

The Most Precious Gift

Matthew 1:18-25/Luke 1:26-38/Luke 2:1-38/John 3:16

Narrator: It's almost Christmas. Have you been thinking about all of the gifts that you want this year? Maybe you want that new doll or action figure that you've had your eye on all month. Maybe it's a new video game. Well, Christmas is coming early this year.

(a child comes on stage and holds up a beautifully wrapped gift and shows the audience)

Narrator: I have a gift for you. What if I told you that this is the only gift that you will ever need? No, it's not socks or a new sweater.

Narrator: Do you want to know what it is? Of course, you do. I'm going to tell you what it is. Better yet, I'm going to show you.

(child exits stage with gift)

(enter Mary and Joseph to the center of the stage)

Narrator: Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows, "When His mother, Mary, had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit."

(Joseph and Mary turn to opposite sides of the stage)

(enter angel to Mary)



Narrator: Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee, called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you."

(Mary looks confused and scared)

Narrator: But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. And begone, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him, Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative, Elizabeth, has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God."

(Mary shakes her head in agreement)

Narrator: And Mary said, "Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." and the angel departed from her.

(angel walks slowly over to Joseph)

Narrator: And Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

(Joseph sleeps - enter angel)



Narrator: But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name, Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Narrator: Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and bear a son, and they shall call His name, Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."

(Joseph wakes up and goes to Mary)

Narrator: And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name, Jesus.

Narrator: You probably think that, since this was God's Son, that He was born in the best of locations and situations. I don't think that's how it happened.

(enter centurion with a scroll - Mary and Joseph are still on stage)

Narrator: Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.

(Joseph and Mary slowly walk around the stage as if they were traveling)

Narrator: And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child.



Narrator: So they had to travel a long way in order to follow what the law said for them to do. Listen to what happens next.

(Someone places two chairs and the manger on the right side of the stage with baby Jesus inside. Mary and Joseph sit on chairs. Mary picks up baby Jesus and holds him.)

Narrator: While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped Him in cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Narrator: Jesus wasn't born in a very good, or clean, place. He was born in a barn where the animals were kept. No one had room for Him. What were Mary and Joseph thinking at that time?

(enter shepherds on the left side of the stage)

Narrator: In the same region, there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night.

(enter angel to the shepherds)

Narrator: And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today, in the city of David, there has been born a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you; you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

(enter more angels)



Narrator: And suddenly there appeared, with the angel, a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with who He is pleased."

(angels exit)

Narrator: When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, "Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has made known to us."

(shepherds slowly go to Mary and Joseph, bowing down)

Narrator: So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as He lay in the manger. When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

(everyone exits stage)

Narrator: The shepherds knew from the first moment that God had sent the world the most precious gift. They just had to tell others about it! They weren't the only ones who knew what God had done.

(enter Simeon to the center of the stage)

Narrator: And when eight days had passed, before His circumcision, His name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.



(enter Mary and Joseph holding Jesus)

Narrator: And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him up to Jerusalem to present Him to the Lord (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, "every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be holy to the Lord"), and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

Narrator: And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child, Jesus, to carry out for Him the custom of the Law...

(Simeon holds baby Jesus)

Narrator: ...then he took Him into his arms, and blessed God, and said, "Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation, which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples, a light of revelation to the gentiles, and the glory of Your people, Israel."

Narrator: Simeon knew that he was holding THE gift from God that he waited his whole life for.

(Mary and Joseph look surprised)

Narrator: There was someone else in the temple that day who was waiting for God's gift to arrive.



Narrator: And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with tastings and prayers.

(enter Anna by Simeon)

Narrator: At that very moment, she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Narrator: Anna knew that she had just seen God's gift to the world.

(all exit the stage)

(enter a child holding the gift from the beginning)

Narrator: This gift isn't actually from me. Do you know who sent it?

(child takes a sign from the present that says "God")

Narrator: This gift is from your heavenly Father! Why did He send it?

(another child comes on stage and takes the sign from the present that says "so loved the world")

Narrator: What did He send?

(another child comes on stage and takes the sign from the present that says "that He gave His one and only Son")



Narrator: Why did He send such a gift?

(2 more children come out and unroll the scroll in the opened present, that says, "that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.")

Narrator: He sent you this gift because He wants to live with Him in heaven for eternity.

(All the children come to the stage and read the Bible verse, John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.")

Narrator: Will you accept this most precious gift?

