

Series: Characters in the Christmas Story

JOSEPH

MATTHEW 1:18-25

Text:

Introduction:

Joseph is often a forgotten individual in the story of Christ birth.

We hear about Mary, the Wise Men, the Shepherds.

Joseph brings no gifts, he sings no songs and he makes no speeches.

However I'm convinced that Joseph possessed certain elements in his life that make him stand out as a very important individual in the Christmas story.

Note:

1. JOSEPH'S CHARACTER (VS. 18-19)

Matthew 1:18-19

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. ¹⁹ Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

A. He Was a Consecrated Man

The Bible tells us that Joseph was A "just" man. This means that he was a man who lived for God.

As far as his heart was concerned, he walked by faith in the Lord. He was a righteous man!

B. He Was a Compassionate Man

Put yourself in Joseph's place.

You are betrothed to Mary, which is the same as a legal marriage, except there is to be no physical intimacy.

All of a sudden, you discover that this woman is pregnant.

Of course, you would think the worse.

Yet, when Joseph hears all these things, instead of reacting in anger, he responds in love and compassion toward Mary.

Joseph just wanted to do what was right by Mary.

How we respond in a crisis reveals a lot about our character.

When things are going smoothly we are able to hide a lot of things that become evident in a time of crisis.

These two truths concerning Joseph's character is a lesson for all who want to be used by God. God uses those who are clean and He uses those who are tender hearted.

Not only do we see Joseph's Character but also:

2. JOSEPH'S CALL (VS. 20-23)

Matthew 1:20-23

²⁰ *But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.* ²¹ *And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.* ²² *Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,* ²³ *Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.*

As Joseph deliberated the entire situation he found himself in, the Lord spoke to him and placed a call on his life, like he had with Mary. This great call to service was, spiritually speaking, a great call and one that would have honored any man.

From a human standpoint, it was a call that placed a great weight on this man's shoulders and it was a call to bear a great weight of shame. His was a call that involved three elements.

A. The Revelation of a Person (vs. 20)

The Lord's call to Joseph was designed to help him deal with his hurts and fears. The angel of the Lord told him

plainly that this child growing in Mary's womb was the Son of God. The Lord was calling Joseph to be the surrogate father to the Messiah.

B. The Revelation of a Purpose (vs. 21)

This verse tells us the child's gender, the child's name and the child's purpose in life. Joseph is told that this child will be THE One Who will provide salvation from sin.

C. The Revelation of a Plan (vs. 22-23)

Joseph is told that God is working out His eternal purpose in the lives of Mary and Joseph. God is going to bring to pass all the prophecies concerning the Messiah and He is going to use Joseph to be a part of it!

In all of this, Joseph is a good example. When a crisis arose in his life, he sought the Lord's face. Instead of reacting harshly and abruptly, Joseph reacted in faith waiting on the Lord for guidance and direction, and he was helped by God.

Joseph's call is also an encouragement to people like you and me. When we consider that Joseph was a humble character and that he was basically a nobody, it gives hope to all people!

Note not only Joseph's Character and Call but also:

3. JOSEPH'S CONDUCT (VS. 24-25)

Matthew 1:24-25

²⁴ *Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:*

²⁵ *And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.*

When Joseph received his call from God, he altered all of his plans and put away all of his considerations and simply went and did what the Lord said to do. Notice what the Bible says about Joseph's conduct.

A. He Was Submissive

Joseph did what the Lord told him to do.

Our duty before the Lord is to humble ourselves under God's mighty hand.

1 Peter 5:6

⁶ *Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:*

James 4:6

⁶ *But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he saith, God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.*

Regardless of the call God places on our lives, there will be times when the world, the flesh and the devil will try to make us ashamed of who we are and what we stand for. Yet, we should submit ourselves to the will of God and bear His shame regardless of what it may involve.

Part of being submissive is being obedient.

Without hesitation, Joseph did that which he had been commanded to do. What a lesson for us.

Obedience is blessed.

1 Samuel 15:22-23

²² And Samuel said, Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the LORD? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams. ²³ For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because thou hast rejected the word of the LORD, he hath also rejected thee from being king.

Obedience is what God desires and is one thing we all can do!

Note not only was he submissive but also note:

B. He Was Surrendered (vs. 25)

Matthew 1:25

²⁵ *And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name JESUS.*

Joseph was a man who was willing to place the will of the Lord ahead of his own rights. He respected Mary's virginity until after Jesus had been born! Even when it was inconvenient, Joseph willingly laid aside his own rights so that he could honor the Lord!

There are times when doing God's will is not the easiest thing to do. There are times when doing His will is not the most convenient thing to do. However, doing His will is always the RIGHT thing to do! We must come to the place where we lose our will to the will of God! Let it be said that we are surrendered to the plan of God without reservation and without compromise!

Close:

Eventually, Mary delivered her baby. On that great night, Joseph did as he had been commanded when he took his Creator into his arms and called his name JESUS.

Is it said of us today we are a person of character, obedient to God's call, carrying it out with the proper conduct?