

The Angels of Christmas

HEARING GOD'S VOICE IN ADVENT

SERMON NOTES

Week 3 December 11, 2022

“Acting on the Unbelievable”

Matthew 1:18-25, 13:55

I. Joseph – The Backstory

- A. Most scholars believe that Joseph resided in _____ at the time Mary discovered that she was pregnant.
- B. Joseph probably learned from Mary that she was pregnant while she was staying at the home of her cousin _____.
- C. _____ is a woodworker and maybe a handyman.
- D. There is some debate in the church about the _____ of Joseph at the time of Mary’s pregnancy.

II. Joseph – A Visit from an Angel

- A. Joseph saw a messenger of God in his dream that confirms Mary’s story about her _____.
- B. _____ must have felt devastated, betrayed, humiliated and hurt by the news that Mary was pregnant.
- C. The virgin _____ is not a lesson in biology, it’s a lesson in theology.

III. God’s Will for Us – Joseph’s Response to the Dream

- A. The gap between the way the world is and the way it is supposed to be is the stuff of God given _____.
- B. We are called to show _____ and compassion for others.
- C. We should _____ serve God without looking for recognition.

Things I Would Like to Remember About This Message



ASBURY DAILY STUDY GUIDE *December 12-17, 2022*

INTRODUCTION

After learning that his fiancée was pregnant with a child that was not his, Joseph is devastated and feeling betrayed. But an Angel of the Lord comes to Joseph in a dream and tells him that Mary's unbelievable story is actually true. How would Joseph respond? Joseph decides to marry Mary and raise the Christ child as his own. It's a familiar story for many of us... but what does it tell us about God's will for us?

Monday: Matthew 1:18-19

What would you have thought if you had been Joseph as Mary told you she was having a baby, not by another man, but by the Holy Spirit? Are there faith issues that leave you with serious belief questions today?

Tuesday: Matthew 1:20-21

Joseph was "a devout Jewish man willing to give up what was often perceived to be a Jewish father's greatest privilege - siring his first-born son - in order to obey God's will." Have you had to give up some cherished dream to obey God? Might you ever have to? How can you and God bend any such loss to a positive end?

Wednesday: Matthew 1:22-23

Scholar William Barclay summed up why Matthew linked "Emmanuel" with Jesus: "Jesus is the one person who can tell us what God is like, and what God means us to be. In him alone we see what God is and what [humans] ought to be." In what ways have you made Jesus central to your understanding of what God is like? Has that helped you to avoid some of the negative, frightening images of God some people deal with? If so, how?

Thursday: Matthew 1:24-25

In Luke 1:38, Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant. Let it be with me just as you have said." In Matthew 1:24 we read that Joseph "did just as an angel from God commanded." The text implied that Joseph accepted that answer without protest. Neither Joseph or Mary could see it at the time, but today millions, perhaps billions of people worship during Advent because two humble Hebrew peasants listened, believed, and obeyed. What is God calling you to listen to, to believe, and then to do or be this Advent season?

Friday: Genesis 37:1-11, 39:6-10, 41:39-43

The Joseph of the New Testament was named after the Joseph of the Old Testament. Joseph of the Old Testament saved Egypt from a great famine and caused it to prosper. Do you believe Joseph of the New Testament lived up to the greatness of his namesake? Why or why not? Does your name mean anything to you? Does it affect how you live your life? How would you like to be remembered?

MOVING FORWARD

The gap between the way the world is and the way the world is supposed to be is the stuff of God-given dreams. Like Joseph, we are called to pay attention to those dreams and then act upon them in order to make this world more like the Kingdom of God. And, like Joseph, we are called to humbly serve God without looking for recognition. What dream is God calling you to act on?

Answers to the sermon notes: IA) Bethlehem, B) Elizabeth, C) Joseph, D) age. IIA) pregnancy, B) Joseph, C) birth. IIIA) dreams, B) mercy, C) humbly.