

MARY HAD A LITTLE LAMB

Key Verse: Matthew 1:18-25

Key Thought: Mary Had the Sacrificial Lamb

In our childhoods, most of us learned the little song entitled, "*Mary Had A Little Lamb.*" It went something like this,

*"Mary had a little lamb.
Its fleece was white as snow.
And everywhere that Mary went.
That lamb was sure to go."*

There's more to the story, but those few lines are enough to remind us of that little childhood song. As we sang that song while we were children, we had no idea that something like that had actually happened. It never dawned on our childish minds that the Bible told the same story. That a young girl named Mary did indeed have a little lamb.

Well, that's what is happening in these verses in Matthew's Gospel. It seems that Joseph is engaged to a young Jewish maiden named Mary. They were betrothed, which means that they were legally married, but were not yet living together. During this time, word comes to Joseph that Mary is pregnant. Joseph knows that he isn't the father, but he is sure someone is! He believes that Mary has been unfaithful to him, and he decides to get a divorce. Yet, because he loves Mary, he wants to do this quietly because the penalty for committing Mary's crime was death by stoning. However, before he can put his plan into action, God sends an angel to tell Joseph that things aren't at all like he thinks they are. He tells this Jewish husband that Mary is carrying a child that was miraculously fathered by the Holy Spirit of God. He is told that this child will be a special child with a special mission. That, in fact, this child is to be the Savior.

Joseph's reaction is to take Mary into his home and wait with her until the day the baby is born. What they didn't realize is that this baby, growing in Mary's body, was none other than the Lamb of God who would one day die for the sins of all men. Verse 25 tells us that Mary eventually delivered this child. When she did, the Lamb of God was born. In one of the greatest stories in all of Scripture, we learn the truth that Mary Had a Little Lamb. It is *that Lamb*, the Lord Jesus that I would like to speak about this morning. I would like to share three characteristics of Mary's little Lamb with you today.

I. MARY'S LAMB WAS A SPECIAL LAMB

A) His Conception Was Special - Jesus Christ had no human father! His Father is God Himself! What makes the conception of the Lord Jesus so fantastic is the fact that He was born to a virgin! Now. We all know the traditional method by which babies are conceived and brought into this world. However, the conception of Jesus was different! His mother was a virgin. (*Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:34-35*)

This is an essential doctrine! Without a virgin birth, we do not have a sinless Savior, and we have no hope of salvation. It is impossible to be saved and deny the truth of the virgin birth of the Lord Jesus Christ!

B) His Conduct Was Special - From the day Jesus came into this world until the day He ascended back into Heaven, He was a Person with very special characteristics.

Miracles - He could feed multitudes, open blinded eyes, heal the sick and even raise the dead. Walking on water posed no problem for the Lord Jesus, neither did silencing a violent storm. Everything He did marked Him as being special. However, these activities were merely proof that He was indeed Who He claimed to be.

Messages - When Jesus opened His mouth, people marveled at the things He said. Even when He was only 12, the doctors of the Law were astonished at Him, (*Luke 2:47*). When He began His ministry, He continued to amaze the crowds that heard Him speak, (*John 7:46*).

Methods - Even the way Jesus carried Himself set Him apart from all the others around Him. Never once did He stoop to the level of His enemies, but He always kept His Father's will as the center of His focus. Nothing mattered to Jesus but pleasing the Heavenly Father, *John 8:29*. There had never been another like Jesus and there never will be! He was and is one of a kind! Mary's little boy was truly special!

C) His Claim Was Special - Jesus was never shy about telling people Who He was. In fact, His claims were what caused the Jews to seek His death. What was the claim that Jesus made that was so offensive to these people? The answer to that question is two-fold.

1. Jesus Claimed to Be the Son of God - *John 10:36* Jesus claimed that He was the Son of God in Heaven. All the people knew Him to be the son of Joseph, *Mark 6:3*. However, Jesus claimed a special relationship with the Father in Heaven.

Just as the doctrine of the virgin birth is essential to salvation, so also is the doctrine that Jesus is the Son of God. Until a person comes to the place that they are willing to confess Jesus to be the Son of God, they cannot be saved!

2. Jesus Claimed to Be God - *John 14:9; John 8:58; John 10:30* - This claim was even more offensive to the Jews than the other one! By making this claim, Jesus was telling them that He was eternal, that He was their God, that they needed to bow before Him and acknowledge Him as their God. This, they were not willing to do!

II. MARY'S LAMB WAS A SACRIFICIAL LAMB

Mary's little Lamb came into this world for one purpose. It was not to walk on water, it was not to heal sick folks, it was not to open blinded eyes, it was not to calm storms. Jesus came for the sole purpose of dying! He was a special Lamb, but He came to be the sacrificial Lamb. You see, Jesus came to die for the sins of humanity. Luke tells us that His mission in this world was "*to seek and to save that which was lost*", ***Luke 19:10***. If He was going to accomplish this, there was price that had to be paid, and He paid that price when He went to the cross and died for our sins.

Notice these three thoughts about the sacrificial Lamb.

A) He Was a Spotless Lamb - Before any lamb could be offered as a sacrifice, it had to be examined thoroughly and to be declared spotless, Numbers 28:9. An animal that was impure or deformed could not be offered. For Jesus to be the sacrifice for our sins demanded that He be a perfect specimen. He had to be a human without spots or blemish. Jesus filled this bill perfectly. Not only was He the Son of God, but He was the sinless Son of God, ***2 Corinthians 5:21***. When Jesus Christ died on the cross, He was shedding innocent blood. He was dying in the place of all the guilty sinners who had ever and would ever live. He was a pure Lamb dying for a wretched world.

B) He Was a Submissive Lamb - Jesus wasn't forced into His role as a sacrifice. He willingly submitted to all that He endured. He did it all out of a heart of love for you and me. Remember, Jesus was God in the flesh! This is the Creator of the universe that we are talking about. He could have called down 12 legions of angels had He wanted to, ***Matthew 26:53***. He could have spoken one word and His executioners and accusers would have vanished away into nothingness.

He could have expressed a thought, and everything would have been no more! But He didn't! He endured the shame and the pain without uttering a word. He submitted to the Father's will and paid the price for sin. He was a submissive Lamb, *Isaiah 53:7*. When He did speak, it was to pray for the forgiveness of His tormentors. Jesus was surrendered to the Father's will. Even in the Garden of Gethsemane when the cross was still hours away Jesus could be found in prayer calling for the Father's will to be done, *Luke 22:42*.

C) He Was a Sacrificial Lamb - All the rest meant nothing unless this part was fulfilled. It wasn't enough for Jesus to be sinless and surrendered. He had to suffer and die before sin could ever be done away with, *Hebrews 9:22*. Thank God, on that cross, Jesus paid the price for our sins and literally became sin for you and me that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him! That's right, they took the Lord Jesus outside the city of Jerusalem, nailed Him to a cross and there He died for your sins and mine! When that blood was pouring from His body and His life was ebbing away, it was as if a giant billboard advertising the awesome love of God had been erected for all sinners to see!

III. MARY'S LAMB IS A SAVING LAMB

If the story ended here, with Jesus dead on a cross, this would be a sad story to tell. There would be no reason to celebrate Christmas and no need to come to church. There would be no salvation and no hope for our souls. If He died and that was the end of Him, that would be the end of us as well. But thank God, the story doesn't end there! Three days after Jesus died on that cross, He came forth, alive, from the tomb, *Matthew 28:1-6*. And He is still alive today! Since this is true, I want to show you what the Lamb of God, Mary's little Lamb can do today.

A) He Has the Power to Save Sinners - Those who are lost in sin have hope today! They can turn to the Lord Jesus and He will save their souls! There are three basic things that He will do in the heart and life of every sinner that will come to Him by faith.

1. He Can Cleanse Sin - His blood has the power to wash away sins forever! When you put your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and accept His death and resurrection as the payment for your sin debt, He washes you in His blood and your sins are no longer an issue!

2. He Can Convert Souls - The human soul is a wicked thing. It is lost and undone and cannot have fellowship with God. However, when a sinner trusts Jesus for salvation, Jesus takes that life that was so far away from God and brings it near to God, *Ephesians 2:12-13*. When Jesus does His saving work in your soul, He makes you “pleasing in the sight of God” and allows you to enter a special relationship with God. Because when you are saved, you too become a child of God! No longer are you black, corrupt and doomed to Hell, but in Jesus you are saved and brought into a close relationship with the Father above!

3. He Can Change Sinners - When He saves someone, He also changes that person. Notice *2 Corinthians 5:17*.

*“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come:
The old has gone, the new is here!”*

We have heard this verse until it seems commonplace unto our hearing. However, the truth needs to be understood by everyone here this morning that if you are saved, you have been changed! You cannot be like you were before Jesus any longer! Everything has changed and can never be the same again! Jesus takes the worst sinners and turns them into the best saints!

4. He Has the Power to Secure Saints - Those who come to Mary's little Lamb never have to fear losing what they have been given. When Jesus saves a soul, He does it for all eternity! If you have been putting off salvation because you are afraid that you cannot do it, then let me encourage you to quit looking at *yourself* and what *you* can do. Salvation belongs to the Lord! If He can save you then He can keep you saved! If He can't keep you, then He can't save you to begin with. After all, that was His greatest miracle!

In closing, when you think about Christmas this year, try to keep things in perspective. You and I who have been exposed to the truth of God's Word need to remember that Christmas is about that special day when God sent His Son into the world to be the sacrifice for our sins. Christmas is about you coming to know God. After all, that is why God sent His Son into the world! Do you know Mary's Little Lamb this morning? If not, why not come and let me introduce you to Him today? If you do, but things aren't as they should be between you and the Lord, then I challenge you to bring yourself and your need to Jesus right now. He can fix what is broken in your life. Yes, Mary had a little Lamb, do you?

Place: FCA

Time: 10:30am

Date: December 15, 2024

After Service: The Lion and The Lamb