

New Birth Experience: Fully Rely On God This Time

The Gospel According to Matthew. Thinking of the New Birth during this season. Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Monday, November 26, 2018

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"...Jacob fathered Joseph the husband of Mary, who gave birth to Jesus who is called the Messiah. So all the generations from Abraham to David were 14 generations; and from David until the exile to Babylon, 14 generations; and from the exile to Babylon until the Messiah, 14 generations. The birth of Jesus Christ came about this way: After His mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 1:16–18, HCSB).

Surprise

It was a miracle! A young woman who had never had sexual relations with any man was pregnant. How many times have you heard of instances when women did not know they were pregnant until the third trimester? How many times have you heard of a woman feeling weird, going to the doctor to find out what was going on, and then ... "surprise!" being diagnosed, not with something that caused weird feelings or nausea, but rather pregnancy? They simply did not know. Even when these women did not realize they were pregnant and were surprised by the fact, they did have sexual relations, and pregnancy was the outcome of that experience. Makes sense.

Well, Mary's case was different. It was so different that God sent an angel to her to explain what happened. Even though she was indeed a virgin, she was pregnant. Miraculously, in fulfillment of many Old Testament prophecies, this holy young woman of God was pregnant. The Holy Spirit reached down into her DNA, with all of its historic and genetic relevance and placed the blessed embryo (for lack of a better way of saying it) who we would finally recognize was the Son of God! God's power overshadowed the human predicament, and Mary bore the Son of the Living God. Miracle!

Weak Roots in The Family Tree

Since we do not have a lot of time to exhaust this holy topic, I would like to direct your attention to an intriguing aspect of the story. Even though Joseph had nothing to do with Jesus' birth, He did still come through the womb of a normal human woman. This means that the list of persons preceding

our theme passage were all ancestors of Christ. This also magnifies the reality, that Jesus Christ entered upon the human scene with the need to rely on His Father, fully, so He could live a righteous life. Have you read the motley cast of characters, with all their foibles in the list? This simply says to us, that the Father did not orchestrate some sideshow and call it the plan of salvation. No! Jesus had real human ancestors whose genetics could have impacted His character if He did not rely on His Father's strength 100% of the time.

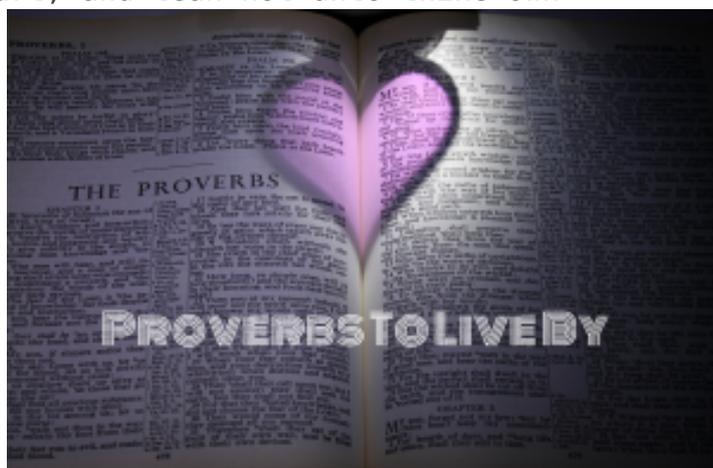
Are you willing to rely on God for power to live above sin just like Jesus did? We do realize there is a difference here – Jesus was victorious from His birth until He died. We all have sinned and come short of God's glorious intent for our lives. However, John 3, Romans 6, and Romans 8, all teach us that we can be victorious from our *newbirth* until we die or Jesus returns, as the case may be. If we make mistakes along the way, following our newbirth experience, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous One.

This has been the gospel according to Matthew. Be transformed by it.

Turn Up The Trust

Message Magazine's Online Devotional for Wednesday, March 9, 2016

"Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths." (Proverbs 3:5-6)



It is not easy to trust people. Oftentimes, those whom we have trusted the most also disappoint us the most. When we let someone into our emotional space, we feel vulnerable, and because of past hurts, we sometimes wish we did not allow ourselves to trust again. This is an unfortunate consequence of sin.

The Lord says that we can trust Him. He has demonstrated His consistency by causing the sun to shine and the rain to fall without fail for thousands of years. He has sustained the very breath in our bodies. This, along with all of His mighty acts, shows us His proven track record and that should put us at ease. This should encourage us to be faithful to Him.

So many people think it is possible to make important decisions without consulting the Lord. Decisions about marriage, business partnerships, and other situations are made without regarding Him. People suffer through unnecessary pain because they do not first confer with God. He says that if we put our trust in Him first, and resist the temptation to rely on our own

limited wisdom, He will direct us in the way we should go. More than anything else, we must rely on the Lord concerning issues of salvation. We have nothing of value to contribute to our salvation; He must perform miracles beyond our abilities in order to fit us for heaven. We are never to aspire to holiness in our own strength. We must trust in the Lord with our whole heart. As we do this, He will make known the mysteries of godliness and will prepare us to meet Him in peace. Isn't it great that the Lord is willing to show us, step-by-step, the way we should go? Trust in the Lord and you will never be disappointed