

Joseph – 12.24.17

Christmas According to Luke Series

Today's Passage: Luke 2:1-7

- When we think of the story of Jesus' birth, there are many people and things we overlook, like Caesar Augustus, Bethlehem and now Joseph.

Most of us do not know much about Joseph.

- In fact, the ironic thing is that he appears on the stage of history for a few moments and then disappears.

Here is what we know about Joseph:

#1 He is from the ROYAL line of David and his father's name was Jacob (see genealogy in **Matthew 1:16**).

#2 He was from Nazareth, but his family hometown was Bethlehem.

- Knowing this, Joseph and Mary had to travel about **80 miles** to get to his family hometown was Bethlehem to register for the Caesar Augustus' census.

#3 He was a CARPENTER by trade. (see **Matthew 13:54-55**)

#4 He was ENGAGED to Mary (and then the story gets crazy).

Matthew 1:18-19 (NIV) ¹⁸ *This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.* ¹⁹ *Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.*

- In order for God to become a man, Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus and raise Him. The problem is that she was already engaged to Joseph before this happened. Early Jewish custom concerning engagement was very different from how modern culture sees engagement. When a couple was "engaged, pledged or betrothed", they were **legally** considered husband and wife but they didn't live together, and no consummation of the relationship happened until **after** the wedding. To break-off the engagement was a lot more involved than just "calling things off", it required a **DIVORCE**.
- Although he felt she had been unfaithful to him, he had no desire to hurt her in any way, so he thought to walk away and divorce her quietly.

#5 He was OBEDIENT.

Matthew 1:20 (NIV) *But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."*

- Up until this point, Joseph didn't understand, realize, or grasp everything that was going on. But now, he knew that God was in it.

Matthew 1:24-25 (NIV) ²⁴ *When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.* ²⁵ *But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And **he gave him** the name Jesus.*

Notice who Joseph obeyed:

#1 Joseph obeyed ROMAN law.

- Joseph obeyed Caesar Augustus' decree and went home to Bethlehem even with a nine-month pregnant wife.
- **In order to be a man of God, you must obey AUTHORITY.**
- **Romans 13:1-2** (NIV) *Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God.* ² *Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*

#2 Joseph obeyed the JEWISH Law. (see **Luke 2:21-24** and **Luke 2:39**)

- In **Matthew 1:19**, when Luke said that Joseph was a righteous man, translated it means "**faithful to all law**".

#3 Joseph obeyed GOD.

- From obeying an angel to **not divorce Mary**, to obeying another angel to go to Egypt to protect Jesus from Herod, Joseph obeyed God. (see also **Matthew 2:13-23**)
- **There will be times in our lives that we won't understand God or know why He is doing what He is doing, and those are the times we have to trust that God knows what is BEST for us.**

Joseph is often overlooked in the Christmas story, but he shouldn't be.

- **Every step that Joseph takes testifies to his IMPORTANCE.**

What can we learn from Joseph?

Joseph stands as a MODEL of what a godly man looks like:

- #1 He was **TRUSTING** when he could have doubted.
- #2 He was **TENDER** when he could have been harsh.
- #3 He was **THOUGHTFUL** when he could have been hasty.

Joseph was a man of FAITH, who, even though struggled with his doubts, trusted God.

Joseph probably thought he had his life all planned out, but then life happened.

- Whether we're given a choice or a command, we must always remember that **God is in CONTROL**. (see **Romans 8:28**)
- We just need to be obedient like Joseph.

In the Bible, God always is giving **GOD-SIZED** instructions.

- Will you trust God when the situation is out of your control?
- God longs for and looks for men and women who will obey when he calls.