy Spirit. And the Bible takes sexual purity very seriously, and we should too. And Mary and Joseph had stayed faithful. They'd kept themselves pure leading up to their marriage. But it says that she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And this is a fascinating statement. Mary was pregnant, yet as the text says, she was a virgin.
And this is really the only explanation that Matthew gives us of the virgin conception of Christ. And we naturally, like, want more details. Like, how did that happen? Like, nothing like this has happened before or since.
Tell us everything. What took place? How did the Lord accomplish this? And I just want you to note that if this story was made up, if a guy in the ancient Near East was just like, I'm going to make up a story, he would have gone on and on in the details of this.
[10:46] But God, when he does the miraculous, just gives very simple statements. It kind of leaves us wanting more sometimes. But you read Genesis 1.1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

No big deal. Moves on to the rest of the creation week. And so this is a miraculous thing that the Lord has done. Matthew is very direct, does not give hardly any details about how this took place. But we know this is miraculous. And honestly, if the Lord had explained it to us, what could he say that would make us think like, oh, okay, that makes sense. I get it. This is just a miraculous creation of life within the womb of Mary by the Holy Spirit.
It's mysterious. It's miraculous. It's miraculous. But this virgin birth is super important. If Jesus had an earthly father, it would not be clear that he had a heavenly origin.
If Jesus had an earthly father, it would not be clear that he had a heavenly origin. If Joseph and Mary had had a son the normal way, the natural way, and Jesus is like, hey, I'm sent from God.
[12:00] People have been like, oh, sure. Okay, where's your proof? But even in the details of his birth, even in the details of his conception, his origin is from heaven rather than from earth.

Now, he needed a parent in order to be a human being. But if he had two parents, he would not have had a heavenly origin.
And so the virgin birth is important because it gives him an earthly parent and so full humanity, but just one parent so that it's still clear that his birth, his origin is from heaven and not from the earth.
And the virgin birth is also important because it helps us understand how Jesus doesn't have a sin nature like we do. Jesus was born without sin.
Jesus was born without inheriting the guilt of Adam, without inheriting this original sin and without a sin nature. And so the author of Hebrews can say things like, he is a high priest who's been made like us in every respect except without sin.
[13:14] And so the virgin birth is critically important for us to believe and to confess and to hold on to. And it fulfills the most ancient prophecy that the Bible contains.

One of the first promises that God makes to humanity. In Genesis 3.15, he's cursing the serpent. And he says to the serpent, the seed of the woman will crush your head.
And when you think about seed, usually the seed is attributed to the man and never to the woman. But this very first promise in the Bible says someone is coming from this woman who will undo the works of Satan, who will crush Satan's head himself.
And the virgin birth makes perfect sense of that prophecy. Jesus came from a woman but did not have an earthly father.
Now what are people going to think when they hear that Mary is still betrothed and hasn't come together with her husband yet but now is pregnant?
[14:29] What will people think of her when they find out? When someone who's not married gets pregnant, you may not know all the details but you know enough to know they didn't get that way by being godly, right?

What are people going to think of Mary? They hear she's pregnant. They find out she's pregnant. What will they say? And what were her parents thinking? And what could Mary say to explain herself?

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How could Mary, even if she told them exactly what happened, who would believe what she said? And then what was Joseph thinking? Her husband-to-be.
What would his thoughts be on this? Well, we get the curtain pulled back a little bit into his mind in verse 19. It says, And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.
Now remember, he doesn't yet know the details that we know as readers. He hasn't yet heard how this pregnancy came about. And Joseph assumes that Mary has been unfaithful to him.
[15:39] He doesn't know the details. He does know that he is not the father of this child. And so, fairly, he thinks that she's been unfaithful to him. Now, how does Joseph find out?

Well, we don't know exactly. But it doesn't seem like Mary's the one that told him. It says that Mary was found to be with child. And then Joseph just kind of seems to hear about it.
But even if Mary had told him what happened, would he be able to believe her? I mean, this is such a miraculous thing. It's such a one-time event.
What would people be thinking? And it says that Joseph was a just man. That means a righteous man or a faithful man. He was upright.
He lived his life in accordance with the law given through Moses. And if you read the Mosaic Law, there's a very severe punishment given for adultery.
[16:38] Given for those who are sexually impure. And the punishment is death. And so, Joseph, if he was wanting to pursue Mary to the fullest extent of the law, likely could have gotten a group together that would have ended Mary's life.

Because by all appearances, it would have seemed like she had been unfaithful to him. So, it calls him a just man. But it says he was unwilling to put her to shame.
And so, he was righteous. But he wanted to show compassion. And he doesn't appear to be angry at Mary. I'm sure he would have been incredibly hurt by this situation.
Being confused about what had taken place. But he doesn't seem angry toward her or vindictive toward her. Again, I'm sure he was hurt by this. I'm sure he was heartbroken by this.
But he wasn't going to take it out on her. And so, this was super mature of him. Because again, he's probably like 16 tops. And so, he just resolves to quietly end the relationship and move on with his life.
[17:44] So, instead of dragging this through the court system or making a huge public scandal out of it, Joseph decides to just quietly and privately divorce her and move on with his life.

It's perfectly logical, makes perfect sense from his perspective. And it's even merciful as well. He's not wanting her to experience the shame of being exposed publicly for what appeared to be her sin.
Now, verse 20 says, But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. And so, Joseph is thinking about these things on his bed.
He's trying to go to sleep at night. But as often happens to us, when something's weighing on us, when something is being a source of concern or worry for us, he just constantly is thinking about it and can't get it off his mind.
And so, he's laying in bed. And the next thing he knows, an angel is speaking to him in his sleep. And now, if I just tell you, there's a righteous man named Joseph who has a dream.
[18:50] I think there'll be some connections in our brain back to the end of Genesis with Joseph being able to interpret Pharaoh's dreams and having dreams himself. And so, here we're introduced to another righteous Joseph who also has a prophetic dream.

And the angel says to Joseph, Joseph, son of David, my son Charlie will, if he wears a shirt like over his head, he's like, I'm Jophus.
So, I always want to say Jophus when I read that. You've got to be careful. So, 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.
Interestingly, this is the only time in the book of Matthew that the term son of David refers to someone other than Jesus. And so, we see here that even through Joseph's line, Jesus is a descendant of David legally.
Mary's also a descendant of David. This is the only time the phrase son of David refers to someone other than Christ in this gospel story. And so, Joseph is now brought up to speed on what's taken place.

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[19:58] The angel says, hey, don't be afraid of anything that could happen to you by taking Mary as your wife. Don't be afraid of what people say. Don't be afraid of the stigma that will be attached to this because she was pregnant before you guys officially were married.

Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid. So, Joseph learns that no, he's not the father, but also neither is any other man on earth because the Holy Spirit is the one who has conceived this child in her, who's created the Lord Jesus Christ within her womb.
And it says, verse 21, she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins. And so, the angel reveals the gender of the child and also gives a command about what the name should be.
He says, you shall name him Jesus. And now, this is actually the exact same name as Joshua in the Old Testament. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew.
New Testament is written in Greek. Jesus and Joshua are the exact same name, just in a different language. And there are several other people in the Old Testament that have a similar name to this.
[21:07] You've got Joshua, Hosea, Hosea, Isaiah. All of their names mean Yahweh is salvation or Yahweh saves.

But there's a difference here with this child. All those other guys, Joshua, Isaiah, Hosea, Hosea, all of them, their names are pointing to God who saves.
Here is the God who saves. Jesus, his name is not pointing to someone else. Jesus is the point. He is the fulfillment of this prophecy.
He is the fulfillment of God's promise to save his people. He is salvation because he is Yahweh in the flesh.
He says he will save his people from their sins. Now I want you to notice a few things about this phrase. He will save his people from their sins.
[22:10] Number one, if you want to write down Psalm 130 verse 8. Psalm 130 verse 8. There it says that Yahweh will save Israel from their sins.

Yahweh will save Israel from their sins. You can go read it for yourself later if you want. But Yahweh will save Israel from their sins. But look at verse 21.
He will save his people from their sins. Certainly this includes Israel. But this change from Israel specifically to his people more generally shows us God's plan to include Gentiles like us who would come to faith through Christ.
He would save us who don't belong to Israel by nature but have been grafted into the promises through faith in Christ. And now when it says that he will save, this is speaking specifically of Christ. But salvation is God's game. Salvation is something that only God can do. And so when it says that he will save his people from their sins, Jesus is God himself.
[23:28] He is himself able to bring salvation and accomplish salvation for his people. So secondly, he himself will save.

His name isn't pointing to someone else. His life isn't meant to declare the salvation that's found through someone else. He himself is salvation for his people.
And then third thing I want you to notice about this verse. He'll save his people from their sins. The primary problem is our sin.
We need a lot of help in a lot of areas. But your biggest problem in life is your sin. You may have other presenting issues, other presenting difficulties within your family or within your finances or within your health, within your mental health.
You may have other things that are going wrong in your life, but your primary problem is your sin. And what is sin? Well, sin is rebellion against God.
[24:35] What's the result of sin? What does sin lead to? Sin leads to death. And so because of our sin, we deserve to be sent to hell for all eternity. And so if anyone's going to come save us, if anyone's going to deliver us from that death, they have to be able to deal with our sin.

And so here this angel sent from God pronounces, he will save his people from their sins. In verse 22, the visit from the angel is over in Joseph's dream.
Almost said Jophus. Verse 22 says, All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet. And here's a quote from Isaiah 714. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us.
And we'll look at this point more next week, but what Matthew wants us to see about Christ is that he is the fulfillment of the Old Testament. He's the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises.

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We see in Genesis 315, he's the seed of the woman, but he's also the fulfillment of the Old Testament patterns. Fulfillment of both promise and pattern. And so what's the pattern here? [26:00] An unlikely, miraculous birth. And we'll see that more next week as we continue to track with Matthew's thinking as he presents Jesus to us. But he's to be called Emmanuel, which literally translated means God with us.

And this isn't just a figure of speech. He will literally be God in the flesh. And so when we think about Christ, he is one person.
He's the Son of God, the divine Son of God. But he has two natures. One person, two natures. And these two natures are unified within the one person.
And so he's one distinct person with two natures. You can call this the hypostatic union. Just get close on spelling and Google it later. But he's fully God and fully man.
Truly God and truly man. But because he's one person, we can say crazy things like God was born or God died when Jesus laid his life down on the cross.
[27:06] Because he is God in the flesh. And if you were at Christmas around the tree, which is why my voice sounds terrible tonight, I shared some of this as we thought through the birth of Christ.

But when we think about the Lord Jesus Christ in the manger, our little Lord Jesus, he's born as a child, as we sang, and yet a king.
There are some paradoxes that show up, some things that seem contradictory, but actually fit together perfectly. And so Jesus, in Mary's womb, knows absolutely nothing.
He's just a baby in his humanity. And yet at the very same moment, in his divine nature, he knows absolutely everything as God.
He is completely helpless in the womb, and after he's born, being held by his mother. And yet at the same time, he's holding up the universe by the word of his power, like Hebrews chapter 1 says.
[28:10] He couldn't yet speak as a baby, and yet he was the eternal word of the Father. The eternal message of the Father in his deity. And when he is born in the flesh, his flesh is the new temple.

And so in John 1.14, it says, The word became flesh and dwelt among us, or tabernacled among us. And then Jesus could say crazy things like John 14.9, when he says, Whoever has seen me has seen the Father, because I am the exact representation of his nature.
And when we think about God being with us, this is actually exactly how Matthew ends his gospel as well. So save your spot there in Matthew chapter 1. Go with me to Matthew chapter 28.
And so the book begins with the angel saying, You shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us. I want you to look with me at the very last sentence of the book of Matthew.
Matthew 28, at the end of verse 20. Jesus is commissioning his disciples saying, I'm going away, I'm going back to my Father, but I'm sending you out into the world.
[29:26] And here are the final words of this gospel. Jesus says, Behold, I am with you always to the end of the age. He's introduced to us as Emmanuel, God with us.

He exits the stage in this gospel saying, I will continue to be with you. I will continue to be Emmanuel to you.
You can go back with me to Matthew chapter 1. And in verse 24, it says, When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.
He took his wife. There's nothing stated about Joseph's feelings or his questions. Nothing about the internal questioning he may have had about how all this happened or why this was happening.
He just obeyed. He just did what the Lord told him to do. And Joseph is not talked about often in the Bible. He's not talked about very much at all. He likely died before Jesus' ministry even began because he just completely disappears off the record once Jesus' ministry takes place.
[30:39] But when he is talked about, he's just quietly doing what the Lord tells him to do. That's obedience. And my desire for all of you is that you would make it the aim of your life to do what the Lord tells you to do.

That you would strive to be obedient to the Lord, to be faithful. Don't seek to be well-known. Don't seek to be well-loved or well-liked by everyone.
Just seek to be faithful. Seek to be obedient. This world does not need more people who are trying to get recognized or trying to make it big or trying to become well-known.

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This world needs people who are faithful to the Lord. And that faithfulness, that obedience, comes out of, grows out of faith in what Christ has been sent to accomplish.
And I love Youth Ministry. I love you guys. I get to see so many of you. I get a front row seat in your life to watch you do this. You may not be well-known in your school or well-known and prominent in our church, but so many of you are just faithfully being obedient in many ways that I don't even know about fully.
[31:53] I hear all the time about people like, hey, so-and-so did this. They shared the gospel with this person or they're ministering to this person. I love to hear that because you guys aren't seeking fame for that. You're just quietly being faithful to the Lord.

And so Joseph is a beautiful example of faith in the Lord leading to obedience to what he says. And so he's not afraid to take Mary as his wife because he believes the word that has been given to him. So verse 25, at the end of verse 24, he takes her as his wife, verse 25, but knew her not until she'd given birth to a son and he called his name Jesus.
And so they go through with the marriage. They begin living together, but they don't come together sexually until after Jesus is born. And again, Joseph just no questions, not letting his feelings get in the way, obeys what the Lord says and names his son Jesus.
He called him Jesus. And if we just think about what Jesus was sent to do, the angel says in verse 21, he will save his people from their sins.
[33:08] How did Jesus accomplish this salvation? And I get the privilege of meeting with many of you about baptism.

And one of the things I ask you, if you want to be baptized, is can you tell me what's the good news about Christianity? What is the gospel? Why is Christianity good news?
What has God done to save sinners? And so what is it that Jesus has done? How is it that he saves his people from their sins? Well, go with me to Matthew chapter 27.
Matthew 27. Matthew 27. Matthew details for us the crucifixion of Christ.
Christ came to lay down his life on the cross. Christ came to give his life as a sacrifice for his people. So Matthew chapter 27, if you look with me at verse 35.
[34:15] And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. And over his head, they put the charge against him, which read, this is Jesus, the king of the Jews.

Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads and saying, you who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself.
If you are the son of God, come down from the cross. And so also the chief priests with the scribes and the elders mocked him, saying he saved others, but he can't save himself.
He's the king of Israel. Let him come down now from the cross, and then we'll believe in him. He trusts in God. Let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, I'm the son of God. And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.
And so Jesus suffered a human death. He was tortured to death by crucifixion. But there's more going on than just what humanity could inflict upon him, as we read in verse 45.
[35:23] Now from the sixth hour, that's 12 o'clock, that's noon, there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour, that's three o'clock. In about the ninth hour, Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, Eli, Eli, lama sapachthani?

That is my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? And some of the bystanders hearing it said, this man's calling Elijah. And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed, and gave it to him to drink.
But the other said, wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him. And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up his spirit. And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.
And so the way of God was now opened through the death of Christ. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised.
And coming out of the tombs after his resurrection, they went into the holy city, and appeared to many. When the centurion, that's the Roman officer overseeing the crucifixion, and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake, and what took place, they were filled with

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awe, and said, truly, this was the Son of God.
[36:41] How many thousands of people had this Roman officer crucified? And given the unique circumstances of God's wrath being poured out on Jesus, they see that this is unique.

This guy was who he said he was. This man was the Son of God. This is how Jesus would save his people from their sins. This is your only hope of going to heaven, is Christ suffering on the cross in your place.
This is why Jesus was born. This is what this baby was born to do. And so don't over-sentimentalize Christmas. It can be an emotional season, a fun season, but don't get caught up in all the trappings of feeling warm and fuzzy on the inside when we think about the birth of our Savior.
Those two little hands were made so that they could be pierced by nails. Those little feet were created to one day carry him to Calvary.
And that little head was made to wear the crown of thorns on the cross as the symbol of the curse of the universe was crammed into his skull. This is why Christ came.
[38:00] He saves us from our sin by becoming sin for us. And so believe in him. Look to him daily. Turn from your sin. Then die to yourself and follow him.

This is the birth of our Savior. This is why he came to the earth. Let's praise God for it. Our Father, we thank you so much for your grace and mercy to us and sending your son Jesus to die on the cross for our sins.
This was a demonstration of your love for us even while we were still sinners. This was a demonstration of your love for the world. And sending your only begotten son, born of a virgin, who came to give his life as a ransom for many.
I pray for the students here who do believe that, that you'd continue to keep them and sanctify them completely when they see you face to face. For students here who don't believe that, I pray that you'd open their hearts tonight to see the beauty of Christ and see the truth of the gospel.
I pray that you'd draw them to yourself through Christ. And it's in his name we pray. Amen.

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