

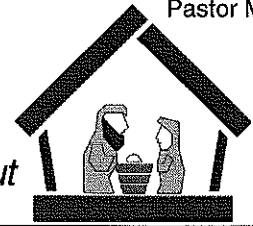
Text: Matthew 1:21
Topic: Guilt. Forgiveness.
Series: none

Pacific Coast Church
December 19 & 20, 1998
Pastor Mike

98-40

The Gist of Christmas

A Fresh Look At What The Incarnation Was All About



1:21 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." (NIV)

1. Remember That "Jesus" _____ (v.21a)

2. Make Sure _____ (v.21b)

3. Live _____ (v.21c)

Application Questions

These questions are provided for your further study and application of today's message. It is recommended that you take time this week to write out your response to each of these questions. This will help to drive home the point of today's message and will help you apply the principles to your life situation. These questions are also used as the basis of discussion for many of our small group studies that meet throughout the week. For times and locations of PCC's small group gatherings that are meeting this week call the church office (949-489-2600).

1. Though there is plenty of talk about "the true meaning of Christmas" at this time of year, it is unfortunate that even Christians often fail to grasp the real intent of what the incarnation was all about. Saying that Christmas is about "Jesus" is good, but it falls short of what Gabriel was trying to communicate by his birth announcement. Summarize in your own words the purpose of Jesus' birth based on what you have learned from this sermon.
2. Ponder for a moment the way you celebrate Christmas each year. What in your celebrations or traditions accentuates the real meaning of the incarnation for you and your family?

What in your celebrations or traditions actually detracts from the real meaning of Christmas?

Think creatively about what new traditions or Christmas activities might help to draw your attention to the real meaning of Christmas. List one or two ideas.

3. Our enemy loves to thwart the work of God in and through Christians' lives by weighing them down with guilt. What is it in your past that tends to surface in this counter-productive way?

How has guilt over this issue affected your confidence in God's love?

How has guilt over this issue affected your usefulness in his church?

4. Are you sure that you have repented of your sins and placed your trust in Jesus' work on your behalf? Is your Christian life characterized by humble and continual repentance instead of self-justification and rationalization? Spend some time right now engaging in the freeing and refreshing process of searching your heart, your motives and your behavior, and confessing anything and everything that a holy God finds inadequate. Leave your guilt with Jesus and thank God for sending his Son to save us from our sins. Memorize Psalm 103:11-12.