

Matthew Tells the Story of Jesus' Birth

Matthew 1:18-25

by David Servant

Joseph's faith and obedience to God's plan helped him navigate a difficult situation and ultimately led to the birth of Jesus.

Scripture: Proverbs 10:12, Matthew 1:18, 1 Corinthians 13:4, James 1:19, 1 Peter 4:8

Topics: "Jesus Birth", "Obedience To God"

Description

David Servant discusses the engagement of Mary and Joseph, highlighting Joseph's initial struggle and decision to quietly break off the engagement upon discovering Mary's pregnancy. Despite the hurt and confusion, Joseph's obedience and unselfishness are evident as he chooses to protect Mary's reputation. Through divine intervention, Joseph learns the truth about Mary's baby and embraces his role in naming the child Jesus, who would save humanity from sin.

Transcript

When two people are engaged, that means they've promised to marry each other but are not yet actually married until their wedding. In our day, engaged people sometimes get "disengaged," and when they do, it's usually because one of them has discovered something about the other person that wasn't known previously. (That's why it's a good idea to get to know a person as much as you can before promising to marry him or her.)

That was the situation for Mary and Joseph. When Joseph discovered that Mary was pregnant, he figured that she had fallen in love with someone else. That greatly alarmed him for several reasons. First, Mary undoubtedly told Joseph that she would marry him because she loved him. But the baby in her belly indicated that she loved another man, and so she had lied to him. No one wants to marry a liar.

Second, in order for Mary to become pregnant, she must have had a sexual relationship with that other man. That meant she had broken one of the Ten Commandments, and so she was also an adulteress (or more technically, a fornicator). No one wants to marry an adulteress.

Third, in her defense, Mary surely explained to Joseph that the baby in her belly was conceived by the Holy Spirit. If she did, Joseph obviously didn't believe her. He must have thought she was going crazy, claiming to have seen an angel who told her she would give birth to God's Son! No wonder Joseph

decided to break their engagement! He was a wise man.

Joseph was also a very good man. Even though he was surely very hurt by what he discovered, he knew that everyone would think badly about Mary if they also knew what he did. So he decided to break his engagement quietly, so as not to embarrass her. The Bible says that when we love someone, we won't want to advertise his or her sins, but keep quiet about them.

God, who knows everything, knew what Joseph was planning to do, so He had an angel appear to Joseph in a dream. The angel explained the truth about Mary's baby, and instructed him to name the child Jesus, which means "the Lord saves." Jesus would save us from our sins, and that was the main reason He came into the world. Joseph was greatly relieved to learn the truth, and he did what the angel told him.

Q. There were probably many people who passed judgment on Joseph and Mary when they saw that Mary was pregnant but not yet married to Joseph. It must have really hurt them. Have you ever had someone believe something bad about you that wasn't true? What should you do when that happens?

A. You should try to explain the truth to those who have passed judgment on you, hoping that they'll realize their error. But, even if they don't, you can be thankful that God knows the truth and trust that He will eventually clear you, just as He did Mary.

Q. Have you ever believed something bad about someone else that you later discovered wasn't true? Why did you believe it at first? What did you learn from that experience?

Q. Do you think you will ever get married? How long do you think you should be friends with a person before agreeing to get married? What are the most important traits you should look for in a person to marry?

A. Obedience to God and unselfishness.

Application: We should always believe the best about people until we know differently, and when we do, if we love them, we will hide their sins, not tell everyone about them.

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