

Remnant Life Church  
December 4, 2016  
**Christmas Courage:**  
**The Story of Joseph**  
Matthew 1:18-25

**READ – Matt 1:18-25**

- The story of Joseph receives little attention compared to the birth of Jesus and His mother, Mary
- But it is a story of courage
  - Courage to do the right thing
  - Courage to do the difficult thing
  - Courage to do the selfless thing
- Not one spoken word of Joseph is recorded in the Bible
  - He was of royal lineage (the line of David – **Matt 1:1-16**)
  - It is speculated that he may have had some position of civic authority among the people in Bethlehem
  - He is truly the forgotten player in the story of Jesus' birth yet he was invaluable to what God accomplished
- What do we learn of courage from the story of Joseph?
  1. God gives courage to ordinary people
    - a. I look at the people of the Bible as superheroes of faith
      - i. Never making a mistake
      - ii. Always prepared and ready to serve God no matter the situation
    - b. The fact is they were normal, ordinary people until God entered the picture
    - c. Moses and David were shepherds
    - d. Abraham and his family made idols
    - e. Elisha was a farmer
    - f. Andrew, Peter, James, and John were fishermen
    - g. Paul was a tent-maker and bounty hunter
    - h. Adam was just a pile of dirt
  2. God does extraordinary things through ordinary people
    - a. **I Cor 1:26-29** - *Brothers and sisters, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. God chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.*
    - b. How did God, maker and ruler of the Universe, bring His one and only Son into the world?
      - i. On billowing clouds with thunder and lightning accompanied by legions of angels blowing trumpets and shouting His arrival?

- ii. No – it was on a quiet spring evening in a backwater town in Nazareth which itself was not a place of notoriety (When Phillip told his brother Nathaniel that Jesus was from Nazareth Nathaniel said, “*Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?*” **John 1:46**)
- iii. God uses the simplest ways to proclaim the most profound truths because He wants everyone to understand His mercy, grace, and love
- c. Take advantage of this time of year to share the love of Jesus with someone in your life
- d. People will listen more this time of year; more likely to come to church (invite for the 18<sup>th</sup>!)

3. God gives us courage to overcome our fears and doubts

- a. Do you think Joseph experienced some doubt after Mary broke the news to him?
- b. “What is going on here?”
  - i. He would have been filled with uncertainty
  - ii. He knew only one thing for certain – Mary was pregnant with a child that was not his
  - iii. Emotions would have been running wild
  - iv. His character reined his emotions in and did not allow them to dictate his response
  - v. Emotions are not bad; they were created in us by God
  - vi. But they were never intended to dominate and rule over us
- c. He had many options he could have used and all of them would have been justified
- d. But only one was the right, best way to respond
- e. **Gal. 5:22-23** - *"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control."*
- f. This is the path that Joseph took and why he was called a righteous man

4. God gives us courage to face the future

- a. Joseph was given a dream with very specific instructions (**Matt 1:20**)
- b. God does not always do this
  - i. Most often He speaks to our hearts through prayer
  - ii. He will speak through other people through wise counsel
  - iii. He will simply guide you through the circumstances
- c. In whatever way God chooses to speak to us our obedience is required just as Joseph was obedient (**Matt 1:24**)
- d. No matter the circumstances we ALL have the same promises
  - i. **Heb 13:5** – *I will never leave you or forsake (abandon) you*
  - ii. **Rom 8:31** – *If God is for us, who can be against us?*
- e. This is why we should never fear the future!

- The road Joseph had to take required courage
- That same courage is being required of us today – perhaps you’re in a time of needing that courage now

- When we face doubts, fears, and difficult challenges we are often tempted to try and avoid the time in the wilderness because...
    - There might be pain and more trouble
    - We might encounter giants
    - There might be defeat
  - And so we often try and retreat to what we know best – our comfort zones
    - Old habits
    - Old patterns of behavior
    - Doing what we must to ease the burden or stop the pain
  - **But we have those promises!**
- God gives courage to ordinary people
  - God does extraordinary things through those ordinary people
  - God gives us courage to overcome our doubts and fears
  - God gives us courage to face the future
- Joseph was a silent yet central figure in God’s plan of redemption for the world
    - The mighty works of God do not require notoriety
    - God does not need an advance man or someone to handle His press releases
    - One of the best examples of this can be seen in an experience had by the prophet Elijah

**I Kings 19:9-13** - *And the word of the LORD came to him: “What are you doing here, Elijah?” He replied, “I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, torn down your altars, and put your prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too.” The LORD said, “Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by.” Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.*

- Have the faith to know that God will work in and through you (yes, you!) to accomplish His will
- Like Joseph it will often take great courage
- Hold to your character and desire to live in righteousness no matter the appearance of the circumstances you are dealing with
- We have His promises and HE IS FAITHFUL!