

An Untold Story of Fear to Faith – Matthew 1:18-25 - Sunday, December 23rd, 2018

- After spending some time seeking the Lord concerning this years Christmas sermon, I sensed I was to do something different.
- Specifically, that of an untold story of faith as it relates to what I would argue is an amazing man we would know to be Joseph.
- Recently I heard a teaching about him that really opened my eyes to this godly man who for the most part is never talked about.

Matthew 1:18–25 - 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 faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. 20 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. 21 She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”). 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 did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

- I’m hoping you’ll kindly indulge me as I share with you from the life of Joseph, which I believe will be an encouragement to you.
- First, I need to point out a couple of things in order to better understand just how unique God’s calling was on the life of Joseph.
- Joseph was the only man in human history that was ever told he was chosen to be the earthly father of the Savior of the world.

- If this weren’t unbelievable enough, he would also be the only husband in human history that would have a son born of a virgin.
- As I was pondering this, it struck me that Joseph lived the rest of what’s believed to be a short life, being ridiculed by everyone.
- Even worse both he and Mary would live their married life together having everyone believe that Mary had fallen into sexual sin.

- It’s with this backstory that I think we are better able to understand just how amazing the story of Joseph is on this Christmas.
- I don’t know if it’s possible to overstate the faith that both he and Mary had in order to be such a big part of the salvation story.
- What follows are two truths about Joseph I would suggest can have profound application to our lives related to Christ’s birth.

1. He counted the cost and made the decision

- I find it most interesting that Joseph had considered the implications of what God had chosen him to do and decided to do it.
- This in spite of what he knew would be tremendous opposition and adversity from people in his own hometown and his family.
- Yet, he counted the cost and decided to accept Jesus as his own son and parent him as a father though he could have refused.

Luke 14:28–33 - 28 For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it—29 lest, after he has laid the foundation, and is not able to finish, all who see it begin to mock him, 30 saying, ‘This man began to build and was not able to finish.’ 31 Or what king, going to make war against another king, does not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? 32 Or else, while the other is still a great way off, he sends a delegation and asks conditions of peace. 33 So likewise, whoever of you does not forsake all that he has cannot be My disciple.

2. He believed by faith and obeyed God’s command

- Notice in verse twenty-four where we’re told when Joseph woke up from the dream, he did what the Lord had commanded him.
- Also, notice in verse twenty-five how that Joseph did not consummate their marriage until after Mary had given birth to Jesus.
- The reason I mention this is because it speaks to the faith that’s pleasing to God and is evidenced by ones obedience to God.

- One of the things that I’m learning in my own walk with the Lord is that fear is the antithesis of faith in that they can’t both exist.
- Let me explain, if I’m full of fear, or fearful, then I cannot be full of faith, or faithful. It cannot be both; it’s either one or the other.
- I point this out because of what we’re told in verse twenty about how the angel of the Lord said to Joseph, “do not be afraid.”

- I was sharing on Thursday night about another teaching I heard on the 23rd Psalm, which I had never heard taught in that way.
- It’s David’s reference to fearing no evil though he walks through the valley of the shadow of death because God comforts him.
- What was so interesting about this is that David is referring to sheep becoming fearful when the sun is behind the mountains.

- I would suggest Joseph had become fearful in the valley of the shadow he walked through when he heard Mary was pregnant.
- It’s for this reason that the Lord comforted him and in so doing turned his fear into faith even though he could not see the sun.
- So too is this true for us in the sense that faith can replace fear even though we cannot see how God is going to get us through.

- I’ll take it a step further and also suggest Joseph was saved by grace through faith in Jesus, which is the Gospel of salvation.
- The Gospel, or good news is that Jesus was crucified, buried, rose again on the third day, and is coming back for us one day.
- That’s the Gospel, and the ABC’s of Salvation is a simple childlike explanation of how to respond to the Gospel and be saved.

The ABC’s of Salvation

- The A is for Admit you’re a sinner and your need for the Savior, (Romans 3:10, 23 – 6:23).
- The B is for Believe in your heart that Jesus is Lord and God raised Him from the dead, (Romans 10:9-10).
- The C is for Call upon the name of the Lord and confess with your mouth that Jesus Christ is Lord, (Romans 10:9-10, 13).