



new life fellowship

**Sermon Title: Joseph: A Story of Grace**  
**Speaker: Jacqueline Snape, Executive Pastor**  
**Scripture: Matthew 1:18-24**

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah 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. 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.

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 from 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.”

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

*Matthew 1:18-24 (NIV)*

**Sermon Outline:**

- Joseph comes from a storied family with a lineage that can be traced back to Abraham. Joseph knows the stories of his ancestors and God’s faithfulness through them. His heritage is extremely important to him and informs everything he does. While he knows his family’s past, he probably has never imagined the role that he is to play in his family’s future.
- When Joseph hears that Mary, his betrothed, is pregnant, he knows that this involves more than feelings of disgrace and shame to work through. This is a matter of life and death; Joseph had the legal right to have Mary stoned to death on the spot. Deuteronomy 22:22 and Leviticus 20:10
- Joseph knew what commitment was. He knew the stakes of getting married and that it was for life. Joseph receives the news of Mary’s pregnancy and knows that he can follow the law and have Mary put to death. And yet, he doesn’t want to publicly disgrace her. Before Joseph receives his dream where the angel tells Joseph to take Mary home as his wife, Joseph sits with the news of Mary’s pregnancy and his conflicted feelings. Joseph decides to dispense grace on Mary. Joseph pours out grace to Mary, who then is able to give birth to grace.
- Jesus was entrusted to Joseph, a man of faith. Joseph essentially was Jesus adopted father. Through placing Jesus into this adopted family, God was showing us that we too are adopted into his family. See Ephesians 1:5-6
- Jesus’ adopted family is a sign for us. The family that we were born into doesn’t matter because we are adopted into the new family of Jesus Christ. Not only are we children of the King, we are co-heirs with Jesus.
- Under the law, we all deserve death as Mary did. But Jesus extends grace to us and adopts us into his family. Perhaps our mission this year is to grab hold of that truth and to extend it to those around us.
- One out of every 25 people have had genetic testing done to find out their family background. Why do we want to know our genetic history? It matters to us to know who we are and where we came from.

**Sermon Summary:**

This Sunday Executive Pastor Jacqueline Snape discusses Joseph’s response to the news of Mary’s pregnancy. Joseph extends grace to Mary enabling her to give birth to the one who will extend grace to us all.

**Sermon Questions:**

1. How does this scripture connect for you the topic that was discussed today? What words resonate with you? Why?
2. In your family of origin, how did your family deal with “earthquake events” such as divorce, out-of-wedlock births, etc.? Was it discussed, or kept a secret? Did grace get extended to family members? Where is it needed today?

3. Have you ever experienced a time when you had not met your own expectations for yourself? What was your response to yourself?
4. Reread Ephesians 1: 5-6. What thoughts and feelings come to mind in hearing the truth that we are adopted into God's family and that we are co-heirs with Christ?
5. What may be one way that God is inviting you to deepen your acceptance of the truth that you are part of God's family? What may be one way that God is calling you to share this truth with others?