



Mary - Love

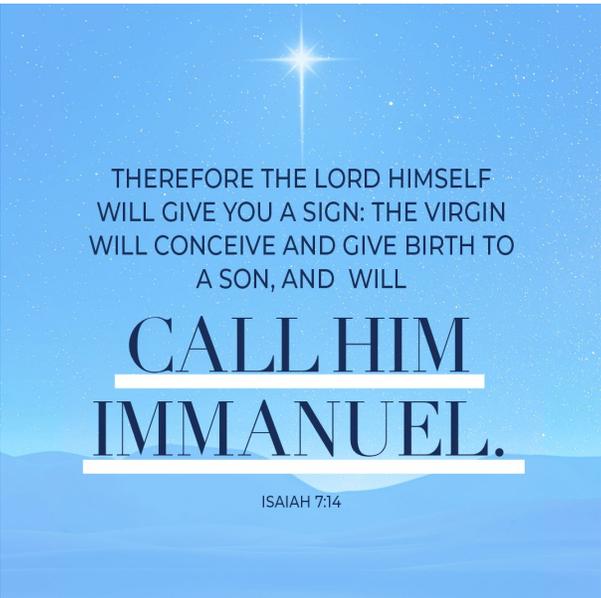
Matthew 1: 18-23 / Isaiah 7:14

God's promise in Isaiah is that He would come to dwell with His people and rescue them. This is fulfilled in the birth of Jesus Christ, who is known as Immanuel, God with us. Jesus made a great sacrifice, giving up the splendors of heaven to come to earth. But He did more than just live among us. Because of His great love, He provided a way for us to have eternal life. His mother, Mary, displayed great love in humbly giving life to the Son of God. Jesus became the Savior of the world.

When love came to earth, He showed up in the least likeliest of places: the modern day equivalent of a barn. No central air, heat, or "creature comforts". Love had no hospital room, no medical staff nor support for a woman experiencing the rigors of childbirth. Through the centuries, artist have adapted the biblical narrative of the birth of Christ. The finished product has come to be called the "Nativity Scene".

The word nativity comes from the Latin word meaning "birth." The nativity scene we set out

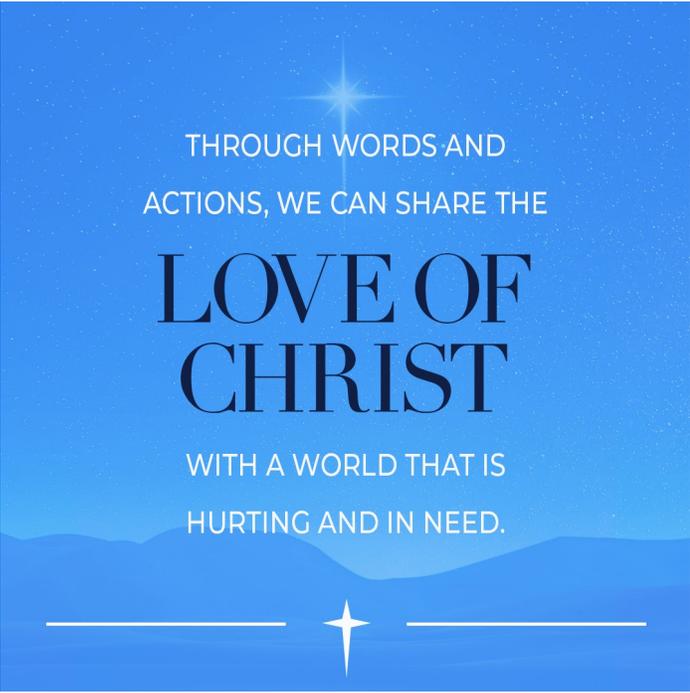
each year is a depiction of the birth of the God of the universe into the world. Surrounded by his mother and earthly father, barnyard animals, shepherds, and angels, all eyes of the nativity are fixed on the baby Jesus because it is all about His birth.



Key Question: How will you allow the love of God to lead you in loving others?

The reason the nativity, the birth of Jesus, is so significant is not because this birth happened one day long ago, but because God's desire for each of us is for Christ to be born within us even today, for the love of God to be revealed to the world by the way we live.

In Isaiah 7:14, a sign given to God's people that they had not been forgotten in their sinful and broken states, but instead, when they see a virgin giving birth to a child, they would see the tangible love of God coming into the world to rescue us all. The instruction given in Isaiah is to be prepared. The same instructions are for us today: Be ready for this revelation. Live your life with expectancy that God would come to us, to you, and to me. Let's make space in our lives.



THROUGH WORDS AND
ACTIONS, WE CAN SHARE THE

LOVE OF CHRIST

WITH A WORLD THAT IS
HURTING AND IN NEED.

Join me in making room for the birth of a work of God within us right now, even before the arrival comes.

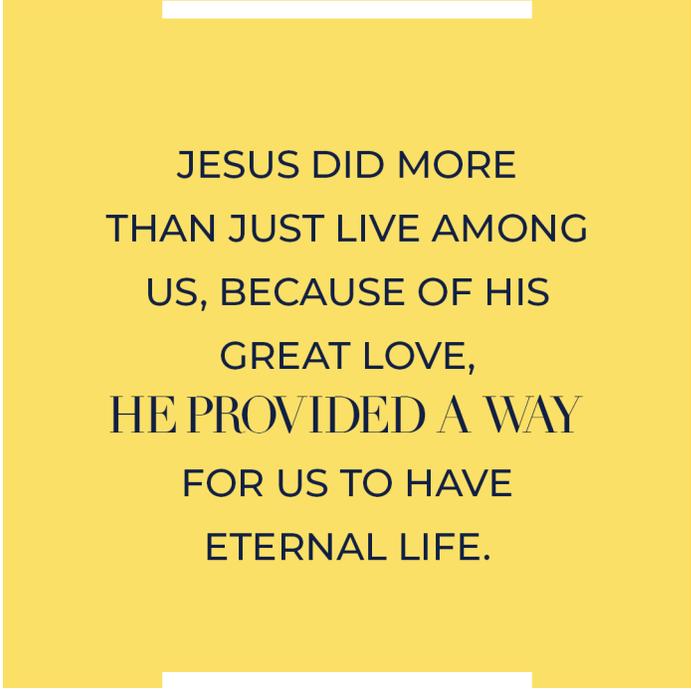
READ Luke 1:26–33.

The message brought by the angel is that Mary would conceive a child within her womb whose name would be Jesus. Can you see the tension in the text? Mary is a virgin. Mary is engaged. She has not yet been married to Joseph, so this announcement must have been a difficult thing to process. What? What do you mean I am going to become pregnant? What do you mean this child, Jesus, will be the Son of the Most High, a king who will rule over all things? Here's a tailored truth: When God is ready to do something new, it almost always is a disruption.

I believe there are two choices that any person has when it comes to disruption within their life: to avoid it or to embrace it. I believe when God is trying to birth something new within us, it will always feel like something confusing, something

hard, something exciting, something inexplicable, something uncontrollable. When this happens . . . what will we do? Avoid it or embrace it?

The nativity, this birth, changed the world over two thousand years ago. This birth is still changing the world today because the same Spirit of God that came upon Mary is the same Most High that can overshadow you and I today. God wants to birth something new within you today, and it is not about your ability, your effort, your qualifications, your gender, your track record, or your status. It is simply about seeing whatever disruption God has allowed or brought into your life has an act of love and is something to be embraced rather than avoided. If you follow the life of Christ, almost all of the miracles He performed... came at the point of interruption. At Christmas time we commemorate the divine idea that Love came near... and His name is Jesus.



JESUS DID MORE
THAN JUST LIVE AMONG
US, BECAUSE OF HIS
GREAT LOVE,
HE PROVIDED A WAY
FOR US TO HAVE
ETERNAL LIFE.

