

Home Groups Questions

December 18, 2011

Christmas Through Joseph's Eyes

Matthew 1:18-25

Leaders: The questions below are inspired by Sunday morning's sermon. Please take time to review the questions and use them as a tool for discussion in your Home Group. It may be that we have provided more questions than you will have time to answer. If this is the case, please adjust or adapt the questions to fit your group.

Icebreakers/ Conversation Starters – These are random questions designed to create community and encourage conversation.

1. What is your all time favorite Christmas movie? Do you have a favorite scene or character?
2. What is the most memorable Christmas present you received as a child? What happened to that gift?
3. What do you know about your parents' courtship or marriage?
4. Do you know why your parents picked your name? Do you know what your name means?
5. Do you typically remember your dreams? And, what are the details of the last dream you can remember?

Turn to Matthew 1:18-25 and read it.

What stands out most to you about the passage or message from this morning?

I. Betrothal and betrayal? (1:18)

Matthew 1:18 - ¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

1. Trust is an important ingredient in any relationship. It is often built up over time and tested in various ways. If you knew that you were not involved in your fiancé's pregnancy, how would you feel about her and the situation?
2. Mary is likely about 4 months pregnant when she was found to be with child (see Luke 1:36,56). If you were in Mary's place, how might this event have altered the hopes you had for your life and future family? Is Mary giving up anything in this process?
3. Scripture is clear that Mary and Joseph had not had intercourse prior to finding out that she was pregnant. Why is the virgin birth so vital to Jesus' story? How does the significance of Jesus' life change if Mary was not a virgin?

II. A distressing decision (1:19)

Matthew 1:19 - ¹⁹ And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

1. What insights does verse 19 give us about the character of Joseph and the feelings he has for Mary?
2. Betrothal was an official and legally binding agreement. It typically involved the families of both parties. We are not told the reaction of Mary and Joseph's parents, but how might they have felt about all this? What concerns could they have dealt with that would be different than Mary or Joseph?
3. It appears that Joseph had already made up his mind about his plan of action. He was going to break the agreement and send her away. Have you ever made a decision based on human wisdom, but had to change it because God seemed to have other plans? Explain.

III. God's voice in the middle of the night. (1:20)

Matthew 1:20 - ²⁰ But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

1. The angel tells Joseph not to be afraid to take Mary as his wife. Are there ever times that following God's plan is fearful?
2. Does God still use dreams to communicate his purposes and plans?
3. If God could speak clarity into any situation in your life right now, what would you want him to speak about?

IV. God's assurances (1:21-23)

Matthew 1:21-23 - ²¹ She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins." ²² Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet: ²³ "BEHOLD, THE VIRGIN SHALL BE WITH CHILD AND SHALL BEAR A SON, AND THEY SHALL CALL HIS NAME IMMANUEL," which translated means, "GOD WITH US."

1. What reason does Matthew give as to why Jesus was born (v. 21) and why is it significant that Jesus' birth is a fulfillment of scripture?
2. How have you experienced Jesus as Immanuel in your life recently?

V. His Determination (1:24)

Matthew 1:24 - ²⁴ And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, ²⁵ but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.

1. Where does determination to follow God's plan come from and how can it be developed in our life?
2. If you were to write a commercial Christmas card message based on this passage, what element of the story would you emphasize?

Prayer Time

Calendar:

December 25 – No Home Groups

January 1 – No Home Groups

January 8 – No Home Groups

January 15 – Tim Hawkins Concert (No Home Groups)

January 22 – Home Groups

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