

Matthew 1B

- Tonight we move into the birth account of Jesus
 - Since we've just started in February, it's like Christmas is taking an encore this year
 - And in a way, I think this is the perfect time of year to consider Jesus' birth account, and here's why
 - The story is somewhat fresh in our minds, having just recently celebrated the Christmas season
 - Yet we're not distracted with the social aspects of the holiday, so we can actually concentrate on learning
 - And despite the familiarity of this story, I think you're going to be surprised by some of the things which you'll learn
 - Because so much of what we know about Jesus' birth has been shaped by movies or Christmas carols or bedtime stories
 - So many of the important details have either been lost or changed from what's reported in the Bible
 - So even what you think we know may not be the truth
 - Thankfully, the whole story is still here for us in the Gospel, so let's revisit this account with fresh eyes
- Matthew's account of the birth begins immediately after his genealogy in Chapter 1, which we studied last week
 - So we pick up reading in Chapter 1:18

Matt. 1:18 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.

Matt. 1:19 And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

- Matthew starts saying the birth of Jesus the Messiah happened this way

- And then he proceeds to tell the story from Joseph's point of view, as I explained last week
- So imagine Matthew or perhaps one of Jesus' half-brothers sitting across from Joseph asking him to recall Jesus' birth
- Joseph leans back and begins with his wife-to-be coming home one day pregnant
- Unfortunately, this has probably happened to many men over the course of history
 - And every single time this has happened, it's always meant one and only one thing
 - Mary's been foolin' around on Joseph
 - Like the time a man suspected his wife of fooling around...

A middle-aged couple had two beautiful daughters, but they decided to try one last time for the son they always wanted. Soon, the wife became pregnant, and nine months later delivered a baby boy. The joyful father rushed to the nursery to see his new son, but was horrified to find an incredibly ugly baby. He went to his wife and said, "I cannot possibly be the father of that hideous child. Look at the two beautiful daughters I fathered. Have you been fooling around on me?"

His wife confessed, "Not this time."

- Clearly, that wasn't the case for Mary, as Matthew explains to us saying she was with child by the Holy Spirit
 - Joseph eventually came to understand this was true
 - But in the moment, Joseph assumed what every husband-to-be would have assumed
 - He thinks Mary is guilty of cheating on him
- Mary and Joseph were betrothed Matthew says, which was a unique pre-marital status in ancient Jewish culture
 - It's not the same thing as being engaged, as we would say today
 - It's far more binding than an engagement is today, and yet it's still a step short of full marriage

- To understand the difference, we must remember that marriages in Jesus' day were usually pre-arranged
- The family of a woman of marrying age would negotiate with the family of an eligible bachelor to arrange a marriage
 - The family of the man had to pay the family of the woman a price for the bride
 - The price needed to be generous, because if the groom's family tried to bargain down the price of the bride, it suggested that they didn't think the girl was very desirable
 - It's like shopping for a wife at goodwill or Big Lots
- But eventually, when the two families came to an agreement on a price, a deal was struck for marriage
 - At that point the bride was betrothed to her groom even though the two may never have met
 - Because money was exchanged, the betrothal was a legal arrangement
 - Legally speaking, the couple had entered into a preliminary form of marriage at that point
 - Months later, a formal marriage ceremony would take place where the couple would officially become husband and wife
- Only at that time could the couple consummate their marriage in the marriage tent
 - If you don't know what the word consummate means, then you're too young for me to explain it...ask your parents
 - But prior to that marriage ceremony, the couple must remain chaste
 - Both the man and woman were to remain virgins
 - In fact, one of the reasons for waiting a year between the betrothal and marriage, was to make sure the woman wasn't already pregnant by another man
 - It was part of a system making sure people did the right thing

- So that's the situation for Mary and Joseph at this point...they are betrothed, which means they haven't yet been formally married much less had relations
 - Then during this betrothal period, Mary turns up pregnant
 - And I love Matthew's choice of words when he says Mary was "found to be with child" like it was a chance discovery
 - We know from Luke's Gospel that Mary initially went to spend time with her cousin, Elizabeth, who was pregnant with John the Baptist at the time
 - She stayed with Elizabeth three months before returning home, at which point her pregnancy was probably starting to show
 - So she knew she was going to have to tell Joseph eventually, and now that time had come
 - Can you imagine the conversation around Joseph's kitchen table?
 - Mary starts saying, "Joseph, I have good news and bad news..."
 - The good news is it's a boy!
 - Mary tells Joseph she's with child but then quickly denies being unfaithful to Joseph
 - She tells Joseph, "It's not what you're thinking. This is a result of the Holy Spirit."
 - In other words, God made me pregnant
- This is a significant moment in the story because Jewish theology did not acknowledge a Third Person of the Trinity
 - In fact, Jewish teaching didn't recognize the Trinity at all, even though we can find clear evidence of the three Persons of God in the Old Testament
 - You can't get past the second verse of the Bible without seeing the Spirit described as a distinct Person of God from the Father
 - Nevertheless, Jews never grasped this concept in their teaching of God
 - You can see an example of what I'm saying in Acts 19 when Paul confronts a group of Jewish men to know if they were truly saved

[Acts 19:2](#) He said to them, “Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you believed?” And they said to him, “No, we have not even heard whether there is a Holy Spirit.”

- Those Jews said they had not even heard of such a thing as a Holy Spirit
- And neither had Joseph, not at this point
 - So when Mary blames her pregnancy on the Holy Spirit, Joseph must have thought it was a ridiculous excuse
 - It was as if she said aliens made her pregnant
- So Matthew tells us in v.19 that Joseph decides to end the relationship, though in a merciful manner for Mary’s sake
 - Joseph sets about to divorce Mary
 - In v.19 my English translation reads that Joseph planned to send Mary away
 - But Matthew wrote his Gospel account in the ancient Greek language
 - And when we look at this account in Greek, we find that Matthew used the Greek word for divorce
 - So Joseph planned to divorce Mary
 - That was the natural response to this situation
 - A husband had the right to receive an unblemished bride, since that’s what his family purchased
 - And since Mary and Joseph had not yet consummated their relationship, Joseph had no obligation to stay with her
 - Nevertheless, he decided to divorce her secretly, Matthew says
 - By secretly, we mean that Joseph wasn’t going to press charges against Mary
 - Mary had committed a crime under Jewish law, a crime punishable by death by stoning

[Deut. 22:20](#) “But if this charge is true, that the girl was not found a virgin,

[Deut. 22:21](#) then they shall bring out the girl to the doorway of her father's house, and the men of her city shall stone her to death because she has committed an act of folly in Israel by playing the harlot in her father's house; thus you shall purge the evil from among you.

- Joseph, being a righteous man, could not marry a woman he believed to be immoral
 - But at the same time, his righteousness led him to show mercy to Mary by protecting her from stoning
 - So he planned to take her somewhere away from her home, somewhere where she wouldn't be recognized, so he could issue her a writ of divorce
- Now let's consider what Mary must have been thinking as she hears that Joseph is divorcing her
 - From Luke's Gospel, we know she had been visited by an angel to learn the news of her pregnancy
 - Plus, she knows she's never been with a man, yet she can clearly see there is a child growing inside her
 - Moreover, she was told her baby would be the long-promised Messiah
 - That Savior that God has been promising to deliver to mankind since the Fall of Adam and Woman in the Garden
 - There is no more important event in all human history than this birth of the Messiah, and God has placed Mary at the center of it
 - So Mary is absolutely convinced that her pregnancy is a miracle ordained by God
 - Yet when she shares this news with Joseph, he doesn't believe her
 - Do you suppose Mary wondered if God was failing her at this moment?
 - Did she cry out demanding why God wasn't keeping her marriage together when she was serving Him faithfully?
 - Perhaps she supposed that God lacked the power to save her marriage or that God didn't care for her?

- The text is silent on Mary's response, but I don't believe she thought those things
 - I believe she remained confident in God despite Joseph's decision
 - I believe she knew the Lord would protect her marriage somehow
 - In other words, I believe she responded in faith
 - With a quiet confidence that no matter how bleak and dark her situation appeared, God had a good purpose in what was happening
- How do I know Mary had this confidence? Because of how she responded to the angel when she first learned of God's plan for her

Luke 1:31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus.

Luke 1:32 "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;

Luke 1:33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end."

Luke 1:34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

Luke 1:35 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.

Luke 1:37 "For nothing will be impossible with God."

Luke 1:38 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.

- Mary hears the impossible, that she will have a baby even though she's a virgin
 - When Mary asks the angel how this can be, the angel responded with that statement, "For nothing is impossible with God"
 - To which Mary says, "...may it be done to me according to your word"
 - In other words, Mary accepted in faith what she had been told by the angel knowing God's word was certain and sure

- She believed that God could do impossible things
- So ask yourself this? What's easier for God to do...to bring a child out of a virgin's womb or save Mary's marriage?
 - How foolish it would have been for Mary to stare down at her baby bump knowing she was a virgin and then complain to God that He's ruined her marriage
 - What would she have expected God to say to that?
 - Maybe something like, "Calm down, Mary, I got this too."
- But don't we do the same thing to God sometimes?
 - When our world seems to be coming apart at the seams, we turn to God in frustration or fear and accuse Him of failing us
 - But in those moments, ask yourself this: what's more challenging for God? To part the Red Sea, or solve your relationship problem?
 - What's harder for Him? To speak the universe into existence or cure your illness or addiction?
 - What demonstrates God's love more? That He died on a cross to save you from your sins, or that He pays off your student loans?
- Hasn't God already proven His love for us sufficiently, and hasn't He already demonstrated His power to solve any problem He chooses?
 - Of course He has
 - So the real issue is are we willing to accept His will for our life even when we don't understand it or like it?
 - Can't we trust Him to be working on our behalf?
- We know God doesn't solve every problem in our life or give us everything we want, and I'm not telling you He will, because the Bible doesn't tell us He will
 - But the Bible does say that the Lord works all circumstances in the lives of believers to arrive at eternally good things for us and for His glory
 - And sometimes the good things God wants to accomplish in our spirit require that we first endure not-so-good things in our earthly lives

- For example, if God wants to improve your prayer life, He may bring you hard trials that bring you to your knees
- If He wants you to develop greater self-restraint or humility, He may expose your pride or test your patience in uncomfortable ways because that's the best way to get the result
- And if He wants you to seek Him more earnestly and to depend upon Him more desperately, He may bring you to the end of yourself because the outcome is worth it
- But no matter what circumstances God chooses to bring into our lives, we can't ever question God's goodness or His ability
 - Think back to Mary again...God gave Mary the blessing to birth the Messiah, so how could she declare God wasn't good to her?
 - What better thing could she have received?
 - And if God could supernaturally conceive a child in a virgin's womb, she should know He had the capability to fix her marriage
- In other words, God had already proven Himself to Mary to be good and powerful
 - So Mary had every reason to stay quietly confident in God even as Joseph declared he was divorcing her
 - And you too know God is good and that He can do anything
- That's the approach of faith: God has already given believers the blessing of His Son dying on a cross to pay for our sins
 - That is sufficient evidence to know that God is good all the time
 - So can we ever say God hasn't been good to us?
 - And God raised His Son to prove to us that He can resurrect us too into a new eternal body one day
 - Knowing that, what can't God do for us while we live in these weak dying bodies?
- I'm talking about maintaining a certain perspective...a faith in God and His promises...I call it, "living with eyes for eternity"

- It's the perspective Mary had, knowing that nothing is impossible with God
 - And if God can do literally anything, the only question we need to ask is, what's best?
 - Because that's what God always does, whatever is best
- So when He doesn't do what we expect, it's not because He's unkind or unable
 - It's because there was a better option for the sake of eternity
 - We may not understand why it's better, not right now
 - But I assure you, when everything is said and done, we'll see that God was right every time
- And then sometimes, in mercy, God will give us what we ask for, but only because it was the best thing
 - Which is exactly what God did in Mary's case for the sake of His Son

Matt. 1:20 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.

Matt. 1:21 "She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins."

Matt. 1:22 Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

Matt. 1:23 "Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel," which translated means, "God with us."

Matt. 1:24 And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife,

Matt. 1:25 but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

- Matthew says in v.20 that even as Joseph was considering his divorce plan, an angel appears to him in a dream
 - This is the Lord showing up in a big way, ready to correct Joseph's thinking
 - The angel addresses Joseph as son of David

- We learned last week that's a title that points back to the Davidic Covenant
- The Davidic Covenant promised Israel that a descendant of David would occupy the throne forever
 - Jesus is the fulfillment of that promise, He is the eternal King Who rules over the world in the Kingdom to come
 - And Joseph is in the line of David leading to Jesus, so the angel draws Joseph's attention to that bigger plan by calling him the son of David
 - It's a wake up call to Joseph
- Joseph's mind was squarely focused on himself right now, considering how to divorce his wife and save his reputation
 - He was nursing his feelings of betrayal and hurt
 - He had given no thought to Mary's explanation regarding the Holy Spirit except to dismiss it out of hand
 - So the angel is waking Joseph up so he might think about bigger things than just himself and his reputation
- Then in v.21 the angel explains to Joseph that his wife to be was going to bear a son, conceived of the Holy Spirit, Whom they would name Jesus
 - His Son would be the Messiah, the One God promised to send to save His people from their sins
 - This Child was to be the key to saving humanity from the judgment fires of Hell
 - And as Joseph hears the angel in his dream, it begins to sink in that the world didn't revolve around Joseph and his problems
 - The Messiah's arrival was going to require that Joseph be willing to marry a woman who got pregnant out of wedlock
 - It would be a sacrifice for both Joseph and Mary, but that was God's requirement of His bondservant
 - And this was no small request in that day
 - Given how hard it was for Joseph to accept Mary's story of a virgin birth, how hard do you think it's going to be to convince other people?

- In a strict culture like ancient Judea, this kind of scandal didn't just go unnoticed
- Mary's friends and family naturally concluded she was immoral
- And so did Joseph's family and friends I'm sure
- That's the price they had to pay to serve God
 - God required this young couple to begin their life together under a dark cloud and probably with few friends
 - We see them as blessed now, and of course in eternity they will undoubtedly receive great reward for their faithfulness
 - But in their earthly life, they followed in the footsteps of their own Child, suffering for the sake of God's glory
- So the angel tells Joseph not to fear taking Mary as a wife, she's not been unfaithful, so press on with the marriage plans
 - The reason Mary's pregnant is just as she explained...she was made pregnant by the Holy Spirit
 - This process is an unavoidable mystery to us
 - Certainly we understand that it happened, but we can't explain how it happened, biologically speaking, because it was a miracle
 - God supernaturally created the male component of conception and introduced it into Mary's womb to conceive a child without a man being involved in the process
 - But such an elaborate plan raises the question, why? Why go to such an effort to conceive Jesus?
 - Why not simply use the normal human process of conception to arrive at Jesus' birth?
 - We learned one reason last week
 - God's curse on King Jechoniah prevented any biological descendant of that man from ever holding the throne
 - Since Joseph was a descendant of Jechoniah, Jesus couldn't be Joseph's biological descendant if He was to rule Israel

- But God could have solved that problem in other ways without requiring a supernatural conception
 - He could have chosen another man to be Mary's husband, a man who didn't descend from the cursed king
 - So we're still searching for the answer for why a supernatural conception for Jesus?
- The angel gives us another possible answer when he tells Joseph that Jesus' miraculous birth is the fulfillment of prophecy from the Old Testament
 - In vs.22-23 the angel mentions a prophecy from the prophet Isaiah
 - He quotes from Isaiah 7 where hundreds of years earlier the prophet told Israel this:

Is. 7:14 "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 Immanuel.

- Hundreds of years ahead of time, the prophet told Israel that the Lord would send His people a unique sign to indicate when their Messiah had come to them
- That sign would be a virgin giving birth to a son
- Obviously, the word virgin refers to a woman who has never laid with a man
 - And since that's the way conception happens naturally, the prophet is telling Israel their Messiah's birth would be supernatural
 - It won't happen through conventional means, which is why it would be a sign...it would stand out in a unique way
- But here again, that just begs a question...why use that particular sign? God could use any kind of sign He wanted
 - And in fact, God gives Israel many other signs of Messiah
 - God sends a star, magi, shepherds, angels and others to indicate Jesus was the Messiah
 - So why did the Lord also want our Savior to come by way of a supernatural conception?

- The full answer comes at the end of v.23, when the angel tells Joseph that child will be called Immanuel, which means “God with us”
 - We know that our Lord was not named Immanuel
 - There is no moment in the New Testament when that name is used for the Messiah
 - In fact, just a couple of verses earlier, the angel told Joseph his child should be called Jesus, which is pronounced *Yeshua* in Hebrew
 - So why say He will be called Immanuel?
 - The angel was saying that people will say this about Jesus, that He is God with us, and that’s why Jesus required a virgin birth
 - To explain why, I need to take you back to the beginning, the very beginning, to the moment of the very first human sin
 - When the human race consisted of only two people, Adam and his wife, who he called Woman, and they were alone in the Garden of Eden
 - Before the first sin took place, God told Adam that should he ever disobey the word of God, Adam’s sin would result in Adam dying spiritually
 - To die spiritually means to have your soul consigned to a place of torment, forever barred from God’s presence
 - The Bible calls this kind of death the Second Death, because it will follow the first death of your physical body – if you don’t have the covering of Christ and have not been saved from your sin
 - This is the penalty God pronounced in advance for sin, and once the Lord issues His word concerning something, it cannot be changed and must be fulfilled
 - As Lord tells us

[Is. 55:11](#) so is my word that goes out from my mouth:

It will not return to me empty,
but will accomplish what I desire
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.

- Remember the moment near the end of Jesus' life, when he was coming into the city on a donkey, which we celebrate as Palm Sunday
 - All the disciples were there and there was a large crowd declaring Him to be Messiah
 - The Pharisees, who hated Jesus, didn't like that public proclamation and told Jesus to silence His disciples
 - What did Jesus say? He said that if these do not cry out, the rocks will cry out, referring to a prophecy in the Old Testament (Zec. 9:9)
 - That's the certainty of God's word – even if it requires rocks to say something, what He says will happen, will happen
- Likewise, God said to Adam, "the day you eat from it you will surely die". Said, done, in the books. It cannot be changed
 - Furthermore, God's word decreed that Adam and Woman were to reproduce and fill the earth with their offspring
 - But God also required that all creatures, including mankind, should reproduce after their own kind or nature
 - In other words, what we are is what we will reproduce, and this word applied both physically and spiritually
 - So once again, God's word must be carried out without exception
 - Therefore, when Adam and Woman disobeyed God, they became sinful human beings
 - They died spiritually, just as God promised
 - Their spiritual nature changed, becoming slaves to that sin nature
 - And then later, when these two began to have children, these children shared in their sinful nature. We see this clearly in the story of Cain:
 - Cain didn't need to eat of that fruit, he came out with that sin already in his nature
 - He wasn't only the first human child, he was also the first murderer

- Clearly, something very bad had happened to the nature of humanity
- And that sin nature has been passing down from generation to generation ever since, and is the cause of all the pain and suffering and sin in humanity that you see everywhere
 - And along with it, the penalty of spiritual death has been handed down as well
 - Paul explains in Romans

Rom. 5:12 Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned –

- So that's the state of all humanity, both in history and today
 - We are all sinners by nature, a nature we inherited from our parents, who received it from their parents
 - You could say we've all been born with a spiritual birth defect
 - That birth defect leaves us under condemnation right from the start, due to the penalty God pronounced upon humanity in the Garden
 - If you have sin, you must suffer the Second Death
 - After your body dies, you experience an eternity separated from God
 - Thankfully, that's not where the Bible story ends. The Bible also tells us that God so loved the world that He determined to make a way available for us to avoid this fate by His mercy and grace to us
 - He sent His Son, Jesus, to take the penalty for our sin on the cross
 - Jesus came to give His life as a ransom payment to free us from our debt before God
 - That if we believe in Him and in His death in our place, we would receive the gift of eternal life
 - Rather than judgment of eternal death which we deserved
 - That's the Gospel. That's the message of salvation

- But if Jesus' death was to be an acceptable substitute in our place, then it was essential that Jesus not have sin of His own
 - If Jesus had been born in the nature of Adam, He too would have inherited Adam's sin nature just like the rest of us
 - And if Jesus were born with a sin nature, then Jesus would have been just as guilty as you and me
 - And therefore, His death would have merely been payment for Himself
 - It couldn't have been useful as a payment to cover someone else's sin debt
- So it was necessary that Jesus be our Immanuel, God with us, not God like us
 - Jesus was fully human, but He was also fully God
 - Jesus was no less a human being than you or me, but He was greater than we are in that one sense
 - Although we had an earthly father that made us like him, Jesus was like Adam – he had no earthly father
 - Just as Adam's body came to life because God breathed into him
 - The Hebrew word for breathe is *ruah*, the same word for spirit
 - So just as the Father conceived Jesus by the Holy Spirit, it was by the Spirit that God gave Adam life
 - God conceived Jesus supernaturally, therefore Jesus didn't descend from Adam
 - Instead, Jesus restarted the human race as a new Adam
 - That's why the Bible calls Jesus the "Second Adam"
 - And that's why our Savior had to come through a virgin birth
 - So that He could be a human being yet remain free from the original sin nature we all inherited
 - Having been born without sin, Jesus then went on to live life without ever repeating Adam's mistake
 - Jesus never disobeyed the Father, so Jesus was without sin

- He experienced the temptation to sin, but unlike Adam, he never gave in to that temptation Scripture tells us
- So that when Jesus went to His death on the cross, He suffered a death He didn't deserve, for He had not committed any sin
- And therefore His death could become a payment for you and me, to cover our debt before God
- Jesus could serve as the perfect sinless sacrifice for you and me
- As Joseph awoke from his dream, he accepted the angel's revelation and acted in faith
 - In v.24 Matthew says Joseph took Mary as his wife
 - Joseph set a date for the wedding and entered into the covenant prior to Jesus' birth
 - In so doing, Joseph ensured that Jesus would legally be his descendant just as God intended
 - Yet Joseph also respected the place Mary had in the plan of God and the need for her to remain a virgin during this time
 - So in v.25 we're told that he refrained from consummating the marriage until after Jesus' birth
 - He acted in faith believing the angel's report and did what was required
 - May I ask you, have you believed this report too? Do you believe the word of God concerning Jesus?
 - Do you believe He is the Savior sent to save you from your sins?
 - Do you believe that He was conceived by a virgin to ensure He remained sinless for your sake?
 - Do you believe He died on that cross 2,000 years ago to pay the price your sin requires?
 - It's a crazy story, really: Your secret to Heaven is a convicted criminal who was killed 2,000 years ago on a Roman cross. That's it. That's the secret
 - The world says it's by how hard you work, how good you are, how much penance you do.

- It's how much pain you suffer, how much sacrifice you make
- But Scripture says you can't do enough, and you can't sacrifice enough because there's only one Sacrifice God will accept
- Do you have the faith to act in keeping with what you've heard?
 - For Joseph, the action God required to live out his faith was to take Mary as a wife despite her pregnancy, which he did
 - But for you and me, the Lord has asked something much easier
 - He asks that we confess with our mouth that Jesus is our Savior, God sent to die for our sins, and believe in our hearts that God raised Him from the dead
 - If we do these things, we will be saved
 - Isn't it amazing how easy it is in human terms, yet how hard it had to be for God to make it possible? And yet, still some won't do it
- You've read the words yourself and the Spirit of God is testifying to the truth of these things in your heart
 - So I call upon you, if you have not yet placed your faith in Jesus Christ to confess Him now, to make that confession now, and not leave without obeying the call of the Gospel. For today is a day appointed for salvation