

Pastor Daryl Diddle

Sermon Series: *Sing in Exultation*, No.4

Christmas Eve: *The Greatest Question*

December 24, 2021

What Child Is This?

What child is this?

That certainly was the question on that first Christmas – and it still is the question.

We live in a world of questions, don't we? And these last days and months have been *full* of them.

Questions about the virus – you could ask a million: about its origin, its treatment, its prevention, its cure.

What's the best path forward?

When will things get back to normal – whatever *normal* is now?

Besides all those, we also have a whole separate slate of questions about race issues, politics, immigration, Afghanistan, China, Russia – on and on and on.

Our world is full of questions. Whether or not we're looking for them, they invade our lives and we're forced to try to find answers.

A little over two thousand years ago, a Hebrew couple named Joseph and Mary encountered the same sort of thing: questions – and big ones.

Questions that would affect everything about them quite unexpectedly invaded their lives.

They were going along, minding their business, and then, well, the gospel writer, Matthew, tells us their story:

A young woman, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph, but before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to call off the marriage quietly.

After considering this though, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Matthew lets us know that (*all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" – which means, "God with us."*)

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had said and took Mary home as his wife. But they did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son, whom Joseph named, "Jesus."

(Matt. 1:18-25, trans. Diddle)

You think we've had tough questions to answer this year?

Consider what happened in Joseph's life.

You're going along just fine, and then suddenly your fiancée (apparently) cheats on you – in a big way, and so your life is now unexpectedly flooded with questions:

"Mary...why?"

"Why did you do this?"

"And why are you lying about it?"

"What did I do to you?"

"Where do we go from here?"

And what about Mary – what if you're Mary?

"What on earth is going on in my body here?"

"It's like I'm expecting a baby, but I know where babies come from. I know how babies come to be, and I haven't lived that sort of life."

"What do I do?"

"What will people think?"

"What will I say to Joseph?"

"How will he ever believe me?"

You think we've had big questions to answer these last couple years? Try these that Mary and Joseph had to deal with on for size.

"What on earth is happening?"

"Why is this happening?"

"What do I believe about this child?"

"What child is this?"

"What child is this?"

You know, of all the questions that Joseph and Mary had at that time, it's interesting that this is the one question God clearly answers for them.

God sent an angel to simply say, "*Mary will give birth to a son... He will save His people from their sins... He will be Immanuel – God with us.*"

"He will be God with us."

That's quite a declaration, isn't it?

This child is God with us.

And, if that's true, if that's the case, it sort of puts all the other questions into proper perspective.

If this child really is God with us, then knowing the answers to all the other questions of life doesn't matter quite so much.

As long as you know that this child is the Savior, the deliverer, the long-promised Messiah.

As long as you know that this child is none other than God with us, all the rest of life's concerns just sort of fade into the background, and you get on with life.

Like Joseph and Mary did.

Not that life instantly gets easy. It didn't for Joseph and Mary. Obviously, they still wondered about lots of other things.

But they lived on with trust and confidence in God, who was with them.

And what was true of Joseph and Mary can be true for us today.

This has indeed been a year full of questions.
But in the end, there is only one question that truly matters:
“What child is this?”
If you will accept that this is Jesus – the promised Messiah – the Son of God...
And if we’ll receive Him in faith, as Joseph and Mary did...
He will be your savior.
He will be your deliverer.
He will be Immanuel – God with you.
And regardless of all the other questions that cloud our world in these days, He will be answer enough to give you light and life and peace...
not just for one silent night...
not just for one earthly lifetime...
but for all eternity.

Candelighting

[Pastor lights his candle from Christ Candle, then says:]

What child is this?
This is Jesus,

God with us,
the promised Savior.
Lord at His birth.
This is Jesus,
whom we worship.

[Pastor distributes light to ushers who pass the light to the congregation.]

Congregational Songs: *Silent Night*
Joy to the World!
[Candles raised on final stanza.]

Benediction:

What Child is This?
This Child is Jesus – the Lord, the King, the Savior,
the Ruler of our world.
Knowing Him, we know the answer to life’s most important question.
Knowing Him, let us also know love, peace, light and deep, deep joy.
Merry Christmas! Go in Peace!

[The entire 2021 Christmas Eve service may be viewed at the link below.]
[Wilmore Free Methodist Church Christmas Eve Worship Service, 2021 - YouTube](#)