



CHRISTMAS AT GRACE

Devotional | The Parents of Christmas: Joseph and Mary | Dec 18, 2022

GRACE
FELLOWSHIP

Discuss: What does Christmas mean to you?

Key Text: “Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.’ 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: 23 ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.” (Matthew 1:18-25)

On Christmas Eve 1914, an event that would later become known as the “Christmas Truce” occurred along the Western Front during World War 1. The war had fallen into a stalemate—men who had hoped to be home by Christmas were still dug into their muddy, rat-infested trenches awaiting more violence and death. But in the week leading up to Christmas, the British and German soldiers who were shooting at each other just days before, negotiated an informal 48-hour truce. On Christmas Eve and Christmas Day, they laid down their weapons, peacefully met in no-man’s land—the area between the trenches—and exchanged Christmas gifts and greetings. Although the war would drag on for another four years, for two days, the birth of the Prince of Peace was honored.

The events surrounding the first Christmas 2,000 years ago were mysterious and stressful, yet we find in Joseph and Mary—the “parents of Christmas”—encouragement and instruction for glorifying God during this special and unique time of the year.

1. Joseph and Mary had a thoughtful faith.

- **Joseph** – “But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, don’t be afraid to take Mary as your wife, because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit” (v.20).
- **Mary** – “Mary was treasuring up all these things in her heart and meditating on them” (Luke 2:19).

Discuss: We see Joseph “considering” (Mat.1:20) and Mary “meditating” (Lk.2:19) on the amazing events occurring around them. What key words and phrases in Matthew 1:18-25 stand out to you?

Discuss: Read Joshua 1:8 and Psalm 63:6. Why is meditation on God and His Word important to a Christian’s spiritual health and growth?

2. Joseph and Mary followed God's plan for their lives.

The words "fear not" occur many times in the Bible. God knows our hearts and understands how crippling the emotion of fear can be for us. Fear may indicate that we don't know (or have forgotten) God's promises to protect, provide, empower us, etc., or that we lack trust in God to fulfill those promises.

The Christmas narratives record several "fear not's," including one for Mary and one for Joseph.

- **Mary** – *"The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God...35 The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God...37 For nothing will be impossible with God.'" (Lk.2:30, 35, 37)*

Mary courageously responded to the angel's announcement: *"I am the Lord's servant...May it be done to me according to your word."* (Lk.1:38)

Discuss: When has the Lord called on you to believe Him for something that would otherwise be unlikely—or perhaps even humanly impossible?

- **Joseph** – *"But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife.'" (Mat.1:20)*

Joseph obediently followed the angels' instructions: *"When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him."* (Mat.1:24)

Discuss: When has the Lord called on you to leave your comfort zone and step out in faith?

3. Joseph and Mary pointed others to Jesus.

Joseph and Mary centered their lives on Jesus and made Him known to others. They shared Him with the shepherds, and later the wise men, and eventually the world.

- **Joseph** – *"She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins...25 And he called his name Jesus."* (Mat.1:21, 25)
- **Mary** – *"My soul magnifies the Lord, 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior."* (Lk.1:46-47)

Discuss: What opportunities does Christmas season provide to point others to Jesus?

For Further Study:

Numerous Bible-based answers to questions about Christmas at www.gotquestions.org

"What is Christmas?" article at www.crosswalk.com

The Case for Christmas by Lee Strobel