

Sermon Notes

"Joseph's Reputation at Risk"

Matthew 1:18-25

December 16, 2018

4. Read Matthew 1:20-25
 - a. Why did Joseph change his plans to divorce Mary (1:20)?
 - b. If Joseph wasn't the actual father of Christ, who was (1:18, 20)?
 - c. What did the angel command Joseph to name the child, and why (1:21)? Use a commentary to learn the meaning of the name "Jesus." What significant mission in life would Mary's child have?
 - d. Why is Mary's virginal conception of Christ significant (1:22-23)? How does the meaning of the name Immanuel contribute to this significance?

Let's Pray:

For our missionaries:

Becky and Enrique Fernandez - ProMETA

Pray for good health and energy as they prepare for a busy end of the year, with many trips and ministry opportunities.

Growth Group Homework

For the week of 12-16-18

Questions adapted from James Galvin, ed., et al., *New Testament Lesson Maker*,
NavPress, Colorado Springs, CO, 1992, pp. 9.

Getting Started:

1. How do people typically react when facing embarrassing situations?

Digging Deeper:

2. Read Matthew 1:18-19.
 - a. What happened to Mary while she and Joseph were engaged (1:18)? What do you think Joseph initially thought upon hearing this news about his bride-to-be?
 - b. How did Joseph plan to handle this delicate situation (1:19)? What positive character qualities did Joseph possess?
 - c. What would have been your reaction had you been in Joseph's situation?

3. Consider the scandalous nature of this story, and the unlikelihood that it was made up or that Christians would have preserved it if not true nor crucial.

“To many in our day, such a miracle of conception is too difficult to accept, but it was scandalous even in the first century, particularly in its Jewish context. The Jews had no sympathy for the myths of the Greeks, nor for the immoral sexual activity of their gods. Moreover, in a culture extremely sensitive to sexual propriety, the virgin birth of Jesus as it is portrayed in the Gospels is simply not the kind of story that the early Christians would have made up. From the earliest days stories were circulating about the illegitimacy of the birth of Jesus, and the Christians would have been foolish to throw fuel on the fire by preserving a story such as this. It was undoubtedly considered true and important in understanding who Jesus was. (*Evangelical Convictions*, Free Church Publications, Minneapolis, MN, 2011, p. 100).

- a. How do you imagine the “grapevine” treated the Mary-Joseph situation?
- b. How does it feel to know that you are innocent and yet have people attacking your character and whispering behind your back?
- c. How does our desire for approval or acceptance keep us from doing the right thing?