

The Virgin Birth – Matthew 1:18-25

Message Discussion Guide

Connect

- There are many parts to the traditional Christmas story (The angel announcements to Mary and Joseph, the birth in the barn/cave, the angels and shepherds, the wisemen, etc.) What parts of the story have been especially meaningful to you through the years?

Discover

- Which statement or experience stood out to you from the worship service?
- Read Luke 1:26-33.
 - What must this angelic announcement have been like for Mary? What might it have been like to balance the fear and the excitement that must have come to Mary being pregnant in such a unique way and in such a unique circumstance?
 - When the angel Gabriel said to Mary, “You have found favor with God,” do you think that was more about who Mary was or who God was? Why?
 - What does it mean that his kingdom will “have no end?”
- Read Matthew 1:18-23.
 - What does verse 19 say about the character of Joseph?
 - The angel said the baby should be named Jesus because “he will save his people from their sins.” What was the angel referring to? How do you think this might have differed from the expectations of the people of that day who were awaiting a Messiah? How does that differ from what people are looking for from Christianity today?
 - What is the meaning of Immanuel? Why is that such a comfort and encouragement for believers today?
- Read Matthew 1:24-25 and Luke 1:34-35.
 - Why was it important that Mary be a virgin when Christ was born?
 - Why is it better to call this a virgin conception and not a virgin birth? What is the difference?
 - What is the implication of the virgin conception with the theological statement that Jesus is fully human and fully divine?
- Read Romans 5:12, 15-19.
 - What does the Bible mean when it says that sin entered the world and spread to all people through one man (5:12, 17)?
 - If through the sin of one there is condemnation for everyone (5:18), why is this not true of Jesus?
 - How does Jesus not having a sin nature (inherited sin) affect us (5:17, 19)?

Respond

- Can a person be a Christian and at the same time deny the virgin conception of Christ? Why is this Bible doctrine so important? Why is it fundamental to the faith?
- How can a full understanding of the implications of the virgin conception add to a Christian’s worship and celebration at Christmas?

Bonus for Thinkers

- The Roman Catholic church adds much to this doctrine that is not found in Scripture. One of those additions is that Mary was sinless. How does this view undermine the theology of Salvation found in Romans 5 (and other places)?

First Baptist Nacogdoches Bible Reading Plan

Day	Scripture
Monday (12/16)	Matt 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38
Tuesday (12/17)	1 Corinthians 11:1-34
Wednesday (12/18)	1 Corinthians 12:1-31
Thursday (12/19)	1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Friday (12/20)	1 Corinthians 14:1-40

Daily Devotion Questions

Monday (12/16) — Matthew 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-38

- Review the “Respond” questions on the reverse side of this devotion guide.

Tuesday (12/17) — 1 Corinthians 11:1-34

- 11:1 says we should be imitators of Christ. This means we should have the attitude of Christ; we should have the character of Christ; and we should be focused on the same purposes on which Christ focused. Prayerfully think through these three categories of imitation. Write down one thing you could change in each category to be more like Christ this week.
- The church at Corinth was filled with cliques. People were in their own little groups and they ignored everyone not in their group. Paul condemned this practice (11:18-22). Write down the names (or a description if you don't know names) of three people in your church that you don't know very well, and ask the Lord to show you something you can do in the next couple of weeks to reach out and connect with each of them.
- What do you think Paul means when he says that some worship the Lord in an “unworthy manner?” (11:27) Whether your church is worshiping via the Lord's Supper this week or not, it is important that we examine ourselves (11:28) and worship in a worthy manner. What are some ways you can make sure you are doing this?

Wednesday (12/18) — 1 Corinthians 12:1-31

- According to what Paul has written in 12:14-26, how important are you to your local church? [Answer: Very important!] So does your commitment to the church and involvement in the ministries of your church reflect the importance the Bible says you have? How can you be more committed and more involved?
- God has given each of us an assignment and a role in our church (12:18). What is your God assigned role? If you don't know, then how can you begin to find out? If you do, then how can you be more committed to this role?
- Paul tells us (12:26) that when one member suffers, we should all suffer together. What does he mean by this? There are people in your church who are suffering this week. How could you “suffer with them?” How could you empathize and comfort one or two of them?

Thursday (12/19) — 1 Corinthians 13:1-13

- In 13:2-3, Paul writes that love is greater than knowledge, faith and even sacrifice. Write down one reason you think that is true for each of these.
- Write an example of what it means for love to be patient. Is there someone to whom you need to show more patient love? Write his/her name down and pray for strength.
- Read 13:4-7 aloud. But when you read, replace all of the occurrences of the word “love” with your first name, and replace the word “it” with the pronoun “I.” After reading this passage aloud like this a couple times the Lord will highlight in your mind some of the week areas of your love. Write those down. Ask the Lord for help in those areas.
- Of all the characteristics of love found in these four verses, at which one does each person in the family excel?

Friday (12/20) — 1 Corinthians 14:1-40

- This is an unusual chapter. It deals with some of the specifics of the worship services at the church in Corinth. If we step away from the specifics, however, we can see four principles that should be true of every worship service. I have listed these below. Read the first one. Then write in your journal a few words describing how you can pray for the leaders of worship at your church (pastor, singers, instrumentalists, etc.). Then hold those people up to the Lord in prayer focusing on that principle. Then repeat this for each of the four principles.
- When we come together for worship, these things should be true...
 - Every element of worship should be for the purpose of building up the body, not an individual (14:1-12).
 - Every expression of worship should engage the mind (14:13-19).
 - The things communicated in worship should bring conviction to both believers and unbelievers (14:20-25).
 - Worship should be done decently and in order. Chaos and confusion in worship do not honor the Lord (14:26-40).
 - How are you doing in your assignment today of bringing glory to God in whatever you do? How could you better honor the Lord the rest of this day?