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Christmas Through the Eyes of Joseph; Matt 1:18-25
GPBC
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Introduction – In previous Christmas messages we looked at Christmas through the eyes of Mary, the shepherds, the angel, Simeon, and Anna. This morning we look through the eyes of Joseph. Apart from Mary, no other character in the Christmas narrative captures the wonder and the confusion of that first Christmas like Joseph.

Think about this way: What he initially was convinced to be the truth was in reality far, far from it – and what he came to know as the absolute truth was far, far more than he could ever comprehend. I want us to stop for a moment and consider this lesson from the life of Joseph. God is doing something in every one of our lives this very moment. God is bringing His will about in your life. And it just might be something entirely different than what you are convinced it is. And furthermore, His plans and purposes are without a doubt beyond our imagination! God is always up to something bigger than us! And by His grace, He includes us in the wondrous outworking of His sovereign will. Joseph at first was just looking at things from the sole perspective of Joseph – but God was including Joseph in something far bigger than Joseph!

That's what Christmas means – God is up to something far bigger than us and by grace He includes us in His wondrous work! Aren't you glad this morning God is working something far beyond us and greater than our imagination! This is about Joy to the World!

But at the beginning of that first Christmas Joseph had no idea just how wonderful were the plans of God. In fact, at first what Joseph thought tragic turned out to be triumphant, what Joseph first thought to be miserable turned out to be majestic, what Joseph first thought to be disappointment turned out to be deliverance, what Joseph first thought to be crisis turned out to be Christmas!

Take a lesson from Joseph – when we eventually find out what God is up to in our lives, it will be a far greater and far more joyful outcome than we could have ever dreamed!

- I. The Heartbreaking Discovery
 - a. V18a – Matthew tells us right away that this is about the birth of Jesus Christ. The first 17 verses Matthew goes painstakingly through the genealogy of Jesus to prove (1) this is the Promised One, (2) this is unfolding in God’s perfect timing, and (3) man could not make this up or arrange it – this has to be God.
 - b. So we know by this point as readers that Jesus Christ, the Promised Son of God who will come to save sinners, is about to be born into this world – we know that – but Joseph doesn’t yet.
 - c. Continue in v18 – When His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together (betrothal in Jewish culture was something like our engagement, except that once you were betrothed, you were considered a married couple. So betrothal was far more binding than our engagement. However, not until the wedding celebration would the couple consummate and finalize their union. BTW – that’s always been God’s plan – sexual purity until becoming one in a covenant ceremony of marriage. I know the world practices co-habitation and premarital sexuality and that’s because the world has no concern whatsoever to honor the God who created their bodies and gave them a spouse to love. But we’re not of the world. We believe God’s plan for our sexuality and marriage is far better and more rewarding. We don’t co-habitat and we don’t forsake our purity. We honor God, and God in turn honors us and our marriage.)
 - d. Continue with me – she was found to be with child
 - i. Now listen carefully – that was devastating for Joseph! Because they had yet to come together. There is no other explanation except Mary has been unfaithful to Joseph! He’s embarrassed. He’s hurt. He’s angry. He’s upset. He is feeling everything you would be feeling if you were in his shoes!!
 - e. Continue with me – from the Holy Spirit. You see that’s the part Joseph did not yet know. From all accounts Mary has been unfaithful, but the reality is actually she is the most faithful young lady in all Judea.

- f. Now in v19 we find out what kind of man Joseph was. He could have made a big show. He could have unleashed his hurt and anger and made life as miserable as possible for Mary, even maybe having her stoned for adultery. He could have acted in vengeance. But Joseph was a good, humble, godly man. Even in the worst of circumstances, he resolved to bring no further harm to Mary. You see he truly loved her in spite of her seeming betrayal. Mary was not the only faithful person in this betrothal. Joseph continued being faithful to her. He just kept loving his neighbor.
 - g. He thought he had been wronged, but he just kept doing the right thing. And as it turns out, being done wrong was far from the truth.
- II. The Humbling Revelation
- a. Let's begin v20 – But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying – (now listen to me for just a second – when your world seems to turn upside down, don't give up and don't give in. Be like Joseph, just keep doing what's right because God has a word for you just when you need it most!)
 - b. **“Joseph”** (you see that – he called him by name. God knows exactly who you are and where you are and what you need) **son of David** (the angel reminded Joseph that he was of King David's lineage. Now guess why that's so important – look at v1. The Christ will come in David's lineage!) **do not fear to take Mary as your wife** (God was disrupting Joseph's plan to quietly divorce Mary because God was up to something bigger! God told Joseph to do the opposite of what Joseph was planning to do.) **for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit** (Now he knows! Joseph – you're not caught up in a betrayal – you're caught up in the birth of the Messiah! You haven't been done wrong – you couldn't be done more right!)
 - c. So in v20 the angel explains how Mary is pregnant, in v21 he explains who the child is she carries!
 - i. It's a boy! (sermon title!) gender reveal!! Israel has been waiting on this son for 1000s of years! Joseph, son of David, you're going to have a son – the Son of David.
 - ii. Names him – Jesus – Jesus is the same name as the Hebrew Joshua, and it means he saves. Just as Joshua led the people

into the Promised Land on earth, Jesus will lead the people of God into the Promised Land of heaven!

- iii. Explains his name – for He will save His people from their sins – that’s how you get to the Promised Land of heaven – through faith in the sacrificial, substitutionary death of Jesus Christ, the Son of God!

d. Oh it was a humbling revelation.

III. The Holy Child

- a. What Joseph first thought was Mary’s sin turns out to be our Savior!
- b. There’s only been one virgin birth because there’s only been one Savior.
- c. Think just for a moment what that name Immanuel means. God with us. You see, because we are sinners and have each one of us rebelled against our Creator, if we were ever to be with God, God must first be with us.
- d. I’m so glad you’re here this morning! Did you realize that before Christmas falls on a Sunday again it will be 2033? Today is one of the most unique opportunities for worship we will ever have together. In 11 more years the makeup of this congregation will be different. The next time Christmas rolls around on a Sunday, our youngest will be 21 years old. Summer and I will be grandparents!
- e. But truly the main reason it’s so special to be right here, right now, is because we’ve gathered to worship Jesus. It’s Christmas. And Christmas means God is with us! Merry Christmas!

Conclusion – Let’s look at vv24-25 for our conclusion. Joseph got a word from God, and he was obedient. He just simply did what God told him to do no matter what everyone else must have thought or said at the time. Can you imagine the murmuring and whispering!! Not everyone knew and not everyone believed what was truly happening. Have you ever been in a situation where you knew the truth but others didn’t? I kinda felt that way the other day.

III. Listen – get in God’s Word because He’s got a word just for you. And then just simply be obedient. God’s up to something bigger than you, and He’s folding you into His great big plan. Let’s just see what God will do when we let go of what we think and simply trust and obey!