

Introduction

This is my 656th sermon at New City Church. During this time I have preached through two Gospels, the Gospel According to Mark and the Gospel According to John. I have preached on fifteen Christmas Sundays. After all this time I finally come to what is known as a classic Christmas text. That is, our text this morning covers—directly, at least—the birth narrative for Jesus, except it’s not really about the *birth* of Jesus but about the *purpose* of the birth. Even more, it’s told from the perspective of Joseph, and not Mary.

As we saw last week, this is “the book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham”. We saw that this is the purpose of the birth of Jesus, for he was born to fulfill all the promises of God. In this text Matthew is explaining the significance of the genealogy of Jesus. As we know his mother was a virgin and so his birth was a miracle. In fact, his birth is the most inexplicable miracle. God turns water into wine? Sure. God feeds 5,000 with a kid’s lunch? Of course. God walks on water and simply says, “Shh” to silence a storm? Yep. Makes sense. God conquers *death*? Yeah. Obviously the one who created life can do that. God becomes a human being? Wait. What, now?

All the other miracles are “of course” miracles. Of course God can do that! God becomes a zygote, a fertilized egg in Mary’s womb, begins splitting into multiple cells, forming a human embryo. He, now a *human being*, continues to grow inside Mary’s womb and kicks and hiccups and stretches, and eventually flips upside down in order to be born like every other human being? God, *the Creator of everything that has been created* has become...a baby?

While the resurrection remains the single most significant and important miracle, for it is the foundation of our faith, the Incarnation of God is the most inexplicable. I’m reminded of the scene in the movie Aladdin in which the genie declares, “It’s all part and parcel of the whole genie gig: phenomenal cosmic powers, itty-bitty living space”. The difference is, of course, the genie was trapped in this way. God, the Creator of all, chose to humble himself by occupying an itty-bitty living space. Love held him there, not some magic that is greater than he.

So after all these years, it’s October 4, and the time is right for a Christmas message. We finally come to a Christmas text...and we will see it’s not really about Christmas, but about all of human history and God’s profound and extensive plans for all of creation. We’re in Matthew 1, beginning in verse 18.

Mt 1:18 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. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ 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. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Matthew 1:18–25

The Virgin

In verse 18 Matthew describes the birth—the *genesis*—of Jesus Christ. He has just given an abbreviated genealogy of Jesus showing his direct descent from Abraham and from David. Being the son of Abraham he is the heir to Abraham’s promises, promises that center on a blessing to all families of the earth. Through Abraham’s offspring—Jesus—God will fulfill his covenant with Abraham. Today Abraham’s true heirs are found in every nation on earth. Think of the scope of this promise. The apostle Paul explained the scope.

Gal 3:28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.

Galatians 3:28–29

In the ancient Jewish mind there were two groups of people. There were those who were directly descended from Abraham through his son Isaac and then through his son Jacob. And then there were those who were not. There were Jews and there were Gentiles. That’s it. That’s the line in the sand. You’re one of Abraham’s descendants or you’re not. Paul here declares this is false. He uses “Greek” as a stand-in for any ethnicity that is not Jewish. He declares that separation is false. There is no line between Jew and Greek, just like there is no line between slave or free. This was a socio-economic distinction. There is no line between male and female. There aren’t two classes of people, he says, because “you are all one in Christ Jesus”. The real line is between those who are in Christ and those who are not in Christ, and ethnicity, culture, sex, social class, etc., is not what draws the line.

He says directly, if you are in Christ, then you are counted among the offspring God promised Abraham, heirs according to promise. In Genesis 15 God told Abraham to look up at the night sky and count the stars—if he even could. He told him this is how many descendants he would have. They would be uncountable. Paul says if you are in Christ then you are one of those many descendants God promised to give Abraham.

Matthew emphasizes this promise must come through a physical offspring of Abraham because God promised to fulfill this covenant through Abraham’s physical offspring. Though the promise was given to all who share the faith of Abraham, it necessarily would come through a physical offspring. Now he’s explaining how this physical offspring of Abraham came to be.

Abraham’s own son Isaac came via a miracle, though a miracle in the ordinary way. That is, his wife Sarah was old and past the age of child-bearing, yet through the normal

act of marriage—and through God’s direct providence—Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham. In a similar way God intervened and Mary became pregnant. A significant difference, however, is Mary was a virgin when she conceived. The point is no human man was involved in the conception.

Matthew is very clear and very direct. Mary was betrothed to Joseph. That is, they were legally bound together as husband and wife yet could not consummate the marriage for a year. This was common at the time as it gave the man a full year to become fully established on his own. Matthew bookends the time. Mary became pregnant after the betrothal and “before they came together”. She conceived in that in-between time. The way Matthew writes this is exactly what you would expect him to write if he intended to communicate they did not engage in the act of marriage until after Jesus was born.

If Matthew intended to communicate Mary would remain a virgin the rest of her life, he communicated this very poorly and was, frankly, misleading in his language. In verse 25 he adds that Joseph “knew her not until she had given birth to a son”. If he meant to say Mary remained a virgin the rest of her life he would have said something like “he knew her not”. *Period*. His point is that during the time of their betrothal, the time after the marriage was formally arranged and before they consummated the marriage through sexual intercourse, Mary conceived a child.

Matthew says this was by the Holy Spirit. As the Nicene Creed says, the Spirit is the Lord, *the giver of life*. While Mary was still a virgin and therefore had not engaged in the behavior necessary for conception the Spirit provided the rest of the DNA necessary for her to have a child. This was in every way a miracle.

Again, if Matthew believed Mary remained a virgin the rest of her life he would not have said “before they came together”. Instead, he would have said she conceived even though she and Joseph *never came together*. He would not have said he knew her not *until* she had given birth. He would have said he never knew *even after* she had given birth.

The notion that Mary remained a perpetual virgin was first taught in a document known as the “Protevangelium of James” that was universally rejected by the entire church. This idea of perpetual virginity grew slowly as Christian culture swung the pendulum away from culturally acceptable sexual immorality and began to highly prize celibacy. This cultural shift allowed this idea to catch on and arguments for explaining away the plain meaning of Matthew’s words persist still today. There is simply no way that one can read Matthew’s words and come away with the understanding that Mary and Joseph never “came together” and that Joseph never “knew her” even after the birth of Jesus. Only by assuming they did not and cleverly ignoring the plain meaning of the text can one say she remained a virgin.

Matthew’s point here is Joseph was not the biological father of Jesus. Through Mary, however, Jesus is the biological descendant of Abraham, for Mary is as well.

The Adoption

The promised offspring for Abraham, the very offspring through whom God would bless all the families of the earth, had to be Abraham’s physical descendant through his wife Sarah. God also made a covenant with David, that one of David’s sons would inherit his throne and rule over God’s everlasting kingdom. Joseph was David’s biological descendant, but was not

the biological father of Jesus. Mary also was David's biological descendant, but there's still a problem.

Matthew says Joseph was a just man. That is, he was righteous. He loved the Lord and was a good man, a righteous man. He understood biology. He knew what it took for Mary to become pregnant and he knew he had not engaged in that behavior. He says Joseph did not want to publicly shame Mary for her apparent sinful behavior so he determined to divorce her quietly.

He could have done so publicly, before the entire town. The whole town would have known anyway, for she clearly became pregnant during their year-long betrothal period. People would naturally assume the child was his. This would shame him and he was a righteous man so he didn't want people to think he had done this. Rather than make it a big, public event, he chose a private divorce, which only required two witnesses—most likely his father and her father. This is what it means for him to divorce her “quietly”.

At some point after this decision he was sleeping and had a dream. In this dream an angel appears to him. Notice what the angel says to him: “Joseph, *son of David*”. Why would he call Joseph the son of David? David was his ancestor from nearly a thousand years before. In verse 16 Matthew just said Matthan had a son named Jacob and Jacob had a son named Joseph. He is Joseph, the son of Jacob, so why does the angel reach so far back into history?

The angel is communicating that Mary's pregnancy is far bigger than Joseph and his reputation. Jacob his father knew he was descended from David. Every kid who was descended from David would have known he was descended from David. The Jewish people took great care in recording these things. In fact, we only know the final nine generations listed in the genealogy because Matthew still had access to the records kept in the temple in Jerusalem. Those records were forever lost when the temple was destroyed. Joseph absolutely knew his own origins and connection to David.

The angel is indicating that God is, once again, directly intervening in human history in order to fulfill his promises, namely, his covenant with David. The angel tells him the child Mary is carrying is not the result of sin, but from the direct act of the Holy Spirit. In God's sovereign providence God miraculously caused his virgin fiancé to conceive. The angel tells him to not *fear* to take her as his wife. In other words, don't be afraid of all the gossip that will be spoken. Don't fear the slander, the attack on his and her character. God knows, for God is the one who has caused her to conceive.

There is no reason for there to be any fear or shame when obeying the Lord, even if others cannot see the sense in it or the reason for it. Even if *you* do not see the reason for it, obeying the Lord is never cause for fear. Implicit in the angel's instruction to Joseph is the truth that Joseph's job isn't to defend Mary—or to defend Jesus. His job is to be obedient to what God has asked him to do. Sometimes God calls us to do hard things through faith, which means we cannot always see all the details.

Further, the angel says Mary will bear a son, and then gives Joseph a direct command: *you* shall call his name Jesus. The angel also quotes a prophecy that *they* will call his name Immanuel, but directly says *Joseph* must name the child Jesus. The angel gives the reason for this name: “for he”—the child—“shall save his people from their sins”. The name “Jesus” means “YHWH saves”. Joseph must name the child “YHWH saves” for he—the child, YHWH in human form!—will save his people from their sins!

Something else is happening here. Joseph, *the son of David*, must be the one to name the child, for by naming him Joseph is adopting him as his own son. By adopting Jesus in this way, Jesus legally becomes Joseph's heir, and therefore Jesus becomes the legal heir to David's throne. New Testament scholar Leon Morris explains.

The story is told throughout from his point of view; thus it is natural that it concludes with him naming the child Jesus. His naming of the child means that he adopted him legally.

Leon Morris, PNTC

The angel is instructing Joseph to receive the child as his own, to adopt Jesus. Matthew adds this all came about in order to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet, and then he quotes Isaiah: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel". He adds for his Greek readers, for he wrote in Greek, the meaning of the Hebrew name Immanuel: God with us.

When Isaiah wrote this 700 years before Jesus was born, these were words given to Ahaz to promise him that God would rescue his people. The word translated "virgin" in Hebrew means a young woman. It can refer to a young woman who was also a virgin, but generally speaking it simply meant "young woman". Again, it can mean a young woman who was not yet married and was therefore a virgin, but the word does not require this second meaning. So why does Matthew translate the Hebrew with the Greek word that only means "virgin"?

A couple hundred years before the birth of Jesus the Old Testament Scriptures were translated into Greek. Those translators, all Jews who lived 200 years before Jesus, understood there was more to the prophecy to Ahaz than simply that a young woman in his own time would give birth and this would be the sign that the Lord would save his people. They chose the Greek word "virgin" for the Hebrew word that means "young woman" and *could* mean virgin.

Matthew says Mary conceiving as a virgin is the fulfillment of this prophecy. When Joseph woke from sleep, he obeyed the word of the Lord and took Mary as his wife though Matthew points out Joseph waited to consummate his marriage to her until she had given birth to a son. Thus, there is no way Joseph could be the biological father of Jesus. Instead, Matthew ends verse 25 by saying, "And he called his name Jesus". That is, Joseph adopted Jesus as his legal heir, and therefore as the heir to sit on David's throne and fulfill God's promise to him.

The Prophecy

Matthew is going to show prophecy fulfilled by Jesus in numerous ways. There are two kinds of prophecy. There are direct prophecies, specific *predictions*, by a prophet, and there are typological prophecies, or prophecies by predictive action. For example, Adam was the start of humanity in the garden. In that garden Adam faced temptation at a tree and his decision would affect all of his descendants. This is prophetic of Jesus. It's not a direct prophecy; Genesis doesn't say, "One day the Messiah will also be tempted at a tree." Rather, Jesus would fulfill the actions of Adam in a far greater way. Jesus would come and start a *new*

humanity by also being in a garden and facing temptation at a tree. Unlike Adam, Jesus said “Not my will be done, but yours” and this decision affects all those who are in Christ.

This is what we mean when we say Adam is a “type” of Christ. This doesn’t mean he’s a kind of Christ like an orange is a type of fruit. A type is a physical pattern. Adam is a pattern of what the Christ would do and be. In a truer way Jesus is the new Adam, just as Paul wrote in his letter to the Corinthians.

Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. He was a type of Christ, for Christ would be buried for three days and then good news of God’s mercy and grace would be proclaimed. Israel was given a Passover lamb to be spared from death. In a far greater way Christ is our Passover lamb.

The prophecy that a young woman would conceive and bear a son had a real, literal fulfillment in Isaiah’s day. In a far greater way, this was also a direct prophecy of Jesus, for an actual virgin and not just a young woman did, indeed, bear a son, and her Son did, in fact, save his people from destruction. We’re going to see both kinds of prophecies throughout Matthew’s Gospel. There are direct prophecies that Jesus fulfills. For example, Micah said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. As we’ll see, Jesus was born in Bethlehem.

There are also typological prophecies. Hosea made an historical statement about God rescuing Israel out of Egypt: “Out of Egypt, I have called my son”. Hosea was not predicting that God would call Israel out of Egypt; he was stating that God had already called his son—Israel—out of Egypt. In far greater way this call out of Egypt is fulfilled in Jesus, as we’ll see in the next chapter. In a greater sense Jesus is God’s Son. Jesus thus fulfills the pattern set by the exodus from Egypt. In fact, we will see that Jesus is the True Israel, the very one God was promising all along.

Central to all the promises is the one Matthew cites in our text: they shall call his name Immanuel, which means “God with us”. He does not mean his name would actually be Immanuel; his name is Jesus, or YHWH Saves. Rather, in a profound way, Jesus is Immanuel. That is, Jesus is God with us. As we saw last week, the apostle Paul made a profound statement concerning Jesus and the promises of God.

2 Cor 1:20 For all the promises of God find their Yes in him. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory.

2 Corinthians 1:20

How is this possible? God made many promises throughout Scripture; how is it that Jesus is the fulfillment of all of them? It’s like God’s promises to Abraham. He promised to make him into a great nation, to bless him and make his name great. He promised to make him a blessing, and to bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him. Ultimately these promises result in the greatest and fullest expression of these promises: in you shall all the families of the earth be blessed. Jesus, being the son of Abraham, the one God was promising all along, is *the* blessing to all the families of the earth for as Paul said, there is neither Jew nor Greek. Instead, all those who are in Christ are the offspring promised to Abraham. This means Abraham’s true descendants can be found in every nation on earth, for there are followers of Christ in each of the 195 or so nations on earth.

The promises to make Abraham into a great nation and to bless him and to bless those who bless him and curse those who curse him were the means God used to fulfill his ultimate

aim of blessing all the families of the earth. They are God's providence in bringing about the greatest aim of all the promises.

If Abraham doesn't have a son, God's promises would have failed, so God intervened in human history and enabled Sarah to conceive when she was long past the age of bearing children. If David had been caught and killed by Saul when Saul hunted him mercilessly, God's promises would have failed, so God intervened in human history and protected David. If the people of Judah, including all of David's descendants, had been killed by the Babylonians when they destroyed Jerusalem and the temple, God's promises would have failed, so God intervened in human history and protected the royal bloodline of David after the exile.

The Providence

This is God's providence on display. God acts in human history to guide it toward his intended purposes. This includes calling an idolater named Abraham and promising him he and his barren wife would have a son and through his son God would make him a great nation. This providence includes Isaac having a son named Jacob and then Jacob having twelve sons. God's providence led this small family of around 70 people to Egypt where they would not die in the famine that drove them there. God's providence led them to remain in Egypt where they were enslaved so that 400 years later he could rescue them out of Egypt.

God's providence provided for them and protected them in the wilderness for 40 years and God's providence gave them victory over those who sought to prevent them from inheriting the land of Canaan. Though Israel continued to rebel against him over the next several centuries God's providence raised up prophets who warned of judgment and who promised God's fulfillment of his covenants. When God raised up Babylon to judge his people his providence protected them during their exile and his providence brought them back and maintained a line of descendants for David, that God might one day raise up the Son who would sit on David's throne.

This is what God's providence is. Millard Erickson says providence is the "continuing action of God in preserving his creation and guiding it toward his intended purposes" (Millard Erickson, "Christian Theology"). God reaches into his creation in order to guide it where it needs to go. He superintends human history for his purposes. The story of the Bible is one of God's providence, of him sovereignly guiding history toward a singular thing, a particular moment. Paul put it this way:

Gal 4:4 But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born
of woman, born under the law,
Galatians 4:4

God guided history to a specific point and then, when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son. We know from Scripture that the covenant given at Sinai was not able to change his people. God made this assertion himself when he promised a new covenant, one that would not be like the covenant given at Sinai in a particular way: they broke that covenant. Remember that Moses was on the mountaintop with God, *receiving the covenant*, while Israel was at the bottom of the mountain *breaking it*.

They continued to break it. God continued to show mercy. This mercy included calling Assyria to take the northern kingdom into exile and then calling Babylon to take the southern kingdom—Judah—into exile. His mercy was on display as he preserved his people in exile and brought them back to their land, all the while preserving a specific family line. In the fullness of time a virgin who was descended from David was engaged to a man who was descended from David. Before they consummated their marriage Mary conceived and gave birth to the Son of God, now in human form. Joseph called his name Jesus, YHWH Saves, for he will save his people from their sins.

All those centuries before God had promised his people a new covenant. The promise was the new covenant would be unbreakable. It would not be like that old covenant, *the one they broke*. This is because the new covenant would not be based on *their* faithfulness, but on *God's faithfulness*.

In the 1800s French playwright Charles-Guillaume Étienne wrote a famous saying that is loosely translated as, “If you want something done right, you have to do it yourself”. The Incarnation of the Son of God is God's own declaration that if you want something done right, you gotta do it yourself. God came into this world, born of woman, born under the law of Moses, in order to do for his people what they would not and could not do for themselves.

The Lord knows his people cannot save themselves. Just as much, he knows they *will not* save themselves! If there will be faithfulness and righteousness and holiness from his people, he will have to do it for them. To accomplish this, God in his providence intervened in human history in a profound way by becoming a human being. He took on flesh and embraced all the normal and ordinary limitations of humanity. The Gospels speak of him learning and growing, of becoming tired and hungry.

Think of how inexplicable this is! God, infinite in power and knowledge, had to learn to walk and to talk. God, the one who knows all things, who spoke a word and the force of his command caused light itself to exist, had to be potty trained by his mother. There was a time when the Creator of the universe had to figure out how to move his fingers just right so that he could tie his own shoes—the same Creator whose “fingers” flung stars and planets and galaxies into their places. Science is still learning the internal structures of the cell, yet the one who created that profound complexity had to figure out how to use a spoon to get soup from his bowl into his own mouth without having to rely on his parents.

In the fullness of time God exercised his providence by bringing human history to its intended purpose. Jesus is God with us. This promise was there throughout human history, going all the way back to God's promise to Adam and Eve that they would have an Offspring who would one day undo all the death and destruction they allowed into God's good world. The promise was implicit when God sacrificed animals in order to cover their nakedness. When God brought judgment on the earth and destroyed all life except for that which was safely aboard the ark, God was promising a new ark was coming, and all those who would be found in that Ark would be saved.

Application

Throughout the Scriptures we see God's promise that he was coming to us, that Immanuel—God with us—was coming. He has come, and his name is Jesus. Luke records a fascinating conversation, one that I hope Jesus will repeat with all of us one day.

Lk 24:44 Then he said to them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.” ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, ⁴⁶ and said to them, “Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, ⁴⁷ and that repentance for the forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Luke 24:44–47

What he was showing them was his own providence throughout history, all the ways he intervened to guide history to the fullness of time when he himself would come as the son promised to Adam and Eve, the son promised to Abraham and Sarah, the son promised to David. What none of them could have known at the time was the Son promised was the Son of God himself.

Throughout our church’s life I have not preached a “Christmas” text. This isn’t because I’ve been trying to be cool and edgy or because I want people guessing about what the connection could possibly be. The truth is the Bible is a Christmas text. The entirety of the Bible either points forward to the coming of God With Us or it reveals the actual coming of God With Us, of YHWH Saves, of the Lord Jesus. Everywhere we turn in Scripture we are pointed to Jesus.

What we see is God in Trinity has been working out his purposes. This divine providence raises up nations and destroys nations. This divine providence causes the rain to fall on the just and the unjust, and for his purposes. He raises up rulers and he brings down the haughty. He puts foreign armies to flight and protects his people. In his divine providence the Lord has orchestrated all of history to culminate in the glory of God in the face of Christ.

Here’s the thing that I find so very striking. God’s providence is evident on a global scale, whether that means raising up a ruler named Cyrus that he might send the people of Judah back to rebuild the temple, thus preserving the royal line as prophesied by Isaiah or that providence is evident in God giving Sarah a son, though she was long past the age of childbearing. God’s providence is seen in Joseph’s brothers selling him into slavery in Egypt, that he might later save his entire family from starving. God’s providence is later seen in raising up Pharaoh, that Pharaoh and the Egyptians might know that he is YHWH, God of Israel.

God’s providence is seen in calling Judas to be an apostle, in saving a Moabite woman named Ruth, in Esther being spared despite approaching the king uninvited, in the apostle Paul not dying in that shipwreck, and in Paul being imprisoned that he might appear before Caesar and proclaim the gospel of Jesus.

When we think of God’s providence we think of the big stuff. God moves kings and nations to accomplish his purposes. Think of this, New City: the same providence that is evident throughout human history and on a global scale, the providence that brought forth the Son of God, born of woman, born under the law in the fullness of time is the same providence at work in your life.

When God calls you to follow him there will be obstacles and there will be difficulties. Some of those obstacles and difficulties are placed there by you! Many are not. Sometimes when God calls you to faithful obedience it may not make sense. God may call you to do

things that make others scratch their heads, whether that's taking Mary to be your wife despite what others may say or think about you, or that's doing something as a church that makes no financial sense. Sometimes God calls you to set a budget that makes no human sense. (Yes, I'm preaching to myself here.)

God calls us to faithfulness. The providence of God on display in this birth narrative ought to fill us with such hope in the Lord that we can follow him no matter how foolish it may seem to others—or to ourselves. Sometimes God calls you to accept a job—or to leave a job—and you don't know all the reasons. Sometimes God calls you to have a baby when you can't have a baby, whether due to age like Sarah or due to the lack of behavior that results in a baby like Mary. As we've seen, God is always at work in your life, working in ways that not only can you not *see*, you cannot even *fathom*.

If God can handle truly impossible things like a virgin giving birth and if God can handle things like moving nations and people groups, and if God can work out his plans over centuries and *millennia* without ever losing track of a single detail or forgetting to do a certain thing and he does so in a way that fully accomplishes his will, then church! I think he can handle your Tuesday afternoon! He can handle your car repair. He can handle that relationship or that obstinate child. He can handle that budget that makes no earthly sense. He can handle that difficult season at work. He can handle your ongoing struggle with sin. He can handle all of it, without losing track of a single detail.

We must never trust in the details or the circumstances of our lives. We must trust in God and in his providence, for he has a track record that goes back to before the world began. We trust in his promises, for his promises are rooted in his character, and his character never fails.