

Just Faithful

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 18 December 2022

Preacher: Dr. Daniel Heeringa

[0 : 0 0] it's always interesting when you talk about the characters of Christmas the people that were a part of that first scene of Christmas his mother Mary at the center of that and then the shepherds and how God came to those men who were somewhat outcast somewhat different worked on the road a lot stayed away from people yet that's who God chose to come to and the wise men probably before that day a pagan pagan astrologers that followed stars and God did work in them and they didn't show up at the manger if you put that in your nativity scene you messed it up they showed up later when they were in a house up to two years later and that's often what we think about when we think about

Christmas but there's one guy in the back of that nativity setting looking down at the baby Jesus we'll talk about a whole lot because we don't know as much about and that's Joseph we know God chose Mary but have you ever thought that he also chose the man who would be the father figure for Jesus there's so much about that time that we don't know and so much about that man that we don't know if you look too hard for why God used him you'll miss the reason why God used him and so first I want you to notice how he was used it's in Matthew chapter 1 beginning in verse 18 and it says 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 and her husband Joseph being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame resolved to divorce her quickly quietly excuse me 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 she she will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus for he will save his people from their sins all this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet behold the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel which means God with us when Joseph woke from sleep he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him he took his wife but knew her not until she had given birth to a son and he called his name Jesus Joseph was born into a strong family the gospel of Luke tells us that he was born of the house and the lineage of King David he had royal blood in his family tree however it does not appear that he was much of a player for all that he was from Bethlehem and he had moved to Nazareth and he dearly loved the lady in his life Mary and God was to use Mary in a way a mighty way but apparently he nor she had a clue about that until those angels came and told him and when she was told she was going to bear the Lord's son Luke 2 tells us that she said how can this be since I am a virgin in other words she didn't know it was coming it was not in her expectation and he didn't either and when he found out she was pregnant he was shocked he was disappointed probably heart broke and he had a few options his options were affected by his betrothed and you see they were engaged and the engagement in that day was different than the engagement in today's day it was not the way people are engaged today if you break off an engagement today it's all about the ring what you gonna do about that ring and I've watched enough judge Judy know how all that works out in that day it was much more than that with a betrothed there came a public announcement and a public union that at least by two or three witnesses you attended you intended to marry another it was a legal binding agreement and to step out of an engagement required a divorce if it was for sexual sin it was serious in Deuteronomy chapter 22 and 23 and 24 it says the guilty parties were to be stoned to death now that had changed somewhat by this point quite honestly but socially it had not changed he had a couple options one he could have charged files against her and had her face the ramifications and we don't know exactly what those ramifications were

I think it was kind of iffy in that day based on my research and and yet it surely meant there'd be great public shame it'd be a drawn out sorted affair or he could give her divorce papers and do it

quietly without a lot of fanfare but even that's not clean and neat because there's no such thing as a clean and neat divorce it was it was a mess and he didn't want to do it either he wanted his lady back and everything to be like it was before so so what was he to do why had she turned and done whatever she had done you see to this point Joseph and Mary had not come together there was a there was an engagement part of that betrothed but they had committed to each other but they did not live together and they did not come together until marriage and that is not only a first century concept that's a biblical concept that's just as real today as it's ever been that's still God's plan I'm amazed at how Christians believe that you can that you don't have to honor God sexually because the urge is high and the desire is great and therefore it feels right the difference in us and animals is that we have a conscience we're made in the image of God and as Christians we have the very presence of God living in us we have an omnipotent God that indwells within us that leads us away from tempting circumstances in which we face and we have conditioned ourselves not by the word of God but too often by the world to act like a bunch of animals we're plagued by a horrible case of the can't help it and the Greek word for that is baloney I'm telling you this world is changing so fast and I hope you see what happens when you get on the slippery slope of leaving God's word behind the world goes nuts without the order of God that's what chaos is and that's what we see and I don't want to harp this morning but I do want to remind you what God's word says 1

Corinthians 10:13 says listen to this Christian you got to hang your hat on this no temptation has overtaken you that's not common to man what you're facing is not different you're not the only one that's been in that spot your circumstances are not unique well if they were in my shoes they'd do different no they wouldn't one of the strategies of the evil one is to convince us that somehow the temptation that we face is justified and okay because our circumstances are different and Paul speaks directly against that through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit in that first sentence when he says no temptation has overtaken you that's not common to man and yes it may be individualized yes it may be customized in some way a little bit different or whatever

[10:21] I'm telling you we all deal with the same stuff and thank God it don't stop there because God is faithful and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability but with the temptation he'll always provide he will also provide and I will add always provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it a Christian that is saved by the grace of God and empowered by the Holy Spirit of God does not have a case of the can't help it we just choose not to follow what the Lord would have us to do and choose not to tap in to the power that he's placed within us he also says in 1

Corinthians 6 verse 18 and 20 flee from sexual immorality and when I read that you know what I think of I think of I think of Joseph and Potiphar's wife when Potiphar's wife went after him he left his coat in her hand and got out of there when you're facing temptation of sexual immorality you can just consider it a skunk within three feet of you you better get out of there because if you don't you're going to stink afterwards flee every other sin a person commits is outside the body but the sexual immoral person sins against his own body do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you whom you've from God you are not your own you're bought with a high price so glorify God in your body now I'm pausing here this morning and taking time this morning because our world is confusing it is confusing it is changing so fast

America is and the tables have turned in such a way that it wasn't that long ago when sexual sin was known to be wrong does not mean it was not participated in but it was known to be wrong people knew what was right and what was wrong but today the tables have somewhat turned in our culture to where what's right and godly and biblical seems wrong and bigoted and narrow and old fashioned I'm going to tell you something through the power of the Holy Spirit of God the Word of God breathes through every generation that has the opportunity to have it before them and until the Lord comes back it will be timely and it will be real God's not shocked by America in the 21st century matter of fact when he put the inspiration in Paul to write these words he had us in mind as well so we can rest in God's Word now when those things come close to home and when they hit us those temptations or those compromise of ideologies all this sexual confusion that's going on now it's easy for us to point at somebody else's problems and sins and talk about all that but when it comes to the house when those you love struggle in these areas and they're looking for affirmation in the midst of their circumstances it's not easy it's not easy

I encourage you to love those God puts in your path and love them with biblical accuracy and don't back off what the Word of God says trust Him trust Him we don't need to be spewing hate we need to be spewing love in the Lord Jesus but at the same time we need not compromise what God's

Word says man I went there didn't I God takes it seriously He does and so shall we so Joseph is in a precarious situation so what does he do you have the betrothed yourself to you have betrothed yourself to a lady that you dearly love but things have got cloudy and so what do you do on that well you sleep on it and that's what he did and when he did an angel of the Lord came to him in a dream and told him do not fear don't worry about this she was she has she she will she was conceived by the Holy Spirit and he will be the Savior and when Joseph got up the matter was settled he would be the guardian the earthly father figure for the Son of God and the Savior of the world why why him was it all about

Mary being chosen and he just this guy in the picture to fulfill the scene I don't think so I think sometimes we think like that but I don't think so so why don't we know more about him and why is he not more celebrated I believe when we get there when we get that we'll get the true picture of what's happening here we'll understand how this is not just about Joseph but it's also about me and it's also about you why did God use Joseph and I'll just tell you up front faithfulness he used him because he was faithful God chooses to use the faithful he was faithful to his family Joseph was dearly dearly loved his wife to be and his family and when he didn't have a clue as to why she was pregnant and if they had conversations about that she was telling him something that didn't sound true no one had ever had a child from the Holy

Spirit and it hadn't happened since and it ain't gonna happen again so I think he's in a unique spot and even with all those feelings he still didn't want to shame her he still didn't want to hurt her his faithfulness to her during pregnancy is the same faithfulness that he had through the childhood of Jesus and we find out more about that when we look at the second truth here not only was he faithful to his family he was faithful to the Lord Joseph faithfully obeyed the Lord and trusted him wholly and I want you to see what stands out to me about Joseph the most and in all my studies of him and none of us know much about him let me tell you what stands out what stands out is in verse 24 when it says immediately when he woke up when he found out she was pregnant he was pondering on that he was struggling with that he was hurting over that and he went and he rested in on that slept on it to find guidance

[18:07] God gave him guidance came to him and told him and his pondering on that was immediately over he got up he took his wife and Mary had Jesus and in Luke chapter 2 verse 21 it tells us that on the eighth day he was named Jesus just like they had been told the wise men came to Bethlehem and gifted and honored the child an angel told Joseph to take the child to Egypt and he escaped the wrath of Herod following the guidance of the angel in chapter 2 verse 14 he rose and took the child and his mother and departed under the cover of the night when Herod died an angel came to Joseph and said in Matthew 2 verse 20 get up and go to Israel Herod's dead and Herod was dead and he got back up and went to Nazareth he took that child and the mother to Nazareth and Luke chapter 2 verse 39 says and when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord they returned to Galilee to their own town of Nazareth verse 41 tells us that every year they went to Jerusalem at the feast of

Passover you know what that means that means he was faithful to the Lord God gave him directions along the way and every time God gave him directions he got up and did exactly what God told him to do my friend you're not faithful when you ponder on what God shows you what you need to do and you struggle with it he struggled before he knew what God wanted once he knew what God wanted he didn't struggle anymore he did exactly what God told him to do and he trusted God with the results he was faithful to the Lord and he was also faithful through the seasons not just for a season he was faithful Joseph submissively committed his life to the Lord and carried through with it steadfastly he's not a weak noodle he guides his family he sets the spiritual track for his family he obeys God he takes them with him in the will of God he does not say

Mary God told me we need to go no he led his family how did he know so clearly what God wanted him to do he honored God with his life that's why and he quickly responded in obedience when God spoke to him God will make himself clear to you he don't offer you suggestions for you to ponder he gives you commands for you to follow and when you do that in faithfulness he'll show you what he'd have for you through God's word and every time the Lord speaks he quickly obeys year at the age of 12 a significant excuse me they went every year and at the age of 12 a significant year in a boy's life they went according to custom meaning they were doing it every year and while they traveled in a pack and on the way back they were checking to see where he was and they didn't see him and they went back and saw him teaching in the temple and was astonished now if you wonder how in

the world did they leave without that boy well then you ain't raised your kids in a church with a bunch of friends

I can tell you that because either my poor children have rode off with somebody else that I didn't know they were doing or either we've left them at the church thinking they were you know or both they went back and he was teaching in the temple and they were astonished and they got to him and said something like boy we've been worried sick about you we didn't know where you were Jesus said at the age of twelve why were you looking for me did you not know that I must be in my father's house I didn't quite understand all that but Jesus went home with them and he was submissive to them that's what verse 51 of Luke 2 says and that tells me that Joseph did not leave the scene when

Jesus was twelve now we have silent years from the age of twelve to thirty about Jesus we don't know and we don't know how long Joseph lived during that time it is believed that he was much older than Mary the custom of that day would have made that very possible and somewhere between the age of twelve and thirty in Jesus life he must have passed I believe the most significant verse about Joseph life is in Luke chapter two verse fifty two when it says and Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man do you know what that means that means Joseph did his job he did what God had entrusted him to do he did what

[23 : 52] God had commanded him to do and what else he did and how long he lived and where he was from and anything else really doesn't matter we spend so much of our time and our energy focusing and spending and pondering on and doing things that really don't matter so much of what we spend our time on so much of what we spend our money on really does not matter what really matters when God has entrusted you with children what really matters is that they increase in wisdom and stature and in favor that they grow in the Lord and anything that we see that comes in the way of that along the way we need to understand what it is it's an enemy of the evil one that has come into our lives to distract us from the main thing it's good to be a part of a lot of things but don't ever let those things come in the way of the opportunity for your child to be nurtured in the love of

God to come to know him at an early age and to live for him throughout life don't let things hinder that when the arm is shot and the knee is blown out they'll need Jesus they need him now so have all the fun and do all that but don't ever let it become a hindrance from your child being raised in the love and the admonition of the Lord don't ever let that stand in the way because no matter how many millions they make over their talent if they die without Jesus they're just building bigger barns just setting the deck chairs on the Titanic it does no good and what greater joy could the devil get than to distract

God's people from the next generation knowing Jesus is a strategy God used Joseph because he dearly loved his wife and because he was faithful to his family God used Joseph because he faithfully obeyed the Lord at every step of the way and trusted him wholly God used Joseph because he submissively committed his life to the Lord and carried it out steadfast God used Joseph because he had a wonderful influence on the life of his child God used Joseph because he was just faithful and the Christmas story is not just about Mary and it's not just about Jesus and it's not just about the wise men it's about that dude in the back of the nativity scene the one who committed himself to the Lord completely and everyone that God entrusted to him because he was faithful and God will use one who's faithful to the king of kings and the lord of lords

Joseph was are we maybe this Christmas the greatest gift we can give is our lives to Christ is to surrender our own ways and confess our own sins and ask God to forgive us for the wrong that we've done to come into our life and to change us for all eternity and I am thankful today it is an open invitation to anyone and everyone and if you've done that that's not just a private matter that's a conspiracy of the evil one as well that is a decision that you're to tell others about to make that public to make that known we'd love to guide you in that maybe you're here today and you know you're a Christian beyond a shadow doubt you got that nailed down you publicly confessed that you've been baptized you better remember this church longer than you can think you got all that worked out are you faithful

I mean I know you're faithful to church because you here and Christmas breaks done started I mean it's serious cream of the crop I get it are you faithful to the Lord when he speaks when he says do you hesitate do you ponder do you sleep on it or do you ask Joseph when God speaks you immediately move in response may we be found faithful by trusting God with every head bowed and every eye closed I don't know about you but I'm challenged by Joseph never heard peep out of him

really don't know enough about him but what we know tells us what was important to him today why don't you just commit yourself to be faithful to the Lord
[30 : 04] I don't know what that means for you but I encourage you to be obedient to do exactly what he'd have you to do Lord Jesus I love you and I thank you for your word I thank you Lord for the challenge of your word I thank you Lord for how you show us in the lives of others how we live our lives so we don't make the same mistakes and sometimes that we follow the model in which you put before us through their lives help us oh God to honor you with our lives this Christmas season help us Lord to be faithful I pray in in in