

Dartmouth

Bible Notes



Notes from the Pulpit Ministry of Dartmouth Bible Church
Series: Who is God/Who God Is Lesson 16 (Advent Attribute #4)
Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25
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A God to be Adored

Matthew 1:18-25 (ESV)

Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.¹

Introduction If, you fell in love with someone, you would (I think) grow in AFFECTION for that lover. You would want to HOLD THEIR HAND, HUG THEM, LISTEN TO THEM. You would find yourself, if you were in love with them, feeling a growing DEVOTION to them. You would want to SPEND TIME with them and you would feel an increasing PROTECTIVENESS of them. You would look for ways to SUPPORT them, if you were in love with him or her. And if you fell in love with someone you would feel a new LOYALTY to that person—you would feel an INTEREST in them, a happy willingness to LEARN THEM, to give them GIFTS that you *know* would make them happy. All of this to say you would find yourself feeling **ADORATION** for them. Can you feel that? But “adoring” someone isn’t something we tend to talk about a lot. We make a feeble attempt to adore our spouse or girlfriend or boyfriend on Valentine’s Day. We tend to say, “He or she is adorable” when we see a newborn baby. We might use the word when we see someone’s new puppy. But beyond that we don’t tend to use the word much. Today I am suggesting to you **THAT THE LORD JESUS IS WORTHY OF ADORATION**. *O Come Let Us Adore Him...* But even here we reserve it for Christmas when we sing it.

Today on this Christmas Eve, I want to say to you that “adorability” is actually an attribute of our God. I know—you don’t normally think of God that way unless it’s Christmas time and there’s a cute baby involved. ADORABILITY

isn't on Tim Challies' list of Attributes or in any of the other lists I have studied among the theologians. But I think if you want to really get to know God, you will find in your investigation of Him that He is worthy of adoration. But I think this is a hard one for many of us to grasp... We might use the word "adoration" officially or technically, for instance:

The acronym for prayer ACTS? Have you learned this one yet?

- Adoration
- Confession
- Thanksgiving
- Supplication

The first letter is "**A**" which stands for adoration. But I wonder how much deliberate adoration we give to God. Singing songs that seem to express something deeper than just saying "I adore you" help us a little--so many of the words of modern worship songs state or imply adoring God. In fact sometimes they're so romantic sounding we're embarrassed to sing them. That's because we don't really know how to adore God. There are examples of it in the Gospels but few enough from the front-line apostles themselves.

- But we do have the woman who poured expensive perfume on Jesus' feet and wept on them and then pulled down her hair to daub off his feet from her tears.
- We have the Roman centurion whose servant Jesus healed.
- We have old Simeon in the temple and Anna.
- We do have Peter at least on the Mount of Transfiguration in a stumble-bum way full of adoration of the glowing Jesus, accompanied by the famous Moses and Elijah. We have other examples but they are few. Is God really adorable? And we have good old Peter in another awkward conversation (John 21)
 - Jesus: **Simon, son of John, do you love me more than these?"**
 - Peter: **Yes Lord, you know that I love You**
 - Jesus... **Feed my lambs... Tend my sheep... Feed my sheep...Follow Me.**

In our reading today, I think it is adorable the way Joseph got the news—in a dream! (Matthew 1:20). That is so cool! "Yo Joe—don't dump Mary—it's cool." (My "translation"). Back in last week's passage in Luke we get the feel of adorability. **And they went with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby lying in a manger. And when they saw it, they made known the saying that had been told them concerning this child. And all who heard it wondered at what the shepherds told them. But Mary treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart. And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.** (Luke 2: 16-20) And what we have from Matthew beyond our reading today (2:9-11) **After listening to the king, they went on their way. And behold, the star that they had seen when it rose went before them until it came to rest over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they rejoiced exceedingly with great joy. And going into the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother, and they fell down and worshiped him.**

Then, opening their treasures, they offered him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh. You will notice that they had brought these gifts with them. **Gold**, which is sort of self-explanatory. I'm certainly not giving YOU anything gold unless I really love and adore you first. **frankincense and myrrh** are spicy, essential oil type things. They're not *Craftsman* tools or a new Glock 42 or a new Darth Vader edition KitchenAid. But in that culture they were valuable accessories and they're brought to the baby's feet by men of some means. They're not common, every-day gifts. They're special.

Jesus as a baby was adored by the shepherds although on that morning before the angels appeared to them they had no idea what their evening would involve. He was adored by the magi who had lots of time to think about Who they would meet before they arrived in Bethlehem. *Their* adoration involved giving valuable gifts and an elaborate pilgrimage. We assume Mary and Joseph adored their newborn son, and Luke tells us that Mary was to some extent aware of the gravity of Who her Son would become. ... **treasured up all these things, pondering them in her heart.**

This all sets me up to suggest that in His coming, the Son of God is adorable. He breeds devotion and loyalty and fascination and affection and bringing Him gifts...

There's a strange old song, from London, from 1872 but the words to the song *In the Bleak Midwinter*¹ captures this, written by a London single woman, Christina Rossetti in 1872 but not set to music until 1909. It captures the feeling of adorability, to me:

In the bleak mid-winter Frosty wind made moan;
Earth stood hard as iron,
Water like a stone; Snow had fallen, snow on snow,
Snow on snow,
In the bleak mid-winter Long ago.

Our God, heaven cannot hold Him Nor earth sustain,
Heaven and earth shall flee away
When He comes to reign:
In the bleak mid-winter a stable-place sufficed
The Lord God Almighty —
Jesus Christ.

Enough for Him, whom Cherubim worship night and day,
A breastful of milk and a mangerful of hay;
Enough for Him, whom Angels Fall down before,
The ox and ass and camel which adore.

Angels and Archangels may have gathered there,
Cherubim and seraphim
Thronged the air;
But only His Mother in her maiden bliss
Worshipped the Beloved With a kiss.

What can I give Him, Poor as I am? — If I were a Shepherd I would bring a

¹ *In the Bleak Midwinter*, 1872 by Christina Rossetti, London, originally titled *A Christmas Carol*

lamb; If I were a Wise Man I would do my part, Yet what I can I give Him, —
Give my heart.

These brief instances of adoration that we have in the Bible, and songs that people have been led to write are all but a glimmer, a faint echo of what will be our experience in heaven.

- Can you imagine strolling along one of those streets of gold, and Jesus comes walking toward you and says, “Hey ____, good to see you. Come here I want to talk to you!”
- Or, maybe fishing along that river in heaven with Jesus at your side, and He says, “You know this fish that we might catch, if you catch him and eat him he won’t die! Let me tell you about this fish.” And He tells you this amazing and fascinating story for like a year, and you never once get sleepy or bored and you just LOVE listening to Him!
- Or He is sitting over coffee with you (will there be coffee in heaven?) and says, “You know ___ I really get a kick out of you. Do you remember the time back on the old earth when you were...?” And as He reminisces you just love Him more and more! You adore Him.
- And even more, when somehow in glory we remember what He did for us, what He did that was in amazing self-sacrifice and we see that that sacrifice was not just cosmically economic but was driven by LOVE, we will adore Him all the more.
- Or maybe you have been in a hard jam HERE and you turned to Him, by faith and gave the situation to Him. You know you did because after giving it to Him, you slept well that night. And then you saw your prayer answered and although some of your skeptical friends didn’t interpret the outcome as “answered prayer” you know He showed up. You just know it. You don’t need anyone else to agree—because you KNOW He showed up and took your surrender of the thing and worked it out. How could you not adore a Savior like that.

He is adorable. He is worthy of all love and loyalty. He has earned your love and affection because He has never once abandoned you. He has never broken a single promise to you although it took some time to learn what exactly He HAS promised. You take a verse seriously and personally like

Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us.

(Romans 5:1-5)

The Lord Jesus is adorable—God is adorable. To love Him is not just a privilege, considering how many there are who do not—it is a joy. Let’s sing...

O Come All Ye Faithful Joyful and triumphant,
O come ye, O come ye to Bethlehem. Come and behold Him,
Born the King of Angels;
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
O come, let us adore Him,
Christ the Lord.

Here is the Greek text from p¹ the oldest extant manuscript of Matthew (ch.1)

α
[1:1] βιβλος γενεσεως ΙΥ ΧΥ ΥΥ δαυιδ [ΥΥ]
αβρααμ [1:2] αβρααμ εγεννησεν τον [ισαακ]
ισαακ δ[ε] εγεννησεν τ[ον] ιακωβ [ιακωβ]
δε εγ[ε]γγησεν τον ιουδαν κ[α]ι τ[ους]
α[δ]ελφους αυτου [1:3] ιουδας δε εγεννη
σεν τον φαρες και τον ζαρε εκ της θα
μαρ φαρες δε εγεννησεν τον εσρωμ
εσ[ρω]μ δε εγεννησεν τ[ο]ν αραμ [1:4] α[ραμ]
δε [ε]γεννησεν τον αμμιναδαβ αμ
μ[ι]γαδ[α]β δε εγεννησεν τον ναασων
γαα[σ]ων δε εγενν[η]σεν τον σαλ[μω]ν
[1:5] σαλμων δε εγενν[η]σεν τον βοες [εκ]
της ραχαβ βοες δε εγεννησεν τον ι
ωβηδ εκ της ρ[ο]υθ ιω[β]ηδ δε εγεννη
σεν τον ιεσσα [1:6] ιεσσ[αι] δε εγεννησεν
τον δαυιδ τον βασιλε[α] δαυ[ι]δ δε εγεν
νησεν τον σολομωνα εκ της ουρειου. [1:7] σο
λομων δε εγεννησεν τον [ρ]οβοαμ ροβο
αμ δε εγεννησεν τ[ο]ν [αβει]α αβεια δε
εγεννησεν [το]ν ασα[φ] [1:8] [α]σ[α]φ δε εγεν
νησεν τον ιωσαφατ .ι[ω]σαφατ δ[ε] εγεν
νησεν τον ιωραμ ιωραμ δε εγεννησεν
τον] οζε[ι]αν [1:9] οζειας δε εγεννησεν
lacuna [1:12] lacuna [με
τοικεσιαν βαβυλωνος ιεχονιας εγ[εν
νησεν] lacuna