



**When a Stepfather
Steps Up!
Matthew 1:18-25**

Observations

- Joseph, the stepfather of Jesus who was Mary's husband, played a pivotal and Godly role in the birth of Jesus Christ
- As famous as he has become, Joseph is never quoted, even once in scripture
- Everything that we know about Joseph is based on what he did and not what he said
- While others like Mary, The Angels, The Wise Men, The Shepherds, even Herod the King, have recorded words in Jesus' birth story; Joseph on the other hand, does not have one line recorded in scripture

But What He Did Spoke Volumes!

Let's Look at the Text; Matthew 1:18-25

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about; His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph

- “pledged” N.I.V., “engaged”- New Living Translation and The Message
- Recognize that engagements in that culture were legally binding and actually required a divorce to end them

“... but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy spirit”

Question: How was she “found” to be pregnant?

Answer: The scriptures do not say, and so we're left to wonder

Did she begin to show physically? Did missing periods and morning sickness cause suspicion among the women that knew her? “Some Mothers Know”

Guys, Put Yourself in Joseph's Shoes

- Joseph was a guy—no doubt—looking forward to the time when he would take his new wife home with him to begin their lives together
- And NOW, she was discovered to be pregnant before he takes her home, and he knew her pregnancy wasn't his

What a Freight Train to be Hit With!

- He immediately imagines that the woman that he wanted to spend the rest of his life with, had been with another man, not only betraying him, but publicly humiliating him
- According to Jewish law, he could have her dragged into the public arena, and stoned to death (remember the woman caught in adultery that the Jewish leaders brought to Jesus)

What Happened?

Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. verse 19

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 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.” verses 20-22

- **Joseph teaches us a lot about obedience to God in this story**
- **Hopefully we can apply the Godly principles Joseph used to help our walk with Him**

#1 Joseph Teaches Us That Obedience to God At Times Can Be Embarrassing

- Joseph was obedient to God even though it was embarrassing to his reputation
- Can you imagine his frustration/disappointment when Mary informs him about her pregnancy?
- Imagine absorbing the public embarrassment in Bethlehem
 - “Joseph how could you marry a woman like Mary!”*
 - “You weren’t with her, but obviously someone was!”*
 - “Mary’s baby is not gonna look like you, then everybody will know!”*
- God had an angel appear to Joseph to confirm Mary’s story (stay with her); but the people that knew Joseph, “didn’t get that memo!” They only knew what they saw

Other Servants of God Have Been Embarrassed by Their Obedience

- How silly did Joshua and the Israelite army look by walking around the great enemy wall of Jericho 1 time a day for six consecutive days and seven times on the seventh day?
- How embarrassed did Noah look building and Ark and explaining for 120 years to his friends why he was building it?
- How silly does Water Baptism look to the unbeliever, 1 Peter 3:21 (unbelievers say that they see nothing in the water)
- How embarrassing does it look to “turn the other cheek?”
- How embarrassing does it look to say, *“I’m sorry!”*
- How embarrassing does it look to “own your mistakes?”

But to Please God We Suffer Embarrassment for the Cause of Christ, 1 Peter 4:15-16

#2 Joseph Teaches Us That Obedience to God Doesn't Always Make Sense

- What was said about Mary's pregnancy didn't make sense: "A virgin will conceive." This had to be validated by God's angel to Joseph, not just Mary's word, Matthew 1:20-21
- Throughout scripture we see God asking His people to do things that rationally didn't add up:

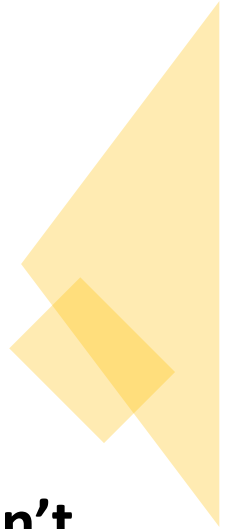
One young man was asked to face a 10-foot giant with only a sling and a few stones (David)

Gideon, the Israelite Commander, faced an army of 100,000 of his Israel's enemies after God had cut his army down to 300 men

A group of guys leave their family's fishing business for a guy they just met (Peter, James, John)

From the “Human Perspective” God Asks Us to Do What Doesn’t Make Sense

- **Pray for our enemies - Matthew 5:44**
- **Forgive those who hurt you - Matthew 6:14**
- **Deny yourself when your pleasures conflict with God’s principles for your life (when what makes you happy doesn’t make God happy) - Matthew 16:24**
- **Bless those who curse you - Matthew 5:44**
- **Place the needs of others ahead of your own - Romans 12:10**
- **Give an offering to God when it’s hard enough already to pay your own bills - Luke 21:1-4 (The story of the widow’s mite)**



#3 Joseph Teaches Us That Obedience to God Usually Comes With a Price

- **Joseph was asked by God to, “*get a U-HAUL*” and relocate with his new family, again and again; Matthew 2:13-21**
From Bethlehem to Egypt to avoid Herod the King’s edict
From Egypt back to Israel, specifically to Galilee
From Galilee to Nazareth in Israel to fulfill prophecy that Jesus would be called a “Nazarene”
- **Remember, Joseph was a carpenter by profession, which made him move his line of work to different locations as well to feed his family**
- **This was part of the price he paid for being obedient to God**



Jesus Modeled Obedience, Paying the Ultimate Price

Let this mind be in you that was also in Christ Jesus, Who being in the form of God ... But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant ... And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Philippians 2:5-8

- Throughout the scriptures God's people showed that obedience usually came at a price, Hebrews 11:37:

They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword. They wandered about in sheepskins and goatskins, being destitute, afflicted, tormented—of whom the world was not worthy

Question: What Is Your Obedience Costing You?

Time? Money? Relationships?

#4 Joseph Teaches Us That Obedience to God Will Always Be Rewarded

- **Think about this: Because of Joseph's obedience to God, he got to be the "stepfather" of God in the flesh**

As His stepfather in the flesh, Joseph got to see God, hold God, carry God around, show Him how to do carpentry work

- **As Jesus grew "in wisdom and in stature," Joseph got to be a part of that growth**
- **Question: Can you think of a greater reward than being used by God to accomplish His plans and His purposes in the world? (e.g., order your children's steps, evangelize your friends)**
- **None of this would have happened to Joseph had he not been obedient to God even before Jesus got here.**

Obedience to God Begins With 5 Steps

Hear the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Believe the Gospel

Acts 15:7

Repent of Sins

Acts 17:30

Confess Christ

Acts 8:37

Be Baptized

Acts 8:38

