



Spiritual Obedience – Matthew 1:18-25

## Spiritual Obedience

- Last week we talked about “Spiritual Appreciation”
  - To appreciate all God has done throughout history to bring His salvation message to you
  - To appreciate all the sacrifices individuals have made to keep the truth in message of the Gospel of Jesus
  - To appreciate all those who said “Yes” to God’s direction, even if they had no idea what it would cost them nor what He would do through them

## Spiritual Obedience

- This week I want to look at another individual God asked to sacrifice his life by making a decision to say “Yes” to the direction of The Lord
  - There is no recorded word in Scripture from him
  - To witness his impact on the Gospel you must observe his actions
  - He disappears from the scene without being able to see the full impact of his decisions
  - He is not listed in any “Hall of Faith” list
    - Not even in the genealogy list of Jesus the Messiah

## Spiritual Obedience

- **Matthew 1:15-16 NIV**, 15 Elihud the father of Eleazar, Eleazar the father of Matthan, Matthan the father of Jacob,
  - 16 and Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.
- Sometimes God asks us to make incredible hard decisions, but He never leaves us alone to make them

## The character of Joseph

- **Mathew 1:18-25 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 faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

## The character of Joseph

- Can you imagine the council Joseph must have been given after finding Mary pregnant?
  - There is no angel coming to him to explain everything
  - There is no chorus of heavenly host proclaiming the goodness of God
  - Just Joseph, alone with his crushed spirit, his “what ifs”, and a life changing decision to make

## The character of Joseph

- **Mathew 1:18-25 NIV**, 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.
- What do we know about Joseph from this verse?
  - Legally, Morally, Socially Joseph was the “husband” of Mary
  - He was “faithful” to The Law
  - He followed The Law but applied a strong layer of mercy
    - Described by some as, “Immense mercy” from Joseph

## The character of Joseph

- **Mathew 1:18-25 NIV**, 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.
  - “Divorce her quietly”
    - Be obedient to The Law but be as merciful as possible
  - **Micah 6:8 NIV**, He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

## The character of Joseph

- Why didn't God inform Joseph of Mary's condition from the Holy Spirit?
  - It had to appear as a scandal
    - God wanted to ensure everyone knew it was not Joseph's natural son, but virgin born
    - This was revealed by Joseph's actions to divorce her
  - It worked so well that the Jewish Talmudic texts and other ancient sources, mention a tradition or rumor that Jesus' mother, Mary, had a child with a Roman soldier named Pantera.

## The character of Joseph

- Why didn't God inform Joseph of Mary's condition from the Holy Spirit?
  - It had to appear as a scandal
    - **John 8:19 NIV**, 19 Then they asked him, "Where is your father?"
    - **John 8:41 NIV**, "We are not illegitimate children," they protested. "

## The path presented to Joseph

- **Mathew 1:18-25 NIV**, 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”).

## The path presented to Joseph

- Have you ever had to make a decision where there appeared to be no good path?
  - Maybe a medical decision, one dealing with an abusive spouse, lost estranged rebellious child
- This is where Joseph was at
  - He made the best morally merciful decision possible with the facts staring him in the face

## The path presented to Joseph

- But it wasn't the decision God wanted him to make, so God brings some clarity to his facts
  - Mary is innocent and obedient
  - God is at work in all the facts you possess and even those you are not aware of yet
  - This is all a part of God's plan to bring salvation to lost mankind

## The path presented to Joseph

- **Vs. 20**, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife”
  - “Joseph son of David”
  - “Do not be afraid”
  - “Take Mary home as your wife”
- “Joseph, Mary and the child need a human protector, provider, mostly they need a family”

## The path presented to Joseph

- I don't know what decisions we will have to face in the coming years, but it is encouraging to know we don't have to make them alone
  - As long as we are open to the leadership of the Holy Spirit
  - As long as pride, anger, hurt and all other human emotions are stored away and kept in check
  - I believe the Holy Spirit will lead you to God's will which is always the best decision
  - So, stop questioning and punishing yourself for past decisions you still wonder about

## The decision of Joseph

- **Mathew 1:18-25 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 did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.
  - **Hebrews 12:2 NIV**, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.
    - “Scorning its shame” - to disregard, or treat as insignificant the disgrace and humiliation associated with something

## The decision of Joseph

- **Deuteronomy 21:22-23 NIV**, 22 If someone guilty of a capital offense is put to death and their body is exposed on a pole, 23 you must not leave the body hanging on the pole overnight. Be sure to bury it that same day, because anyone who is hung on a pole is under God's curse. You must not desecrate the land the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance.
  - We preach a shameful message when we preach Jesus on the cross to lost mankind
  - Because being crucified was a degrading insult, and the idea of worshiping someone who had been crucified was unimaginable

## The decision of Joseph

- **1st Corinthians 1:18 NIV**, 18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God.
  - The message of the cross is foolishness, mōria in Greek, from which we get the word moron
- This is what God is asking of Joseph – set aside the scandal, what will be lost, the appearance of your character being destroyed and be a part of God’s greatest gift to humanity

## The decision of Joseph

- Notice Joseph's decision
  - **Mathew 1:24 NIV**, 24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.
    - No questioning, columns of pluses and minuses, caring about his reputation or doubts about raising God's Son – Just a simple, "Yes, Lord"
    - Immediate would be a word I used to describe Joseph's actions
    - Fear gone but probably questions remained

## The decision of Joseph

- Notice Joseph's decision
  - **Mathew 1:25 NIV**, 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.
    - He took Mary home, not to his home, but their home
    - He understood the importance of the virgin birth so he “did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son”

## The decision of Joseph

- Notice Joseph's decision
  - He was obedient right down to the simple instruction to “give him the name Jesus”
  - In naming Jesus, Joseph was essentially saying, “This is my son”
  - My lineage, name, character legally flows to him

## The decision of Joseph

- We have an example of obedience this morning in baptism
  - This one doesn't have all the answers as to why and doesn't even know the right questions
  - But because Jesus instructs us to be baptized, she will come this morning in simple obedience

## Spiritual Obedience

- Joseph kind of disappears from the pages of Scripture
- Appreciate the work of Joseph in your spiritual walk
- Appreciate the mentorship Joseph has displayed for our life
- Follow Joseph's spiritual obedience with your own spiritual obedience, wherever it leads
  - Whatever the cost
  - For the glory of The Lord



Spiritual Obedience – Matthew 1:18-25