

“Joseph, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife.”

Lesson 02 in the series: “Christmas Greetings”

I. The first Christmas, God sent an angel to greet Joseph in a dream.

“This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream.”

Matthew 1:18-20a (NLT)

Note: Mary’s unexpected pregnancy had put a good man like Joseph in a bad spot.

“If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death... You must purge the evil from among you.”

Deuteronomy 22:23-24 (NIV)

“And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.”

Micah 6:8 (NIV)

A. The angel told Joseph God didn’t want him to break off his engagement to Mary.

“Joseph, son of David,’ the angel said, ‘do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit.’” Matthew 1:20b (NLT)

Merry Christmas! God has ways of making His will known to us.

- **The Bible:** “All Scripture is inspired by God and is useful to teach us what is true and to make us realize what is wrong in our lives. It corrects us when we are wrong and teaches us to do what is right.” 2 Timothy 3:16 (NLT)
- **Prayer:** “If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking.” James 1:5 (NLT)
- **Godly Counsel:** “Teach and counsel each other with all the wisdom he (Christ) gives.”
Colossians 3:16 (NLT)
- **Circumstances:** “We can make our plans, but the LORD determines our steps.”
Proverbs 16:9 (NLT)

B. The angel told Joseph that the baby in Mary’s womb was God in the flesh.

“‘And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet: ‘Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means “God is with us.”’”

Matthew 1:21-23 (NLT)

Note: “Jesus” = “God saves”

Merry Christmas! God understands us, loves us, and wants a personal relationship with us.

“So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unending love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father’s one and only Son.” John 1:14 (NLT)

II. Joseph wasn’t afraid to do what God commanded regardless of the consequences.

“When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.”

Matthew 1:24-25 (NLT)

Note: By taking Mary as his wife and Jesus as his son Joseph willingly surrendered to the Lord:

- His dreams
- His security
- Control of his life
- Approval of others

Merry Christmas! Surrendering our lives to the Lord is the smartest/safest/best thing we can do.

“The LORD is my shepherd, I shall not be in want. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he restores my soul. He guides me in paths of righteousness for his name’s sake. Even

though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows. Surely goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the LORD forever." Psalm 23:1-6 (NIV)

"If any of you wants to be my follower, you must turn from your selfish ways, take up your cross, and follow me. If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake and for the sake of the Good News, you will save it." Mark 8:34-35 (NLT)

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Connect Group Questions

1. Share about a time in your life when you realized that you needed to break up with someone or quit a job. How did you get ready to face the other person/your boss? How did it go?
2. Read Matthew 1:18-24. Why was Joseph going to call off the wedding? What changed his mind? If you had been in Joseph's position, would you have believed Mary's story that God made her pregnant?
3. God rarely speaks through angels, but He often speaks through:

- The Bible
- Prayer
- Godly Counsel
- Circumstances

How has he spoken to you recently?

4. Read John 1:14. How does the phrase "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" impact you?
5. By taking Mary as his wife and Jesus as his son, Joseph willingly surrendered to the Lord:

- His dreams
- His security
- Control of his life
- Approval of others

On a scale of 1-10, with Joseph being a "10", where would you rate yourself as far as being surrendered to following God?

6. Read Matthew 19:16-22. What kept the rich young ruler from fully surrendering to following Jesus? What holds people back today?
7. Spend some time as a group praying for our church asking God to help us fully surrender to his will.