

The Facilitator

Community Groups @ Trinity Presbyterian Church

12/2/18

Text: Matthew 1:18-25; 2:1-6 & 13-18

Title: The Promise of Christmas: He's Coming!

Teacher: Tim Rice

Surrender through Prayer:

Surrender through prayers for Illumination and Transformation, asking that Jesus would meet with you in this time.

Engage with the Sermon

Read the passage together

Today we started our Advent series and looked at the Gospel of Matthew as we considered the Scandal and the Miracle of Christmas. Jesus, God in human form, came as a baby to save His people from their sins and fulfill the long-awaited promises of redemption for his people. As we saw, the message of Christmas is an indictment of humanity that, in our brokenness, we resist and deny. Denying the Scandal, we fail to see our own sin, and want to believe our own way rather than God's. Denying the miracle, we fail to believe that we need saving, or that God would actually save us in that way. The beauty of the gospel message is that we, as individual Christians, are the biggest scandals and miracles we should know; scandals as God's enemies, full of sin, and yet called to be his people; and miracles, that God in Christ would take our sin and our place to redeem us as his own and offer us His perfect record. At Christmas, we remember that God keeps His promises, and we wait for Him to fulfill them in His return.

Reflection Questions:

1. *Tim said that with Mary's pregnancy, Israel's unfaithfulness to God, and Herod's undermining by a new "king", God has presented his people with a Scandal that is actually a miracle. God has conceived, God has been faithful, and God is the true King.*
 - ***"We are scandal averse" - When have you witnessed a scandal in the Christian community and a response to deny, cover or condemn it? Why do we do that?***
 - ***How has God's undermining of your worldview turned your expectations for your life upside down?***
2. *Tim said that as much as we want to deny the scandal and miracle of Christmas, we are utterly powerless against evil, sin and death...and no source of hope can overcome it.*
 - ***In what ways do you live as if you "have it all together" and deny your sin and the scandal of the Christmas?***
 - ***In what ways do you live as if you can solve your own problems, and deny the miracle of the Christmas?***
3. *Jesus came as both a Scandal (God as a baby), and a Miracle (to save his people from their sin). He did what we couldn't, and we wait for Him to come again.*
 - ***What is it like to wait for God to fulfill his promises in your life?***
 - ***What "promises" have you expected God to fulfill that He never committed to?***

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WORSHIP AND PRAYER:

A.C.T.S.

(Spend time in prayer and worship as you consider Adoring God the Father, Confessing your sin and weakness, giving thanks to Jesus, and asking Holy Spirit to transform you. Use this as a time to talk to God about what's been revealed in your heart from this sermon.)

1. ADORATION *(The Father)*

Adore and Worship God for His attributes and actions

2. CONFESSION *(Me)*

Spend time Confessing sin and ways in which you are finite and limited

3. THANKSGIVING *(Jesus)*

Give thanks to Jesus for his salvation (past, present, future)

4. SUPPLICATION *(Holy Spirit)*

Ask Holy Spirit to transform you in specific ways

5. Prepare for Gospel Community *(My Neighbor)*

Pray for those who are on your heart, that God would use you to impact them with His gospel message.

Prayer Items

- 1. Worship the LORD for His love, power and wisdom. Praise Him, Father, Son and Holy Spirit for how He has worked even through shame, loss, suffering and death in order to redeem sinners like us.*
- 2. How have you lived denying either that you are a scandal (in sin) or that there are miracles (because you can solve your own problems)? Confess your pride and unbelief to Jesus, asking Him to forgive you and change you.*
- 3. Give thanks to Jesus for how He has worked to save us. Thank Him for becoming a scandal in our place, which IS a miracle – that God would work so radically to save us when He could justly destroy us.*
- 4. Who do you know that struggles with minimizing their sin or need for a Savior? Ask the Lord to help them, to open their eyes to their true peril without Jesus and to use you to help them find hope in Christ.*
- 5. Ask the Holy Spirit to bear in you the fruit of patience. Pray for the wisdom to think well about Jesus' promise to return in light of His promises kept at His first coming, and that the Spirit would sustain you in hope.*