

Computer Generated Transcript - We're going to get started today and we started last week on on this series idea of rediscover the wonder all right it's really easy for us as Christians who have heard this story right and I know some of you maybe haven't heard it as much as others and that's OK And surely some of you haven't because you're not as old as some of the people in this room right so you've you've heard it you've heard it if your time is but what can happen when we hear a story over and over and over again particularly if we believe that story is true that the details of the story start to become commonplace right the details of that story kind of become just another story and we forget how amazing these stories are right life just for the simple fact most Christians just take it for granted and talk about it like it's a fact and just believe it that Mary was a virgin when she conceived a child. We talked about that last week goods like yeah that's no big deal listen I believe that's true I believe that the Bible is true and that's what the Bible teaches so I believe it's true but that is ridiculous to somebody who doesn't believe what we believe our in the world can a virgin conceive right like it makes no sense if you sit there and you step back it only makes sense when you add a divine element to it. We talk about angelic visitations like they're no big deal right like yeah I went to the drive thru at Taco Bell and got a number two and then later that day I saw an angel. And we just talked about him the exact same way like yeah that's just no big deal. You know what I'm saying this and so we were like No I get to number six when I go to Taco Bell you know and so you know what I'm talking about though right we talk about this stuff like it's ordinary and what I want what I really want us to understand today what I really want to get out of this whole thing is get back to the wonder of what this story is this story is nothing if not miraculous the story of Jesus coming to this earth and judge. His beginning much less his end is a miraculous story in for us to communicate it and think about it in any other way is selling fish selling it completely short Russ to think of this story as anything other than miraculous. To sell this story short. It's to not truly give this story the credit that it deserves so my challenge to you this whole time is we're going through this commute this this Christmas season is don't let it be normal Don't let this just be another thing that happens because it's not this is a story of the divine and we need to make sure that we treat it as so so I'm going to I'm going to go at this a little different today I know that what we're going to talk about today isn't a normal Christmas thing to talk about OK but it's an important part of the story and I think it's important to understand that when Jesus came into this world you know we sing songs like Silent night holy night right and I'm I'm OK with that we can sing the pretty song but do you think that night was really like when you read the Bible does it come across as silent at all right I mean there's nothing in the story that's like oh yes what a silent night you know I mean everything in this story is big and loud and fantastic right and and it's so I'm not again I'm not trying to dog your song if that's your favorite song that's fine are right I grew up in a German home and sing in this song in German was one of the things that we did every day and I'm not going to do it right now even if you asked me to because I only remember about every other word or word and in German and that's just not going to happen OK but but you know I mean this is this is one of those things and so I want to talk about this and a little different angle we're going to keep going past where we usually talk about the story in The Christmas story and I want to start this with have you ever felt called by God to do something. Right I mean I'm just a you don't need to raise your hand or anything like that but I want to ask yourself this question if I ever felt called by God to do something about maybe. Maybe called is a word that you don't like because when you hear the word called you think of maybe full time missionaries you know like God never called me to Africa you know and so let's say Have you ever felt prompted by God to do something. Like you felt like God wanted you to do something in a certain way right or at a certain time or God God was prompting you to go do something maybe it was something as simple as giving somebody a hug or a high five maybe it was sharing your faith with someone maybe it was giving in a certain offering to go do something you felt prompted by God to do something I think that most of most people if you've served if you serve Jesus for any amount of time I know in this room there is a group of people that you're just starting this faith journey and we're so happy you're here and maybe you haven't experienced that yet I guarantee you if you keep on this path of following Jesus you're going to experience that at some point in time you're going to

experience God that just that prompting that you can't explain other than God is asking you to go do something it's going to happen how many of you in this place and again I'm not asking for hands I want you to just kind of internally reflect how many of you in this place have ever been asked to do something that was hard you were asked to do something that you were like you know I don't really want to do that right again most of us if we've been through this thing we've been serving Jesus for any amount of time have probably experienced that too if you're in this place and you haven't yet because you're just starting your faith journey the life of Christianity is not a call to ease and I just want to tell you that when we are called to be Christians we are called to some hard things. And honestly I have no other way. I love when God I don't I don't love doing things I don't like to do but I love that the life of God the life of serving God is a life of adventure I love that he calls us out of the norm and into into things that are difficult I love that and one of the things that happens and I'm going to say this. Carefully OK because I'm not trying to mock people I'm not trying to hurt anybody's feelings but one of the tendency in American Christianity for about the last twenty years is is we believe that if the road is hard it must not be God. It's kind of been taught that if God calls us to something he's going to open every single door and make it really clear and give us a really nice path to accomplish that goal and as soon as there's resistance we feel like must not have been God I was wrong I was really God and we just write it off and we go away. By Or like God might call us to something that doesn't make sense to us like God might call us to go do something but it doesn't make sense with what I wanted over here so that must not be God because clearly God wouldn't call me away from this thing that I want for a time as if that's somehow in the Bible. And what I want you to hear out of this story and what I want you to hear as we as we talk about this today. Is that God's call most often is a call let's take that word out of it again and God's prompting most often will be a prompting to something that's bigger than you. Be something that is hard because if you can accomplish what God is prompting you to do without God can I just tell you it's probably you. Not God. Because when I look at the Bible and I see the things that God prompted those people to do. Is Bigger than one man or woman now sometimes God calls us to something that's right in our groove right something simple and quick but I want what I want you to hear is opposition is not a sign of it not being. A closed door is not a good way to determine whether or not something is of God. It's not look at look at the Bible look at what God called these people to how many times if you're familiar with the story of Moses how many how many close doors were in Moses is face right the way that we interpret an open or closed door. I mean if you'd look at the life of Jesus and any of us argue that Jesus was ever out of the will of God would anyone of us say you know what Jesus really missed the will of God on that one and yet his life was a life full of incredible hardship with door slammed in his face left and right and yet still carried through and finish what God asked him to do. Because when we say closed door most of the time what mean we mean is I don't like the way that that looks or what I thought was going to happen just didn't so the door is closed therefore it must not be God. When in fact resistance many times is a great test on whether or not we really are doing what God wants us to do. But a lot of us give up a little too early and I want to look at this story. I want to talk about that a little bit before we jump into this I want to hit some timeline stuff real quick again OK now I've heard from about four or five of you that you didn't like it two weeks ago when I said that Jesus doesn't care when we celebrate his birthday right and I got I got these I got a couple of very detailed e-mails and one very detailed phone call about how Jesus was obviously a harvest baby not a December twenty fifth baby and and so clearly he really cares because we would care if our birthday was in the wrong place right we wouldn't want to celebrate our birthday three or four months in the wrong spot so Jesus obviously really cares listen I hear your so I hear what you're saying I absolutely hear what you're saying I just don't agree OK I don't think God in all of eternity cares about his birthday on earth being celebrated on the right day he's an eternal God without time I don't think the date matters that much to him as a matter of fact there's a verse that Paul gives us that talks about how dates don't matter. And I think that's really a political to this and I hear the harvesting right people say that Jesus couldn't have been born in December because that's a color times of the Shepherds when they've been out in the field and all those things and I get that I mean I hear you

and I'm not saying you're wrong maybe Jesus was born during harvest in spring or fall he very well could have been OK as you're absolutely truthful in what you say right there but I also know that we just experienced in November something completely different than what we experienced in October and everybody who own cattle here that had them in October had them back in the fields in November because it was unseasonably warm and that happens so you can't just definitively say well because it was the shepherds were in the field well that must mean Jesus was obviously born then and then people say to the other the other thing is is well the reason that we celebrate Christmas on the twenty fifth is because the emperor Constantine wanted to one of the take Christmas and set it over the Moon Festival that was already beings. Already being you know celebrated that day and so the Christian faith can can enter we with all these different things and we can have one holiday instead of three and we can make things through and that's not entirely wrong Emperor Constantine was the one that decreed in the Roman Empire that Christmas would be celebrated on the twenty fifth but do you know why he picked that date anyone. Anyone know that history we all know the Emperor one lot and all but many of us know the history of Emperor Constantine doing that but the reason that he picked that date was because there were a large group of monks is early is eighty one hundred so maybe seventy years after Jesus was born right that had been celebrating the birth of Jesus on the twenty fifth of December because they believe that Jesus physically ended or entered and ended this world at the same on same day OK So they believe that his Reza are or that his death OK was on the same day as his conception and they did a little bit of addition and they wound up with late December being the day that he would have been born. And that's why they picked December twenty fifth as a date because they could have picked any other holiday in the Roman world to lay that down on there but for that for two hundred years by the time he had done that there had been groups of Christians that had already been celebrating his birthday on December twenty fifth I know that's history and I know many of you don't care I don't really either other than saying we don't know we can say as much as we want that Jesus was born on the harvest but the fact of the matter is we cannot know that one hundred percent we can say he was born on the twenty fifth but the fact of the matter is we can't know that one hundred percent and you know what. Doesn't matter. It just it just doesn't God is an eternal god not bound by time if we want to celebrate Jesus's birthday in the fall go ahead you can absolutely do that that is your right as a human being to celebrate Jesus' birth whenever you want because you could be as right as somebody who says he was born on February second. We don't know is what I'm trying to say and that doesn't make the Bible not trustworthy that just means God in all of his infinite wisdom didn't think that the date of the birth of Jesus was so important that it had to be recorded in the Bible. So we probably don't need to make it any bigger deal than that either. So I'm saying Ok so many give you two more timeline things because it's going to be about what we're talking about right now it's going to affect how you believe what we're talking about right now so according to the Christmas story there's two basic schools of thought for how the Christmas story went down and its timeline and they begin at the same place everybody believes I should say everybody all the scholars believe that it begins with an angelic visitation toward Mary right they believe that that's the beginning of the story you know unless you want to count John the Baptist had of that as part of the Christmas story then you could start there they all agree that that's what happened Mary goes Joseph gets gets that angelic visitation as well they get they wind up married they travel to Bethlehem everybody agrees on that timeline to that point right they believe that Jesus was born in a barn and probably. Not our wooden stable the way we think of it but born in a barn right and the there's a there's angels that visit the shepherds and the shepherds come in and they see the birth of the King and everybody kind of agrees right to that point. And then the school of thought breaks into two separate trees from right there OK And again this doesn't really matter except for how you interpret what we're about to talk about right now OK So the next one goes or actually the other thing that they agree with is eight days later is Jesus a circumcision OK and that's in the scriptures too that's that's part of it and that's a Jewish tradition and most you know those scholars believe the same thing so here's where it breaks up so the first school of thought is is after you know after forty one days after Jesus birth

Mary goes to Jerusalem and she goes through the rights of purification that's mentioned in Luke OK and they believe that that would happen within the year somewhere the magic I visit them and then they have to go to Egypt and they stay there for maybe a year or two and then Herod dies and and then they come back that's that's the one that's probably the more common one of of how people believe all this stuff happened OK in the timeline and the best the best probably. Evidence of that is when they went to the temple for Mary's purification writes They offered an offering that was for for the poor people that couldn't afford the normal offering right so if they'd already received the gifts from the magic I they think that they probably could have afforded to give the higher the higher level gift many of the things in the Old Testament where that way there was a gift that or there was an offering and a sacrifice that was designed for people who had some money and there was one that was specifically designed for if you can't afford that one we want you to still be able to do this stuff and you do it the one that's listed specifically in Luke is the one that's the Poor People's one OK And so that's that's probably. The best piece of evidence that they would have to say that that's how it happened OK the second group of thought is that. After Jesus' circumcision within maybe a day or two of that the magic I visit. Jesus is a young baby at that time he's not there for his birth but he's a young baby and then they go to Egypt right away. Herod dies and then they return within the forty days then they go to Jerusalem for the mare Mary's. Purity right there OK And so all of that they would say happened within the forty days and that's that's how it goes and the best in the best evidence for that is when it says after Jesus was born in Matthew the in the story of the magic that we talk about that word is most often used when people are talking about like the next day or the next hour right there's another word that's used when we're talking about a length of time after in the Greek that's used and so a lot of people look to that word and they say after OK that means within a day or two they're here the other piece of evidence that people look at is simply the calendar OK many scholars believe Jesus was born probably three or four eighty K. maybe maybe five A.D. at the earliest or not eighty I'm sorry B.C.. Between five and three B.C. is where people most people believe that Jesus was born most scholars most historians they believe that somewhere in that window is where Jesus was born Herod died in four A.D. or four B.C. day so that's another thing like if it is the other one that doesn't give a lot of time in between those windows if you believe in the year or two after you know when the magic I come to visit and all that stuff would probably already be dead. You know unless the window of history is a little wrong again these things don't really matter. Or OK as far as what the exact order is other then. Effects how you think about the next part of what we're going to talk about and so I just want to give those to say those are the two schools of thought both of those schools of thought work with scripture neither one there is no scripture that you can look at and say definitively Well that would create a conflict here OK The fact of the matter is what we're trying to do is take two different gospels Matthew and Luke and create a timeline out of two different gospels that tell two different parts of the story that's not a contradiction OK because Luke tells part of the story and Matthew tells part of the story that's not a contradiction that's just two different parts of the same story right like if you ask me and Mandy about the birth of our children you will hear two different stories because we had two very different perspectives. When when our children were born so you will hear two very it doesn't make one of us right and one of us wrong it's two different parts of the same story now what makes us wrong is I don't remember as many details and so many story if there is a contradiction is probably the right one OK I'll just say that just but but just because the two stories aren't exactly the same doesn't mean they're contradicting it's just two different parts of the same story like the thing I remember most clearly about Eden's birth our first child that was born OK but our second daughter OK our first one was adopted if you don't know that's our first one was adopted Kay So Mandy didn't carry Miriam. So even as being born and Mandy had been having nightmares for months that Eden was born with my eyebrows. OK Like she looked like Bert when she came out of the womb OK And so she she had Makoni I'm in her lungs which means there was some in the in the womb can she sucked out. And so when she was born right away they didn't she have to leave the room but they take her across the room and they start sucking all that junk out of their lungs and make them gag to get that

out of there and all those kind of things and so man he's laying on the table getting fixed up and I'll just leave it there. And I am over with and this little table is there doing that and then the first two things Mandy asks Are Is she OK because she didn't cry right away because she had all that stuff in there right is she OK yes she's just fine Does she have your eyebrows that was her second question. About our daughter OK that's my most clear recollection of the birth of Eden that is not Mandy's clearest recollection of the birth of Eden if she tells the story she's probably going to tell you some other details it doesn't make mine wrong and it doesn't make her as wrong it's two different parts of the same story and that's what's happening in Matthew and Luke OK And that's why there's some discrepancy about the order of events because we have two different parts of the same story that are being told and we're trying to marriage them together to make one timeline and so there's a little We're trying to figure that out it doesn't matter it's far is Jesus dying in saving our souls and all those things it's cool to study OK it's a cool thing to look at but again it's not that important but this does kind of impact what we're about to talk about however you believe that because you're going to believe it's either a long point time or it's not OK But so that's just a little bit of fun little bit of history for you who care about history and the rest of you are completely bored and now you're going to start paying attention again OK when you turn to Matthew Chapter two. Burn a look at verse thirty OK Matthew Chapter two going to read out of New Living Translation If you're going to choose you know on Lagasse are you going to choose on an app like you version that's what I'm going to read if you like to read the same words that I read at the New Living. Translation of the L.T. you've got your own favorite That's fine Matthew is the first book of the New Testament if you're not familiar with your Bible there's a whole bunch of weird names you're going to be like Obadiah in a home OK and then you're going to it's ones that you do recognize Matthew Mark Luke John so if you turn past Matthew just go back a little bit it's the first one of those OK Matthew Chapter two. Start and verse thirteen. Matthew two verse thirteen after the wise men were gone OK this is what we talked about last week the wise men show up they worship Jesus they give him gifts so once they leave after the wise men are gone and Angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream get up flee to Egypt with the child and his mother the angel said stay there until I tell you to return because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him that night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and marry his mother and they stayed there until Harrods death this fulfillment was what the Lord had spoken through the prophet I called my son out of Egypt Herod was furious verse sixteen when he realized that the wise men had outwitted him he sent soldiers to kill all the boys in and around Bethlehem who were two years old and under based on the Wiseman's report of the stars first appearance here is a brutal action fulfilled what God had spoken through the prophet Jeremiah a cry was heard in Raymond weeping and great morning Rachel weeps for her children refusing to become comforted for they are dead verse nineteen when Herod died an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt get up the angel said take the child in his mother back to the land of Israel because those who are trying to kill the child are dead so Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother but when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was head of Herod son are I don't know how to say that word arch away as COME ON SOMEONE some Greek scholar can tell me later he was afraid to go there then after being warned in a dream he left for the region of Galilee so the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth this. Filled with the prophets had said he will be called the Nazareth So I want to just look at a couple prophecies real quick before we dive into our story because some of the most amazing thing about this whole thing to me is how far ago it was it was prophesied that it would happen right we talked about the wise men vision visiting last time being or the star showing of the sky all the way back in Moses's time was prophesied that that would happen two thousand some years before it even happened they were prophesying about it that it would come true these ones happen Jeremiah thirty one first fifteen is quoted here about this infanticide that the fact that all of these babies would die is Jeremiah chapter thirty one through fifteen and that's hundreds of years before it happens Jeremiah through God prophecies that this horrible day of infanticide is going to happen OK that all of these children are going to be killed the last thing in verse twenty three that the Prophet said that he will be called the

Nazareth in is a collection of prophets it says the profits it's not it's not one specific prophecy there's this big idea in scripture that the Messiah although long looked for would be despised. You might think of the word like Can anything good come out of Nazareth OK that's what we're talking about here the other the other way to look at this is this word that's used here in Nazareth and talks about this branch the specific branch it's mentioned in the it's mentioned in Malakai it's mentioned all over the place so we see all of these different prophecies coming true right here on this NG And listen that's cool to me it's cool to me that God says hey this thing is going to happen and then it happens. That's that's an amazing thing all right that is worthy of our wonder all right but let's talk about the story I wanted to read that portion of Scripture because most of us are super familiar with the beginning of the story but if you ever thought about how difficult a thing God asked of Mary and Joseph. Right the other just thought about how it if your idea of God's call and God's will and God's plan for your life somehow just working out without any bumps and difficulties or every door has to be kicked open this doesn't fit in that Feola G. at all I want you to think about how difficult a task it was to bring the savior of the world into this world and keep them alive. Regardless of your views on this timeline. The first hard thing that God asks of Mary is to be a teenager who's not married and pregnant. Is as much stigma is there is around that today and there still is stigma around that right. It's nothing like what it was these girls could literally be killed in the streets for what happened to Mary. It could be killed in a horribly violent ways because they were carrying a child before they were married particularly in Mary's case because she was engaged to Joseph. And it wasn't just this baby so Joseph had every legal right to have Mary killed. I'm not saying that's OK Please understand I'm not condoning that I'm just saying that is reality for this time does that look like an open door to you that look like an easy road. You know. The second thing that he asks Mary to do is to carry a baby for nine months. God in all of His grace and wisdom and power and strength and all the things I could have believed of him could have just sent Jesus to this world as a man fully grown ready to go God didn't need to use Mary he could just said Jesus There we go and Jesus is part of the god attorneys like I don't want to be a baby I want to start as a man. Don't have my diapers changed. I want to deal with any of that stuff man I don't want to go through puberty. Even that must have been rough even for Jesus I just want to start as a man but he didn't he chose to have Jesus come into this world the same way that every human being comes into this world because Jesus had to be able to be related to. He was fully human yet he sinned It's not easy ladies who care babies even those of you who had easy pregnancies just a breeze right. No problems just for fun every day I know my wife had some rough ones but my wife didn't sleep for like six months you know because every time she finally fall asleep one of the kids would decide something needed to start moving you know like or she was in pain I mean that that's a difficult thing that's a tough thing then they get married right and she has to travel from Nazareth to Bethlehem anybody down that road you've gone from Nazareth to Bethlehem anyone and hear it all two of you. Many miles is it. As the crow flies from Nazareth to Bethlehem is seventy miles. The roads that go from Nazareth to Bethlehem are about ninety two or ninety three miles. So this teenage girl. Who is now married and nine months pregnant like ready to pop has to travel ninety miles by phone. Or at best on some sort of cart with a donkey pull in it. Sounds easy right. Sounds like a good time most of you who are nine months pregnant and probably thought that would be great right let's just walk on a gravel road. And winter or fall depending on how you believe it. Right let's just let's just let's just go take a ninety mile trip back pack in. Your death like we're getting this baby out right not easy not simple then they get to Bethlehem and regardless of your views on in or stable or however you want to think about that right however you view those words and whatever I think most of us would say in the barn with animals not the best way to bring a baby into the world. Right I mean most of us would probably say yeah if I had my choice between a hospital room or the barn. I choose the hospital room or maybe some of you don't like hospital so if I have a choice between a clean bed a room in my home or bathroom wherever you people who have babies at home have them. Between that. And the barn. A month choose not the barn. OK that's how most like that's not Option one the ball and how many do you ever been in a barn like I mean you ever been in a clean barn what you would consider a clean

barn my Grandpa kept a very clean barn there was still poop everywhere there were still animals and fur and hair everywhere but it was a clean barn. Probably not Choice number one. Probably not what most of us would view as an open door. Right then Jesus is born. And the first thing we find out politically about the climate is that there's a crazy jealous king who hates the concept of even this Messiah being born in his area so the first decree politically that we know of after the birth of Jesus regardless of your views on forty days or two years. Is that the government's going to try and kill him Government sponsored infanticide opened or write. Really easy real simple path to adulthood and yet this is the Christmas story and we're all like yeah what a great day so simple. So silent. So joyful and triumphant I'm not making fun of those songs. I'm really not but what I'm saying is. Our view of the Christmas story lacks wonder a lot of times because we've allowed this incredibly complicated difficult story to become normal it allowed to be defined by a few songs allowed to be defined by in the Tiffany scene on our mantle. Our children's version of the story that we should tell our kids but our understanding of the story is never grown past that child's version and we've allowed this incredibly raw. Dangerous difficult miraculous story. Become commonplace and I'm here to tell you today I just don't think that's OK. I just don't think it's right I think we should honor the birth of our Savior whether we do it in November or April or February or December. With a little bit more. He sometimes get a. Little bit more wonder in this story. Because there is nothing simple there is nothing easy there is nothing normal about this this is a story of the divine. Divine protection divine in durance following the divine into ridiculous. Dangerous on multiple levels for Mary. And yet this is the beginnings. Of the new covenant faith it's not the beginnings of Judaism This is the beginnings though of Christianity and this is how it didn't start one day on a cross that was on a dark day but that's not where it started. Started with a young lady doing what most of us would consider the impossible just to get it started Jesus had to survive infanticide just to get going. Just to begin the journey and we talk about it like it's a kid story and we make the mistake of thinking if something is hard or confusing and it must not be God. Even though the origins of our faith are new covenant Christianity the origins began in this incredibly difficult confusing. Hard. Way. Most of us would never have designed the beginning of our origin this way. One of the reasons I believe the Bible is true because nobody would make up this kind of thing. If you were going to make up this kind of faith you would have said Jesus was born of a king in a palace surrounded by gold and amazing that's how that's how we human stories start. When we tell stories that's how they begin you don't see the ugly in the hard in our stories it's all mazing right when our stories finish every detail works out Aragorn is king over Middle Earth and peace reigns for hundreds of years. So orderings reference for those of you who are nerds. That's how our stories fit Jesus a story ends on a on a cross from the outside. As to rise again from death and then ascend to heaven none of it's easy and yet it's all the will of God. None of this is simple you know it was all at the prompting of the Holy Spirit to accomplish the task that God wanted them to it to accomplish. This is the reality of a walk with God at this idea that every Christian is going to be rich if you just believe enough and we're not going to encounter any difficulty on the path to what got us calling us to if we really have enough faith that's not what the Bible teaches even at the beginnings of the birth of Jesus so if you want to follow Jesus trappin get ready. God is going to call you to some things that are only accomplished through him because you're not going to be able to do it all on your own guess what that's not bad. That's not somehow you failing God. It's just how every story goes in the Bible. So that God gets the glory. Not you it's an amazing thing and it's the beginnings it's the origins of the Christmas story so I'm going to I'm going to close a store or this this sermon and we're going to do this. What we do every week if you're a guest with us this is how we end forty eight ish of our fifty two Sundays. We believe that the most important thing that you can possibly here respond to as a human being on this earth is that this man Jesus that we just spent all this time talking about was not only born. But he lived his life was sinless. He ultimately died on a cross in our place because a sacrifice had to be made. For our sins to be covered but he didn't just die three days later he conquered sin and death and he rose and if God can do that if Jesus can predict his death and his resurrection then pull that off me paves that path for us to forgiveness. What is it we think he can do. What is it what is too big

for a god who can do that we talked about the beginning of a story that. There is no end to a story but the end of his story on paper if you will that's kind of it. And I want to encourage you in this place if you've never chosen Jesus. It's the best decision you can ever make is a says that he's the way he's a truth he's a life he is the way to God The only way only way to God. I want to encourage you in this place if you never done this if you never prayed to Jesus if you never asked for his forgiveness if you never made him a ruler over your life we're going to be a chance to do that in just a few minutes some of you in this place. You've done that before you've you followed Jesus you've done this thing you know you could pray the prayer yourself you know you I mean you know all those things but you'd if you were honest you would have to say lately I haven't been living for God It's been my wants and my needs my desires my path I'm picking what I do I'm not even looking the God about it anymore and you want to see that turn. And want to pray for you today too. I mean ask you about your heads and close your eyes everybody in this place if you're in that first group you're in that group that says never chosen Jesus before. You're in that group that says I've never done this I've never asked him to forgive me I've never never followed him. I'm not going to embarrass you by calling you up here or the Bible says that becoming a Christian is really easy we acknowledge were sinners we believe Jesus is who he says he is. We confess our sins to him. If you've never done that before but this morning you're ready like you just raise your hand we're not going to wait long I don't like to motivate these things out of guilt but I believe this is the most important decision anyone can make so if you've never done this before we'd like you to raise your hand when pray with these or anybody here today you've never done this but this morning you're ready or I could so we're going to move that second that second group K. maybe you're in here and you've done this before you know the right answers you know what I'm talking about but you know that lately you'd have to say that you haven't really been living for God you've been living for you and this morning you want to see that turn like you to raise your hand I want to pray with you is there anybody in here today. You've got a couple hands over here is there anybody else you can put your hand down all right is there anybody else you audio. I couldn't look at me I don't know where you all are OK so I'm just going to say a prayer. I'm going to ask you to repeat after me those of you who raised your hands I want pray with you I want to lead you and it's because I don't know I don't know how much you know. OK so we're going to pray a prayer if you're in space and you've chosen Jesus I'd like you to repeat after with me OK. Take some of the edge off. If you've been in this place and you're not chosen to do this and you're not ready yet we don't want to make you do something you're not going to do and honestly I don't want you to promise something you're not ready to follow through with you absolutely have our blessing to remain silent in this we don't we don't want you to feel like you have to do something or else OK I'm going to pray for those of you who raise your hand repeat after me for those of you who are followers of Jesus please repeat after me as well right let's pray Jesus. I know better. I'm sorry. I've been doing this my own way. It's not enough. It's not right forgive me. When you realign my life. With you. Thank you Jesus a man. Who are incredibly important moments the three of you who raise your hands thank you so much for being honest that way it's such a privilege to be able to partner with you in that way if you have questions please come and talk to me talk to the person who brought you the person who doesn't who brought you doesn't have any answers come and talk to me if you have questions I would love love to answer those questions so here's how we're going K It's about eleven I know that's a loving fifty seven so if you look at your phone is probably actually eleven fifty five or so because it was trying to get me to shut up earlier by a sudden that clock a little fast OK I'm just joking it just runs fast so we would have to redo it about once a month we got a little time OK I'd ask you not to go pick up your kids till about noon they're working on stuff back there so if you can wait but here is what I want to do. I know in this room beyond a shadow of a doubt just because I know some of your stories OK but I know that in a group this size there have been those of you in this place where you have felt the prompting of God to go do something maybe recently and you see stopped following that call of God because it got hard and you know. You know. That God wasn't done yet. You know that there was still more to do. But you gave up for whatever reason. Not going to ask you stand today. Not ask you to raise your hand and

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I'm not going to do that today. I'm going to say as a man pray at the end I'm going to pray for you. And if that's you in this place. I want you to pray I want you to pray as hard as you prayed about anything in your life. And ask God what the next step is take it take it. Is the most understand what I'm saying there are times when God calls us to do something and it might not seem done to us yet but it's done we've done what we're supposed to accomplish OK and we can walk away being that I'm not trying to say the job as a whole is and I'm saying the part that God called you do you understand the difference if God has called you to do something and you gave up because it's too hard to see it maybe you never even started. Because the road got bumpy and you just assumed that meant it wasn't really God but deep in your heart you know better. Known you know it was God. Maybe even some nights keeping you up at night. You gave up on pray for you. I want you to pray as well. Maybe not right now sometime today say God what is the next step in this thing you're asking me to do what what's next when it will all go through it I will walk this path even if it's difficult I will walk this path even if it seems like doors are slammed in my face because I believe it's you I'm really glad Mary did. Really glad she didn't give up her and Joseph I'm really glad that they walked the difficult path because it was the path that God laid out for them I'm glad they didn't give up when it got hard otherwise it never would have even started and this story is not unique in the Bible I mean it's unique in that it's the only virgin that carried a child but a road being difficult and still being a road of God That's not unique that's really every story in the Bible if you're in really good company if it got hard. I'm just going to pray I want your prayers Well right and Jesus. I know this is difficult God I've had things in my life where I die stopped. Because I just assumed. Wrongly that something was done because it wasn't any working out the way I thought it would. I know I'm not alone in this room. I know that you have called some people in this room some difficult hard things maybe maybe they gave up because it went longer than they thought. They met resistance or something else came up and it just turned their gaze from what you had in store and I pray that you speak to us in those situations God for those who are. There in those spots I pray that you give direction show us the next step. To help us to be bold enough to take it even when it's tough even if it seems like a door's closed you don't promise easy journeys his promise you'll be with us in the middle through all of that journey Thank you for that again. It was to walk. You would have us one. Of us to this Christmas season. Take for granted the miraculous that is this story. Was to to look at it maybe with fresh eyes again this year. See all the miraculous amazing things that you accomplished just Jesus get started your good get. Him at. A great afternoon.