

Text in your attendance to # 208.215.7797 Message: lifer6038

Text to give to RLM, simply text your amount to # 208.714.0026.

SERMON SERIES: Distractions—Distractions are a huge part of the world we live in today.

WHAT IS THE TRUE MEANING OF CHRISTMAS?

Most would answer this question by saying something like, “The true meaning of Christmas is celebrating the Birth of Jesus,” and that is true!

ONE OF THE GREATEST DISTRACTIONS THIS TIME OF YEAR IS FALLING INTO THE TRAP OF TRYING TO “CREATE THE PERFECT MOMENT.”

- God’s “Perfect Christmas moment” took place a long time ago, but it didn’t look anything like our idea of the “Perfect Christmas moment.”
- Let’s imagine for a moment that God defined the perfect Christmas moment the way many of us do today. A couple things that would have gone differently:

1. Mary would not have gotten pregnant outside of marriage.

Luke 1:26 -31 ²⁶In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. ²⁸And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” ²⁹But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

- We don’t usually bat an eye at the news of a young lady getting pregnant outside of marriage today because it is so common.
- Culturally, this would have meant the end of Mary’s future! To get pregnant outside of marriage meant no future and most likely getting killed.

Deuteronomy 22:20-21 ²⁰But if the thing is true, that evidence of virginity was not found in the young woman, ²¹then they shall bring out the young woman to the door of her father’s house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death with stones, because she has done an outrageous thing in Israel by whoring in her father’s house. So you shall purge the evil from your midst.

- **Joseph had every right to not go through with the marriage and to leave Mary, but God was creating a different kind of “Perfect Christmas Moment.”**

Matthew 1:19–20 ¹⁹And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰But 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.

2. Jesus would have been born in the comfort of Mary and Joseph's home.

Luke 2:1-5 ¹In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ²This was the first registration when Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³And all went to be registered, each to his own town. ⁴And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, ⁵to be registered with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child.

Luke 2:6-7 ⁶And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth. ⁷And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.

- **The point is this: God's perfect Christmas moment looked nothing like what you and I expect our perfect Christmas moment to look like.**

GOD'S PERFECT CHRISTMAS MOMENT WAS: "God and man meeting face to face in the flesh."

Galatians 4:4-5 ⁴But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, ⁵to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.

TWO CHALLENGES FOR THIS YEAR

1. Give purpose to your PRESENTS—Go for it! Find the right gift that your family or friend will love. There is nothing wrong with that. But don't leave out the reason that we give gifts during this season. The reason that we give good gifts is a reminder of the good Gift that was given to us in the person and work of Jesus Christ.

2. Give purpose to your PRESENCE—To be truly "present" means not just physically being there but spiritually being there as well. It means taking the time to be intentional in everything we do, pointing to Jesus through all of our holiday traditions.

- Let's redeem all of the amazing and wonderful Holiday traditions that would otherwise be empty without Jesus!
-
-
-
-

QUESTIONS TO DISCUSS IN LIFE GROUP OR WITH YOUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Passages to consider: Galatians 4:4; Luke 2:1-8

1. Share what stood out to you from the sermon.
2. Read Luke 2:1-8. What do you see happening in this passage? A) What would have the people involved experienced? Put yourself in their place; what would it have been like?
3. What do you think might have been challenging for Joseph and Mary? A) What do you think might have been joyful?
4. What is challenging for you in the Christmas season? A) What brings joy to you in the Christmas season?
5. What helps you focus on Jesus and God's presence and purposes in the midst of this season?
6. Consider: What is God doing this season that He is asking you to be a part of? A) What might that look like?
7. What would it take for you to not be so distracted but more focused this Christmas season? (Be specific. Be intentional.)

Next week: Distractions (Week 2): Blessing Instead of Consuming

Passages to prepare: Luke 1:5-56