



Pastor Doug Wilson • BETHANY - A PLACE OF NEW BEGINNINGS  
December 22, 2024 • THE FOURTH WEEK OF ADVENT

**When we study the story of the birth of Jesus,  
four times an angel appears.  
And four times the angel says, "Fear not! Do not be afraid!"**

### 1. Where did Jesus learn the right way to live?

MATTHEW 13:54-56 (NIV, NLT)

<sup>54</sup> Coming to his hometown, he began teaching the people in their synagogue, and they were amazed. **"WHERE did this man get this wisdom and these miraculous powers?"** they asked. <sup>55</sup> **"Isn't this the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother's name Mary, & aren't his brothers James, Joseph, Simon & Judas? <sup>56</sup> Aren't all his sisters with us? WHERE did he learn all these things?"**

### 2. God gave Jesus an extraordinary model! (Actually two! Er, three!)

MATTHEW 1:1-18 (TNIV)

<sup>1</sup> This is the genealogy [Lit. 'the Genesis'] of **Jesus the Anointed...**

<sup>16</sup> ...Jacob [was] the father of **Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Anointed.**

MATTHEW 1:18-25 (TNIV)

<sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of **Jesus the Anointed** came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to **Joseph**, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant **through THE HOLY SPIRIT.** <sup>19</sup> **Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man** and did not want to **expose** her to **public disgrace**, he had in mind to divorce her **quietly.**

<sup>20</sup> But after he had considered this, **an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream** & said, **"Joseph son of David, DO NOT BE AFRAID** to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is **from THE HOLY SPIRIT.**

<sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and **you are to give him the name Jesus,** because he will save his people from their sins."

<sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

<sup>23</sup> *"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him **Immanuel**" (which means **"God with us"**).* [ISAIAH 7:14]

<sup>24</sup> When **Joseph** woke up, **he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him** and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup> But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. **And he gave him the name Jesus.**

**WHAT WERE THE REASONS FOR JOSEPH'S FEAR? (And our's?)**

- **Can I trust my wife?** (v. 18) ♦ *Fear about my relationships.*
- **What will people think about Mary...& me?** (v. 19) ♦ *Fear about my reputation. Realize that we can't control our reputation — we can only control our character.*
- **How can I protect my wife...& my baby?** (MT 2:13-15, 19-23) ♦ *Fear about my future.*
- **Am I in over my head?** (as a husband, as a father, as a person?) ♦ *Fear about my competency.*

#### a. Joseph had... ear. (So can I!)

- **Joseph listens to the word of God** (MATTHEW 1:19)
- **Joseph listens to the voice of God and the heart of God** (MATTHEW 1:20-22)
- **So does Jesus!** MARK 12:29-30 (NLT) *"The most important commandment is this: 'LISTEN, O ISRAEL!*

#### b. Joseph had... character. (MATTHEW 1:19)

"In the NT Joseph never speaks. ... We may call him "Quiet Joseph." His hallmark is obedience — prompt, simple, and unspectacular obedience. And in this sense Joseph prefigures one important feature in this Gospel's understanding of righteousness: **to be righteous is simply to obey the Word of God;** righteousness is just to do (a favorite word in this Gospel) what God says. Righteousness, in Matthew, is — simply obeying.

...we read that "Joseph, Mary's fiancé, was a righteous man (*dikaios*), but **he did not want to shame Mary.** So he decided to divorce her quietly (*lathra*)" (1:19). In this verse it is the phrase between the two principal words ("righteous" and "quietly") that defines Joseph's character most subtly: **"he did not want to shame Mary."** **RIGHTEOUSNESS, Matthew's Jesus will show again and again, IS NOT WANTING TO SHAME PEOPLE, A SENSITIVITY TO PERSONS.**

FREDERICK DALE BRUNER, *Matthew: A Commentary, 1. The Christbook (Matthew 1-12), Revised & Expanded Ed. (1987, 2004, Eerdmans) 47-48*

"Matthew tells us that Joseph was "a righteous man" (Matthew 1:19). **This is a technical term in the first century, meaning that he was a man who was FAITHFUL TO ALL HIS RELATIONSHIPS, especially to his relationship with the living God and God's will as it is expressed in God's law. JOSEPH WAS A "RIGHT-RELATIONSHIP" MAN.**

Now, according to the law, when a woman is unfaithful she is to be taken to the court and openly exposed for breaking the legal bond. As Joseph, the "righteous man" struggles with his pain, he chooses **not** to exercise this legal right. **Although he seeks a right relationship with the LAW, he also seeks a right relationship with MARY. He does not want to shame her. What good would that do?"**

—DARRELL W. JOHNSON, *The Most Wonderful Time of All Years* (2013, Regent College Publishing) 84.

*"One of the hardest things in the world is to be RIGHT and not hurt other people with it."*

—DALLAS WILLARD

#### • So does Jesus!

HEBREWS 1:8-9 (ESV)

<sup>8</sup> ...[to] the Son [the Father] says, **"Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, THE SCEPTER OF UPRIGHTNESS** is the scepter of your kingdom.

<sup>9</sup> **YOU HAVE LOVED RIGHTEOUSNESS** and hated wickedness; therefore God, your God, has **ANointed you with the oil of gladness** beyond your companions." [PSALM 45:6-7]

• **God enables us to GROW in righteousness!** (LUKE 1:17; ROM. 8:4,10; 14:17; GAL. 5:5!)

PSALM 23:3 (NKJV)

◆ **So I trust the Lord my Shepherd to lead me in alignment with His CHARACTER...**

PROVERBS 1:1-3 (NIV)

◆ **...and I study God's Word to gain wisdom in doing what is RIGHT...** (MATT. 5:6; 6:33)

ROMANS 8:4 (NIV)

◆ **...and I keep in step with the Spirit who leads me into RIGHTEOUS living!**

**c. Joseph had...a \_\_\_\_\_ heart.** (MATT. 1:19; EX. 34:6; PSA. 145:8)

• **So does Jesus!** See *how* RIGHTEOUSNESS is described by Jesus...

MATTHEW 9:13, 36 (NIV)

<sup>13</sup> **But go and learn what this means: 'I desire MERCY, not sacrifice.'** [HOS. 6:6]  
*For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*

**d. Joseph had...an \_\_\_\_\_ spirit.** (MATTHEW 1:24-25)

• \_\_\_\_\_ **times God spoke to Joseph...& \_\_\_\_\_ times he obeyed!** (1:20-25; 2:13-15, 19-21, 22-23)

MATTHEW 2:13-15 (TNIV)

<sup>13</sup> When they had gone, **an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream.** "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. **Stay there until I tell you,** for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

<sup>14</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night & left for Egypt,

<sup>15</sup> where he stayed until the death of Herod.

MATTHEW 2:19-23 (TNIV)

<sup>19</sup> After Herod died, **an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt** <sup>20</sup> and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

<sup>21</sup> So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. <sup>22</sup> But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, **HE WAS AFRAID** to go there. **Having been warned in a dream,** he withdrew to the district of Galilee, <sup>23</sup> and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

» **Obedience requires \_\_\_\_\_.** "Not my will, but Your's."

» **Obedience requires \_\_\_\_\_.** "Jesus set his face towards Jerusalem."

» **Obedience requires \_\_\_\_\_.** "Into Your hands I commit me spirit..."

» **Obedience demonstrates \_\_\_\_\_.** "Jesus took the bread...gave thanks..."

• **So does \_\_\_\_\_!** (MATTHEW 26:38-39, 42, 44; HEBREWS 5:7-8)

HEBREWS 5:7-8 (NIV)

<sup>7</sup> During the days of Jesus' life on earth, **he offered up prayers & petitions with fervent cries & tears to the one who could save him from death,** & he was HEARD because of his REVERENT SUBMISSION. <sup>8</sup> **Son though he was, he learned OBEDIENCE from what he suffered...**

JOHN 5:19 (TNIV)

Jesus gave them this answer: "...the Son can do nothing by himself; he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does.

JOHN 12:49-50 (NLT)

<sup>49</sup> **I don't speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me WHAT TO SAY and HOW TO SAY IT.** <sup>50</sup> And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so **I say whatever the Father tells me to say."**

JOHN 14:9-10 (TNIV)

<sup>9</sup> Jesus answered: "...Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father?' <sup>10</sup> **Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, LIVING IN ME, who is doing his work.**

MSG *I don't just make them up on my own. The Father who resides in me crafts each word into a divine act.* NLTse ... my Father who lives in me does his work through me.

JOHN 14:31 (TNIV)

<sup>31</sup> ...but [the Holy Spirit] comes so that the world may learn that **I love the Father and do EXACTLY what my Father has commanded me.**

JOHN 7:14-18 (TNIV)

<sup>14</sup> Not until halfway through the Festival did Jesus go up to the temple courts and begin to teach. <sup>15</sup> The Jews there were **amazed** and asked, "**How did this man get such learning WITHOUT HAVING BEEN TAUGHT?**"

<sup>16</sup> Jesus answered, "**My teaching is not my own. It comes from the one who sent me.** <sup>17</sup> Anyone who chooses to do the will of God will find out whether **my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.** <sup>18</sup> **Whoever speaks on their own does so to gain personal glory, but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is a man of truth; there is nothing false about him."**

JOHN 8:25-30 (TNIV)

<sup>25</sup> "Who are you?" they asked.

"Just what I have been telling you from the beginning," Jesus replied. <sup>26</sup> "...But he who sent me is trustworthy, and **what I have heard from him I tell the world."**

<sup>27</sup> They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. <sup>28</sup> So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am he and that **I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me.** <sup>29</sup> The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for **I always do what pleases him.**" <sup>30</sup> **Even as he spoke, many put their faith in him. [May it be so today, Abba!]**

• **And what about \_\_\_\_\_?** [Today's homework: read & reflect on 1 John 2:3-6.]  
*Like Joseph, and like Jesus, You and I are called to obey the words of Jesus!*

MATTHEW 7:24-29 (TNIV)

<sup>24</sup> "Therefore everyone who **hears** these words of mine and **PUTS THEM INTO PRACTICE** is like a **wise** man who built his house on the rock. <sup>25</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not **fall**, because it had its **foundation** on the rock. **[that is, it gives us: \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_.]**

<sup>26</sup> But everyone who **hears** these words of mine **and does not put them into practice** is like a **foolish** man who built his house on sand. <sup>27</sup> The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash."

MATTHEW 7:21 (NIV)

<sup>21</sup> "**Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one WHO DOES THE WILL OF MY FATHER** who is in heaven.

JOHN 2:5 (NASB 1995)

His mother said to the servants, "**Whatever He says to you, DO IT."**

JOHN 14:23-24 (NIV)

<sup>23</sup> Jesus replied, "Anyone who **LOVES** me **WILL OBEY MY TEACHING. My Father will LOVE them, and we will come to them and make our home with them.**

<sup>24</sup> Anyone who does **NOT** love me **will NOT obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.**

ISAIAH 66:1-2 (NIV)

<sup>1</sup> This is what the Lord says:

**"These are the ones I look on with favor: those who are humble and contrite in spirit, and who tremble at my word.**