

# Jesus Before Bethlehem

by David Guzik

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*David Guzik's sermon explores the pre-existence of Jesus and His role as Creator before His birth in Bethlehem.*

**Duration:** 37:51

**Scripture:** Genesis 3:8, Genesis 18:1-8, Micah 5:2, Revelation 22:13

**Topics:** "Christology", "Purpose In Christ"

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## Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of Jesus coming to earth and having face-to-face encounters with his people. The preacher highlights instances in the Bible where Jesus, in his pre-incarnate form, walked and met with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden and appeared to Abraham as three visitors. The preacher expresses concern over people finding meaning and purpose in entertainment, such as the Backstreet Boys, and emphasizes that true purpose can only be found in Jesus Christ. The sermon concludes with an invitation to follow Jesus and experience a higher calling and purpose in life.

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## Transcript

Open our Bibles to the book of Micah, chapter 5. We're taking a break from our verse-by-verse study through the Gospel of Mark, and we're looking at Micah, and I'm going to stall for a little bit of time so that you can find the book of Micah. If you didn't bring a Bible, raise your hand and one of our ushers will bring one to you, because you're going to want to follow along in the text this morning. Look in the table of contents if you need to.

Micah is in that section of the Bible where the pages might be kind of stuck together, perhaps not very well worn. Now on Wednesday night we're going through the minor prophets, and we haven't made it to the book of Micah yet, but we will in several weeks. It's a great time on Wednesday nights.

It's something good for me as a teacher, and I trust it's good for those who are here to spend time in an area of God's Word that's often neglected, but it's no less precious, and how wonderful it is to have that in front of us. So, Micah chapter 5, we're going to begin at verse 2 here, where we read, But you, Bethlehem Ephesra, though you are little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of you shall come forth to me the one to be ruler in Israel, whose going forth are from of old, from everlasting. Always around Christmas time we're very struck, and rightly so, with the images and the pageantry of Christmas.

You know, you have the Christmas tree, and you have angels, and you have candles, and you have light bulbs, and you have elaborate decorations around the homes, and some people string up thousands of lights around their house, and it's a beautiful thing for people to see, and it conjures up so many warm memories, and it's a great thing. But we're also struck by one of the images that you probably have in most, every one of you in your home, you probably have a manger scene, don't you, a nativity? Some little thing, and there's the little shack, or whatever it is, and there's baby Jesus there in the manger, and what a compelling picture that is. There's a little baby, you know, surrounded in hay and laid in a feeding trough.

We don't lay babies in feeding troughs, do we? I mean, even the poorest family, they empty out a dresser drawer, and they put the baby in there, but they won't put the baby in a feeding trough. Not where animals eat, and lick, and salivate, and all of that kind of thing. So you look at it in the manger scene, and there's Mary and Joseph, and baby Jesus, and there's the shepherds.

We always have the Magi there, the wise men from the East, even though they didn't really come the night Jesus was born, but it's nice in the nativity scene. And there it all is, right there in front of us. Very compelling picture.

Everybody's captured by that image, and rightfully so. But at the same time, we should remind ourselves that the person who's the center of the nativity scene, that the Jesus who lies there as a baby in the manger, he didn't begin there. Of course, you say, of course he didn't begin there.

No baby begins when it's born. The baby begins when it's conceived, when it's in its mother's womb. But we just don't mean in that sense.

No, Jesus, of course, he began when he was conceived in Mary's womb, but even before that, Jesus had an existence. And I don't mean it in the sense in which every one of us have an existence before we're born. Now, when I say that, that may bring up some strange pictures in your mind.

And there have been some people who've offered very speculative theories or ideas about that. Some people think that we all have an existence as souls in heaven before we're born. And then just kind of happens when the baby's conceived, the child drops down from heaven and gets, you know, put in the mother or whatever.

And it's kind of like the gumball bank theory of souls. You know, they're all up there in a great big gumball machine and at the right time, the lever slides and wow, it comes down from heaven and the souls have existed in heaven beforehand. That's just really speculative nonsense.

But we do know that there's a sense in which everyone exists before they're conceived. They exist in the heart and in the mind of God. God knows that we will exist.

And God knows because of his great foreknowledge, because his omniscience, he knows that we will exist before we're even conceived. And therefore he can love us and he can put his affection on us even before then. You know what this is like.

Many of you have prayed for your husband or wife before you ever knew who they were. You prayed for your children before you know who they were. And Jesus loved us because in his foreknowledge he knew who we were.

In Ephesians chapter one, it says that he chose us in him before the foundation of the world. God knew about us. Sometimes it's said, and I would agree with the sentiment, that it's good that God loved me before the foundation of the world because if he would have waited until I was born and saw how I acted, he might have changed his mind.

But he loved me from before the foundation of the world and chose me. But when we say that Jesus existed before that, we don't even mean it in that sense. Which everybody could be said to exist in the heart and in the mind of God.

You know, our text from Micah chapter five, verse two today, tells us that Jesus is different. Yes, born in Bethlehem. The text tells us that.

That among all the thousands of villages of Judah, out of that one village, that obscure place, nothing terribly famous about Bethlehem, but out of that one village would come forth this one, the Messiah. And if you notice, verse two says, the one to be the ruler in Israel, the Messiah, the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the great king and leader of God's people. And then it says at the end of verse two, whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting.

The original wording there in the Hebrew that Micah spoke and wrote in is very vivid. He uses the Hebrew word *olam*, which speaks of eternity. And he has his eye on eternity past.

And he said that before time was, before the worlds were, before there was anything in eternity past, there was Jesus. There was this one to be born in Bethlehem on that day. Now Micah tells us something that the rest of the scriptures also tell us.

For example, in Revelation chapter 22, Jesus said, I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. That means from the very beginning, Jesus was there. I said, I'm the alpha and the omega.

That was the first and the last letter of the Greek alphabet. It's like saying I'm the A to Z. I'm the beginning of everything and the end of everything. You take a look at the shelf of encyclopedias on your bookshelf.

If anybody has encyclopedias and books anymore, they'll put them on CD-ROM now. But you understand what I mean? You have the very beginning A and the very last volume Z and everything in between there. Well, that's Jesus before everything and after everything.

He's the beginning and the end, the first and the last. This means that from the very beginning, before the worlds were created, before time itself was created, Jesus was there. There was never a time when Jesus did not exist.

Now, he existed as the second person of the Trinity. The Bible teaches us, and it teaches us this clearly, though not in the detail that we would like. It teaches us that God, that there is one God in three persons.

The person of God the Father, the person of God the Son, and the person of God the Holy Spirit. One God in three persons. You say, well, how can you have one God or one being in three persons? I don't know.

The Bible doesn't explain that for us. It just tells us that it's true. And we know something about this, that God the Father and God the Son had a relationship of love and fellowship before anything was ever created.

I mean, that's what Jesus was doing before he came on the earth in Bethlehem. He was enjoying this loving relationship between him and the Father. For example, Jesus prayed in this great high priestly prayer recorded in John chapter 17 on the night before he would be crucified.

He said, and now, O Father, glorify me together with yourself, with the glory which I had with you before the world was, before anything was created. There's the Father and the Son existing together in mutual glory. The person of the Father and the person of the Son.

Jesus said something else in that prayer in verse 24 of John 17. That's very striking. He said, for you loved me before the foundation of the world.

Think about it. A relationship of love between God, the Father and God, the Son, before the world's were ever created. It tells us that before anything existed, there was a relationship of love and fellowship and shared glory that God, the Father and God, the Son enjoyed one with another.

Now, even if the scriptures were never to tell us this specifically, we could deduce it from one little line in the letter of 1st John. In 1st John, it tells us very simply three words. It's the simplest theology.

A child can understand it. God is love. Well, a child can understand it, but the greatest scholar can't comprehend all of that means.

But certainly know that if God is love, then we know that love must always have an object. Love must always have something that it loves. And if God is love, and if he's always been love, and if it's part of his eternal being and character, then before there was anything.

I'm going to sort of give you a headache here for a minute here. Think in your mind back before there was anything. Before the world was created, before a human being was created, before an angel was created, before there was anything, before there was anything that we would know as matter, before God created anything, there's God all alone.

Yet not alone. Because there's the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, and they existed in this mutual relationship of love and fellowship. And there was never a time when God did not love.

Because even when there was no man made in his image that he would lavish his love upon, even if there was never a man, there was always the Father who had a relationship of love with the Son, and the Son back to the Father, and the Holy Spirit. And since God is love, he has always been love. He's been this way for all of eternity.

Now if I could sort of, well I don't even know if I should, well I'll try to explain it the best I can with this one, and hope I'm not treading on dangerous theological ground. And if there's anybody present here from a doctrine research group or something then talk to me afterwards and maybe I can explain it a little better. But you know the name Jesus was not known until the angel Gabriel announced it to Mary.

We know that from Luke chapter 1. I'm not trying to say that nobody knew the name Jesus, it was a common name in his day. But that the Son of God, the Messiah, that that would be his name Jesus, it wasn't known until that time when it was declared to Mary and Joseph by the angel Gabriel that you shall call his name Jesus. I would suggest to you that before that, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity wasn't known by the name Jesus.

If I could use a very awkward metaphor, and forgive me for the awkwardness of this, but if there were name tags in heaven before that, I know it's an absurd kind of thing, but just grant me it for purpose of illustration, if there was a name tag in heaven and before the incarnation, if you were to go up and look at the name tag on the second person of the Trinity, it wouldn't say Jesus. That is the name reserved for God incarnate, for God made man. No, it would say the Son of God, God the Son, because he's always existed as God the Son from the furthest reaches of eternity past.

The eternal Son existed before he revealed himself as Jesus. But on that day at that time in Bethlehem, as Micah points out to us, he came forth and was revealed to the world, not just as God the Son, not just as the Son of God, but as Jesus. And we love that precious name.

Now, when Jesus existed before Bethlehem, what did he do? It seems like a lot of time to just kind of wait until your grand entrance upon the scene, doesn't it? It's as if you were a great actor in a play and you had a very pivotal role, but you didn't come on until the last scenes, and there you are, you're just waiting in the back, and was Jesus waiting around for his great appearance at Bethlehem? No. No, he was busy. He was busy, first of all, creating all things.

You know, Jesus created all things. Before that baby ever emerged in Bethlehem, he had the creator of all things. That baby laying in the manger, his hands, his mind, he created everything.

Created the stone that that manger was probably carved out of. Created the animals and everything around. Colossians chapter 1 says, For by him all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers.

All things were created through him and for him, and he's before all things, and in him all things consist. Well, it's hard to get around that, isn't it? Everything. Everything visible, everything invisible.

Everything in heaven, everything on earth. All things created there, and everything consists in him. There's another passage in John chapter 1 that speaks of the same idea, where John says, In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God.

He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him nothing was made that was made. So what was created apart from the work of Jesus? Nothing.

Nothing at all. Now, by logical deduction, this is a marvelous, marvelous evidence of the deity of Jesus Christ. Because if he created everything that's created, it must mean that he himself is not created.

Did I give you a bigger headache with that one? I mean, if you create everything that's created, everything that is made from creation, if Jesus did it, then he himself is not part of that which is created. He is the creator, not the creature. Not that which is created.

So Jesus was busy creating all things, and this tells us something. That when you look at the character and the majesty and the greatness of God as it's displayed in this creation, you're looking at Jesus. When you look at the starry night sky and see what seems to be a million stars spread out all over the sky, of course you're not seeing it here in Southern California, you're going somewhere else.

But when you see that, and you see the absolute majesty and infinite space that you realize is something so big, so majestic, so mighty to make all of that, you're looking at the fingerprint of Jesus. And then when you go down to the smallest molecule of DNA, and you look at the complexity of the structure and how

different acids and proteins and little bits of enzyme all work together to make a little piece of information in something so small, but is more complex and more intricate and more exacting than the most sophisticated computer that any human being can build, you're looking at the greatness and the glory of Jesus Christ. He's the creator of all things.

It should just make us stand back and be amazed at His glory, amazed at His power. This great God, He loves us and He hung on a cross for us. It's the greatness of Jesus as the creator.

Well, that's not all Jesus did, you could say. Well, great. He created everything and then He took a few thousand years off, you know, until it was done.

No, that's not it either. We know that there are many instances in the Old Testament where individuals had a personal face-to-face encounter with God. And we know from deduction that it must have been Jesus that they met with.

We know this because, first of all, they couldn't have met with God the Holy Spirit because He's spirit and spirit is invisible. They couldn't have met with God the Father because God the Father, the Bible tells us that He's invisible and that no one has seen Him or can see Him. And so if they saw God, but it wasn't God the Father and it wasn't God the Holy Spirit, then they must have seen God the Son.

Many remarkable instances in the Old Testament where God has a face-to-face encounter with a human being. That must be a preview appearance of Jesus. You know, I'll highlight a trailer, coming attractions.

There it is, Jesus gonna appear on the earth in full glory as a babe in Bethlehem, as Micah announced. But it's as if He couldn't be distant from His people. He had to be close by them.

And so He couldn't hold Himself back from coming and having face-to-face encounters. The Bible says that God walked and met with Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden in the cool of the day. Who do you think that was? It was Jesus.

When Abraham was at his tent one day and saw three visitors coming to him, Abraham, a man of great hospitality, he instantly said, let's put on a big dinner for these guys, honey, go get it, make it ready. And they got the whole dinner ready and they served it for the three visitors. And then two of them went on and it was revealed to us later in Genesis chapter 19 that those two visitors were angels.

And they're on their way to Sodom and Gomorrah to check the place out and to take Lot and his family out of there as destruction from God is going to come down. We don't know exactly if Abraham knew that they were angels or not. Maybe they had big humps underneath their, you know, jackets or something and left a trail of feathers as they walked or something like that.

Well, that's a foolish joke, isn't it? That's just not going anywhere. You know angels don't appear like that. But we know that the one person who was left behind, despite those two angels, the one person left behind, Abraham prayed with that person, right? He bargained with that person about the destiny of the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah and he haggled with God right there and he talked with the Lord face to face.

That must have been Jesus. When we saw Hagar in the desert crying out for God's provision, it was the Lord who saw her and ministered to her. When Jacob wrestled with the man there near the brook Jabbok and he was dislocated in his hip and God did a great work there, it was Jesus that he wrestled with.

When Gideon had his encounter with the Lord and said, I've seen the Lord face to face, it was Jesus. When Manoah and his wife, who were the parents of Samson, when they saw the Lord, it was Jesus. Or how about the Hebrew young men, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego when they're cast in the fiery furnace of the Babylonian king and they see a fourth man walking among them, one who appears like the Son of God.

It's Jesus right there, isn't it? Jesus there with his people in the furnace. Jesus coming in bodily form. So in each one of those situations, the person is given different titles, but in each reference it's plain revealed that there's a human being or at least a human appearance.

There is the Lord himself. Now might I say that this was not the same as the incarnation where Jesus actually added human nature to the divine nature. In these Old Testament appearances, Jesus merely appeared in human form, but in Bethlehem there was no mere appearance.

He added humanity to his deity. Many people are confused about this. They wonder how it ever got from this place where Jesus is enthroned in the great palaces of heaven and then he comes down here on this earth and how does that happen, you know? And there's been all sorts of strange theories about this.

You know, there's some of the filling kind of idea or the, you call it the Oreo theory of the incarnation. They think that, you know, just like an Oreo sandwich cookie, it has the outside and then it has the filling and they think, well, Jesus was human on the outside, but on the inside he was God. No, no, that's not it at all.

Or other people think, well, you know, he's like one of those strange figures from mythology, kind of half man and half God somehow, and that's how you should express it. Or that Jesus was a human in all his being, but he had the spirit of God. No, no, none of those things.

The Bible tells us that, of course, Jesus is God, the second person of the Trinity, God the Son enthroned at the right hand of God the Father and at the right time and at the right place to secure our redemption, to provide for our salvation. He came and he added humanity to his deity. I chose those words very carefully.

Some people think that the incarnation, when Jesus came to the earth, that it was like subtraction, like he just sort of checked in some of his deity. He set it aside. You know, I'll cast this back.

I'll just leave it behind. And, you know, I'll just come and take a lesser place as a man for a while and then I'll come back to heaven and everything will be fine again. No, there's no element of subtraction in the incarnation.

Jesus is just as much God when he walked the earth as he was enthroned in the heavens. How can God ever be less God? It doesn't work. There's not levels of deity.

There's not junior gods and senior gods. If you're God, you're God. You're divine being.

You can never be less than that. But what Jesus did was he added human being to divine being, fully God and fully man. And you might scratch your head and you say, well, I don't understand how that can exactly work.

How can it be that a person is fully man and fully God? Well, in one sense, I could say, I can explain it to you this way. I mean, you take any one of us. Are you the son of your father or your mother? Well, I'm both.

I'm fully the father of my son and I'm the father of my son. Boy, I'm really confused here, aren't I? Let me come back to this now. We say, are you the son of your father or your mother? And you say, well, I'm fully the son of my father and I'm fully the son of my mother.

You can't separate the two. They're just there. I'm all of this.

Well, Jesus had a human mother and a divine father. And so he's fully the son of his father and he's fully the son of his mother. That's all there is to it.

Human being and divine being together, fully God and fully man, not just in mere appearance, but in who he was. You know, we also know that from eternity past, God's plan of the ages included Jesus and included this plan. And in first Peter chapter one, it tells us that Jesus was foreordained from before the foundation of the world, but was made visible or manifest in these last times for us.

The Bible says that the plan of salvation and that God would send his son and be a sacrifice for sin, that that was planned out before anything was created. Now, that should give us great confidence. Although for some people it's confusing.

For some people, they ask a very legitimate question. They say, now, wait a minute, wait a minute here. I look around at the world today and I see how there's so much sin, how there's so much difficulty.

Wouldn't it have been so much better if God could have just kept it the way it was in the garden of Eden? I mean, isn't that where all the problems came in? When Adam and Eve sinned and when Adam rebelled against God and you know, what was going on with that? Well, some people think that God sort of, you know, maybe lost control of events right then. You know, there's their picture of it is that God created everything and intended man and woman to live forever in the garden of Eden. And that's how it was.

And then all of a sudden, whoa, one day, look, they sinned and God says, well, this is terrible. What am I going to do now? I've got to go to plan B. And so plan B was, I don't know, sending prophets and said, well, that didn't work. So I got to flood the earth and all that.

What a mess. And then I'll try Abraham. I'll try Moses.

Well, that doesn't work either. Well, finally, I've tried everything else. OK, here's my son.

Maybe this will fix it. And, you know, that's not the way it is at all before God. He knew from the very beginning, the very beginning, he knew that the sacrifice of the son would be necessary even before the worlds were created.

He said, well, then why did he even do it? Why are we just some like laboratory rats and some grand experiment or something? No, no. See, again, we have a misunderstanding. We look back to the innocence of the garden of Eden and we think, oh, that's the best, isn't it? That's how God really wanted to be.

That's the ultimate. And God's whole goal is just to get us back to the innocence of Eden. That's what he wants to accomplish.

Well, friends, if that's what God wanted to accomplish and he's going about it all wrong, but that isn't his purpose and he's going about it all right. Let me explain to you what God's real purpose is. It's not to bring man back to innocence.

It's to bring man to a higher place, the place of redeemed glory and the place of redeemed glory is greater than the place of innocence. We don't often think of it that way, do we? But friends, it's true. You look at it from beginning to end in the scriptures and you'll see this theme that we gain more in Jesus Christ than we ever lost in Adam.

God doesn't want to just bring us back to the place where man was at the garden of Eden. No, he wants to bring him to the place of redeemed glory and friends, you can't have redeemed glory unless you have a fall first. God says, I allow this.

It's necessary. It's good in my plan. And you just wait till I see till you see what I bring out in the end is what God says.

So friends, all this consideration of who Jesus is and what he's done, what does it show us? What does it show us about Jesus? I haven't had on my heart this morning to deliver to you an interesting theological lecture. I want something to grab ahold of your heart and to confront you with the person of Jesus and change or to develop or to mature your understanding of who Jesus is. And so let me apply it with some just basic points here, understanding who Jesus was before Bethlehem.

Well, it helps us to see the glory of Jesus and to see that he was far more than a man. When you consider Jesus walking this earth and who he was and everything that he did, my friends, you're not talking about a mere man, you're talking about the son of God himself. And this should help us to see his glory, his majesty, to understand that as he laid in that manger, he created the worlds.

This is the glory of our savior. Secondly, understanding that Jesus was before Bethlehem, it shows us the love of Jesus, that he would leave the glory of heaven for us. I want you to think about it for a moment and think about it in a few months when we're going to be in the very dead of winter and you'll turn on the news and see how it is in some distant point in North Dakota and how cold it is and how many feet of snow that they have and what the wind chill factor is.

And then look it up in Homer, Alaska and see what it's like there. And just look at that. Look at that wind chill factor and how cold it is out there.

And then think and ask yourself, do I want to move from Southern California where it's 80 degrees in the winter? You say, no way I wouldn't do that. You'd have to be crazy or called of God to do that. And you think there's no way am I leaving this place for something like that? Well, friends, what do you think the greater difference is between California and a cold place or between the glory of heaven in this earth? Can you imagine what it was like for Jesus? There he is in heaven, enthroned in heaven.

The glory all around him, the splendor, the joy, the absolute uninterrupted bliss of heaven. He says, I'm going to come down to earth and add humanity to my duty. And I'd say, well, if I'm God, I'd be willing to come down to earth, but I'm going to come down to God and bring all the luxuries of heaven with me.

And Jesus didn't do that. Do you know why he did it out of love? Now, sometimes people will relocate for career, for position or because they have to. And they say, well, I really don't want to, but I'll do it for this reason.

Maybe it's a selfish reason, but Jesus says, no, I did it purely out of love. It wasn't for his benefit. It was for yours.

That's how much he loves you. That's how much he cares about you. It shows us the nature of Jesus, that he would add humanity to his deity.

It shows us the sympathy of Jesus, that he remains fully man and fully God. Let me remind you of that. That is, Jesus Christ is enthroned in the heavens right now, interceding for us at the right hand of God.

By the way, he prayed for you today. Perhaps you didn't even pray for yourself, but Jesus prayed for you. He ever lives to make intercession for his people.

Jesus prayed for you today. And sometimes we think, well, you know, he's up there in heaven and everything, but he's God again. He's not man anymore.

You know, it's as if Jesus's humanity was sort of like an overcoat. And when he left heaven, he put it on. And there he walked around with the overcoat of humanity all around this earth.

But then when he went back to heaven, it is essential. Well, he took the overcoat off. He doesn't need it anymore.

No. The Bible tells us that there is one mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus didn't say there was one man. It says there is right now.

Jesus is still fully God and fully man. He didn't give up his humanity when he back went back to heaven. You know what that means? It means there's someone enthroned in heaven who really understands you, really understands you.

In the deepest hurts of your life. You know, you have gone through things in your life that nobody else gave you the comfort you needed, right? Nobody else. They might have tried.

They might have the best intention, but they didn't really know, did they? Jesus does. And he knows perfectly because he's God. Friends, you have that sympathy in heaven awaiting for you.

Might I make one final point? All of this shows us as well the purpose of our life. Thinking that Jesus came from the great glory of heaven and came down. Now, wouldn't you agree that that's taking a step down, that that's taking a demotion, so to speak, coming from heaven to earth, purely out of love and the desire to serve and to give.

The fact that Jesus did that shows us the purpose of our life. Because Jesus said in John chapter 20, verse 21, as the father has sent me, I also send you. In other words, as he came from heaven and down to earth in glory, that's how the Lord wants us.

And you know, most of the best ministry happens when you go and take a step down. You take a step down. That's what Jesus did.

Some of us are unwilling to do that. We'll minister for the Lord. We'll testify for him as long as we can stay at that dignified and proper level.

But, you know, Lord, I don't want to talk to them about Jesus. I don't want to raise my voice for the cause of Christ among them. They'll they'll laugh at me.

I'll take a step down. They'll reject me. My reputation will be ruined.

Then let it be ruined for the glory of Jesus Christ. Take a step down for the glory of the Lord. You really need to have the same heart.

And I do, too. What this does is this gives a glorious purpose for our life to say we're going to be followers of Jesus and we're going to follow in his. This is the purpose of our life, friends, not merely to be admirers of Jesus.

Oh, we can find plenty of those. We could dissolve the church and start the the Jesus admiration society. And oh, yes, we admire Jesus.

But it's entirely a different thing to be an admirer of Jesus and to be a follower of Jesus. And if you're going to be a follower of the one who stepped down from heaven's glory to this earth, there's going to be times when you have to take a step down as well. You want a purpose for your life, don't you? This is it.

People today are searching for purpose in their life. I'm almost embarrassed to share it, but weeks ago I saw on the television set some promotional program or something for this new record album or CD that's come out from the Backstreet Boys, and they were doing promotion all over the place for it. And they they focused the camera in on this group of girls who were so excited about the Backstreet Boys album.

I couldn't believe it. You know, I expected to see 12 year old girls, you know, all excited and everything. But these are like college age girls.

And then they're just crying. The tears are coming down their face. You know, it's just like it was when Frank Sinatra and Elvis Presley and the Beatles and all this, they're screaming, they're wailing.

The tears are coming down. Oh, and they're interviewing them. And oh, that's when it really got terrible.

They put a microphone in front of these poor girls. Oh, I love the Backstreet Boys. They give so much meaning to my life.

What do you even say to that? Well, I mean, sure, if you like the entertainment, you know, whatever. But meaning to your life, you know, they're not even that good. And I mean, meaning to your life.

No, I mean. And then all you know, they're so devoted and this and that. And I'm thinking, oh, how these people, they they need Jesus.

Let them enjoy music for entertainment, whatever. But for meaning in your life, a purpose, you need something higher than that. You need the son of God.

You need the one who came down from the beautiful palaces of heaven and came to this earth and showed us his love. He didn't have to, but he did it out of love. Friends, if you want a high call and a high purpose for your life, Jesus Christ offers it to you right here.

He says, come and be my follower. I'm looking for more than admirers. I'm looking for followers.

Won't we follow Jesus this morning? Let's pray together. Father, thank you for sending your son. But Jesus, we pray to you this morning and we say thank you for coming.

You had such a glorious existence before you came in Bethlehem and you didn't think it less glorious to come and be among us. Father, I pray that you would give a purpose in life to each and every one of us.

And that's to be a follower of Jesus Christ, to trust in what he did on the cross to save us.

And Lord, to realize that he is our life, that in him we live and move and have our being. Father, I pray for any here this morning. They are admirers of Jesus and Lord, that's a good thing in and of itself.

We should all admire Jesus, but it isn't enough. Make us true followers of Jesus and those who receive what he's done on the cross for us, giving you the glory and the honor, willing to take a step down whenever it'll benefit someone else for the sake of Jesus. We pray this this morning, Lord, thanking you in Jesus' name.

Amen.

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