

# December 20, 2020 - David Baumgartner (Christmas Service)

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Date: 20 December 2020

Preacher: David Baumgartner

[0:00] We welcome you to the media ministry of Bethel Community Church. Knowing Jesus, making Jesus known. All right, well good evening everyone.

Boy, I gotta tell you, that is really hard to follow. It really is. You realize that all over the world, people are celebrating the fact that God came into this world.

Isn't that good news? He took on human flesh. 100% God, 100% man. And it was one of the most important events in history.

It was so important that God put a star in the sky. It was so important to humanity that we divided history into two parts. Two time periods.

B.C. before Christ and then A.D. Anno Domini, the year in the year of the Lord. As believers here at Bethel, we declare that Jesus is our Savior.

[1:02] And that's because we believe that he died for our sins. But in order for Jesus to die, he had to have a body. And so, when I ask, how is that possible?

Well, tonight, I'd like for us to consider the humanity of Jesus. And so, if you have a Bible, please turn with me to Luke. I'm going to be reading from Luke chapter 1, verse 26.

Beginning in verse 26 to 38. Here's what God's word says, according to Luke.

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, Hail, favored one, the Lord is with you. But she was greatly troubled at this statement.

[2:04] And kept pondering what kind of salutation this might be. And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary. For you have found favor with God.

And behold, you will conceive in your womb, and you will bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great. He 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.

And Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I am a virgin? And 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 offspring shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even now your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age.

[3:09] And she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God. And Mary said, Behold, the bond slave of the Lord, it shall be done according to your word.

And the angel departed from her. Our Heavenly Father, we come before you and just thank you, Lord, for this time of year that we can celebrate the coming of Jesus.

Lord, what a difference it has made in humanity. And Lord, we just pray that we can celebrate tonight and to remember that and how important it is. I want to thank you for each person here, Lord, and your presence in our lives.

We ask this in Jesus' name. Amen. It was a perfect Christmas for little Monica. She got all the presents that she wanted.

And her cousins were with her all day long. And she was able to eat all her favorite foods. And as her mother tucked her in bed, Monica smiled and said to her mom, Mom, I sure hope that Mary and Joseph have another baby next year.

[4:21] Tonight, I want to speak mostly to the children here tonight.

And the rest of you can listen in. So children, I'd like you to listen up and listen to this. I've been studying church history for the past couple months.

And I've been studying particularly the heresies that affected the early church. If you're under 10, I want to ask you this question. What is a heresy?

Someone tell me. Put up your hand. Under 10, tell me what is a heresy? No takers here. That's okay. It's a bashful group.

I'd like to give you my definition. It's any teaching that contradicts the Bible. A very simple answer. Did you know that the very first heresy in the early church had to deal with, it was not a denial of Jesus' divinity, that he was God.

[5:27] No, it was a denial of his humanity. And they said that Jesus can't be both God and man. And there was one man in particular who may have been the first one to say this.

His name was Serinthus. Serinthus lived in the latter part of the first century. That would have been around 50 to 100 A.D. And he did not believe that Jesus was both God and man.

Instead, he claimed that a spirit came upon that is possessed a man who happened to have the name Jesus. And it was this spirit being that went around the countryside teaching people.

Now, I want to ask you, why would someone ever think something like that? Well, Serinthus was Jewish, but he was educated in Alexandria, Egypt.

And that's the center of Greek philosophy. And the key thing to know about Serinthus is that he was persuaded by the Greek culture around him.

[6:35] The Greek culture saw the material world, that is, everything that we see and touch, as being inferior. It was somehow evil to them.

And so to Serinthus, God couldn't have a body. No, or else he's not God. And as you'd expect, Serinthus had a really terrible relationship with the apostles that were living at the time.

Especially the apostle John. According to some of the church leaders, the reason John wrote his gospel account was to combat the teachings of Serinthus.

We see some of this in John's letters. For example, in his first letter, he wrote, By this you know the spirit of God, that every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come into the flesh is from God. And then in his second epistle, his second letter, John said, For many deceivers have gone out into the world, those who do not acknowledge Jesus as coming in the flesh.

[7:46] Well, Serinthus didn't care what the apostle said. He wanted to make Christianity more appealing to people, especially the wealthy elite people.

And so he founded a school and his teachings spread all over the Middle East. I want to ask the children here tonight, how would you answer somebody like Serinthus?

What would you say? I give you a clue. What's this? What's this? The Bible. Yeah.

Let me give you an example. The Bible is very clear about the humanity of Jesus. Matthew's gospel account traces Jesus' genealogy back to Abraham.

And that's to show that Jesus inherited the right to inherit King David's throne. But Luke's gospel, it shows Jesus' genealogy all the way back to Adam, the first man.

[8:53] Also, we read in the scriptures that Jesus was born just like any other baby. He grew up from childhood to adulthood just like other people.

Jesus' genealogy. In Luke chapter 2, it says that the child continued to grow and he became strong, increasing in wisdom. Jesus, we know, went through the learning process just like everyone else. He learned how to walk, how to walk, how to talk. He learned how to read, how to write. We often miss this, that those who were with Jesus saw him as a man.

He didn't have a halo or a thing on his head. He didn't walk around glowing. He didn't walk around or float in the sky. It's recorded in Matthew chapter 13 that one day while he was performing miracles and teaching in the synagogue, people said, where did this man get this wisdom?

How did he do these mighty works? Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? Are not his brothers and sisters with us?

[10:07] So the Bible clearly teaches that God himself, Jesus, became a human being just like we are.

But the scriptures also teach that he was different from us in one very important aspect. He was without sin. Now some people, they'll say, well, there you have it.

Well, Jesus was not fully human because all humans sin, right? Well, those who make that claim fail to realize that sinfulness is actually an abnormal condition for humanity.

God didn't create Adam and Eve in a sinful condition. No, they were made in a state of innocence. But Adam and Jesus came into the world without sin.

But later on, Adam sinned. He fell short. And so as the father of the human race, all of his descendants, and that would be all of us in this room, inherited what's called a sin nature.

[11:21] But not Jesus. No. Jesus was born without sin. He never committed a single sin. He was the Holy One of God.

I want to ask, how is this possible? It's because of the virgin birth. We saw, we read earlier in Luke's account, Jesus didn't have a human father.

No, and some have asked, well, why didn't Jesus inherit his mother's sin nature? Does anybody know that? Well, maybe the adults, would you know that? It's a good question.

But here's where we find the answer. In fact, it was in our reading tonight. Here's the reason. It's when the angel Gabriel was speaking to Mary. And he said this, The virgin birth was a miracle, brothers and sisters.

God made it happen. What a wonderful thing for us. God made it possible. And so Jesus was a 100% God and 100% human.

[12:42] We call this the incarnation. And it explains how a divine being could have a human body without stealing somebody else's body.

Just like what Serenthus taught. Serenthus should have read the Old Testament prophet Isaiah. In chapter 7, verse 14, he says, Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign.

Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son. And she will call his name Emmanuel. So Jesus' humanity is very important to us.

And I'd like to give several reasons for that. But I'd like to focus on just three here. First of all, Jesus as a man lived the life that we couldn't live.

Jesus was the only man who obeyed God perfectly. All the rest of humanity, we failed.

[13:49] The scriptures teach us all have sinned. And we fall short of God's glory. Let me ask the young ones here. Who does that include? When Paul says all have sinned, who does that include?

Does that include your moms and dads? Yeah, who does that include? Go ahead, Ruby. Ruby. Everybody's a sinner.

Everybody's a sinner. That's right. But what about your moms and dads? I mean, they're great people.

All of you. How about grandpas and grandmas? Yeah. How about your brothers and sisters? Are they sinners? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

You know, they always share their toys. They always share their toys with you. They're always nice to you, right? How about your aunts and uncles? Yeah.

[14:54] I'd say just about everybody. Sloan, you want to say something? No, no. Jesus did not sin. Jesus did not sin.

But all of humanity sinned. How about teachers? How about teachers? Have they sinned? Yeah. How about government officials?

Yeah. Absolutely. All right. I won't go there tonight. Here's the key to know, friends. All of humanity failed to obey God perfectly, going all the way back to Adam.

And this is why the apostle Paul refers to Jesus as the last Adam. He writes in his first letter to the Corinthians, the first man Adam became a living being.

But the second, the last Adam became a life-giving spirit. So the first reason is Jesus, as a man, lived the perfect life.

[16:02] But here's another thing. As a man, Jesus could sympathize with you and me. And we know this because that baby Jesus grew up.

And he experienced everything that we experience. Listen to what the writer of Hebrews says. He says, speaking of Jesus, we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin.

I want to ask you, young ones here, what does it mean to sympathize? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? Anybody? That's all right.

I'll give you my definition. It means that Jesus thoroughly understands us. He's been where you and I have been. And he has experienced what you're going through.

Maybe even something right now. Here's a question. Have you ever felt rejected? Yeah, some of you have. Jesus understands what it means to be rejected.

[17:09] In John chapter 1, it says, even his own people rejected him. In fact, it says they took offense at him. I want to ask you this. Have you ever been lonely?

Anybody? Yeah. Yeah, Jesus experienced that too. In fact, on the night that he was arrested, it says that all the apostles, the disciples deserted him and they fled from him.

And so we know that Jesus felt that too. All this leads to the last thing.

Jesus obeyed perfectly. As a man, Jesus can relate to us. And as a man, Jesus died the death that you and I should have.

Do you realize that as sinners, that our sins separate us from a holy God? We, mankind, we cannot rescue ourselves.

[18:15] But friends, God had a plan. Jesus, the second person of the Trinity, willingly gave his life in exchange for ours to pay the price for our sins.

And if you believe that, you have eternal life. In Peter's first epistle, he writes, Christ also died for sins once for all, the just for the unjust, in order that he might bring us to God, having been put to death in the flesh, but made alive in the spirit.

But in order for Jesus to die, he had to be a man. This is a really good time for us to just pause for a moment and remember the Lord Jesus.

And we actually have these symbols, the bread and the cup, that help us to remember what Jesus did. If I could have some help here by some, some fellows here to bring over the table.

If you're old enough to partake in the Lord's Supper, then you're welcome to. And, and, you know, maybe your moms and dads can help you. As they get that set up, I'd like to read what Paul says in his first letter to the Corinthians.

[19:38] He says, go ahead, go ahead and hit him. He said, for I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus in the night in which he was betrayed, he took the bread.

And after he had given thanks, he broke it. And he said, this is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

If you were here last Sunday, you may remember the message that Kevin gave about the Lord's Supper.

It's a very personal thing. For us to come before God and to remember with gratitude what he did for us.

And so Jesus gave us, gave these emblems for us to remember him. Amen. Thank you.

[21:26] Thank you. Thank you. In verse 25 of that same chapter, Paul says that in the same way, he took the cup also after supper, saying, saying, this cup is the new covenant in my blood.

Do this as often as you drink it in remembrance of me. For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.

O heavenly Father, it is with such a longing that we look for your appearing.

We thank you, Lord, though, that you have provided a way for us to be in your family. And these elements here just serve as a reminder of the price that was paid by Jesus Christ himself.

We thank you, Lord, that we can do this because it brings the focus into where it belongs.

[22:56] And that's on you, the Holy One, the one who came into this world, lived a perfect life, taught us about you, and went to a cross for our sins.

We thank you for that. Thank you.

Thank you, fellas. Amen. Amen.

God sent his son, Jesus. If Jesus would have entered humanity just by showing up as an adult, I think it would be very difficult for us to see his humanity.

But God made a way for his only son to enter humanity. And Jesus came in a most tender, innocent way as a baby in a manger.

[24:24] Can you imagine, if you would, on that star-filled night in Bethlehem, gazing into that manger, gazing into that manger, your eyes perhaps just fixed, you're gazing on that infant, hearing about the angelic announcements, seeing that star in the sky, no doubt that you would join Mary as she pondered, what kind of child is this?

And I think it's a good question. Others have asked that too. Serenthus wondered about it, but he got it wrong.

And that's because he listened to the culture around him. The denial of Christ's humanity, that's a serious mistake. It's just as serious as denying his deity.

But friends, you and I don't have to be persuaded by culture. We can depend on what God's word says. And this may have been a challenging year for you.

I know it's been for many. Many people are sad at this time. Many people are lonely. Many people are dealing with sickness from COVID. Many people have lost their income.

[25:45] But because of the Bible, you and I can still be encouraged. We can still have hope. I think of this man by the name of William Dix. He was born in the year 1837 in Bristol, England.

Mr. Dix was a successful insurance salesman in Glasgow, Scotland. But at the age of 29, he was stricken with a serious illness.

And he was confined to bed for a very long time. Well, during his illness, Mr. Dix became very depressed. But then he called out to God.

And he read God's word. And his life was filled with joy. And after that, he wrote several poems.

And one of those poems became the Christmas hymn, What Child Is This?

And that answer to that question, What Child Is This?, was answered by the shepherds themselves when they saw the baby Jesus. Here's the answer.

[26:54] This is Christ, the King, whom shepherds guard and angels sing.  
Haste, haste, bring him laud, the babe, the son of Mary.

Here's my last question tonight for the young ones. What does it mean to bring laud? Anybody? It's an old word.

It means to bring praise. Like when you applaud someone. We should do that very thing tonight. Be We We