

## **This Baby Will Save**

December 11, 2016 | Children's Christmas Service

### **Matthew 1:18-25**

*<sup>18</sup> 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. <sup>19</sup> 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. <sup>20</sup> 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. <sup>21</sup> 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." <sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup> "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). <sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup> But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.*

It is only two weeks till Christmas. Are you excited? What is our favorite part of Christmas? The gifts under the tree. As we get older it becomes more about the company, the food (for the boys), introducing the family to someone special—meeting the newest member of the family. But if there is one thing that can ruin the holiday season for us, it is holiday drama. That joy we know we should feel can easily get buried underneath layers of holiday stress. Whose side of the family do we spend Christmas with this year? Who will the kids get to spend Christmas with this year?

Drama. Christmas, unfortunately, is full of it. And so was the first Christmas. I love this account from Matthew because we get Joseph's side of the story. And I can only imagine what this guy was going through. He is engaged to this beautiful young woman, named Mary who—we are told in Luke's account—goes off to live with her cousin Elizabeth for the three months prior to their wedding. She gets the news from the angel Gabriel that you're going to be the mother of God. She was going to give birth to the Savior; "Wonderful news!" She thinks, "But who can I tell? Who will believe me? How do I break this to Joseph?" What kind of fear would drive you away from your fiancé for three months?

So already Joseph must be thinking, "Why is she leaving? What's going on is it something I did? Is there another guy?" And he's living with these doubts for six months. Six months of his imagination eating away at him, and then he gets the news... "Mary is pregnant." You know that feeling when your heart hits the floor and your stomach is turned inside out. Hurt, betrayed, he is ready to break things off. But man, how tempting it would be to try to bring her down too—"She betrayed me, why not let everyone know; she had it coming!" But he doesn't. He does the honorable thing and try his best to preserve Mary's honor—he still loves her.

You see, at the heart of Mary and Joseph's problem was what the Bible calls sin. The tangled mess that infected and threatened to destroy Mary and Joseph's relationship is very much at work in our lives. Sin enters families and just makes a mess of things. Rumors, gossip, false conclusions, accusations, separation, divorce. Our world, our families, even we are cursed with

sin. Sin is a real problem and like all real problems, it needs a real solution. We need a real savior. But, so often the savior we look for this time of year isn't the one in the manger. We look for escapes from sin in capturing the perfect holiday, the perfect Christmas, we bury our failure under the piles of presents to buy happiness, surrounding ourselves with family and friends, or a few extra Christmas cocktails.

How he ever fell asleep that night in the first place is beyond me. But here in the middle of this dramatic mess of hurt feelings, confusion, pain—God cuts in and intervenes. The angel tells Joseph the very words Mary must have rehearsed over and over but couldn't come up with the courage to tell him. "The baby is a miracle child from God Himself." And almost as if sensing Joseph thinking, "I immediately jumped to conclusions!" The angel immediately tells him, "You are to give the baby the name Jesus, because He will save His people from their sin." The angel cuts straight to the real problem and the real solution.

This is the real message of Christmas: God leaves His perfect home in heaven to intervene in our lives. God is not afraid to get His hands dirty; He comes down to be "God with us," to throw Himself into the tangled mess of our lives. God demonstrates exactly what His love for us means when he not only embraces the humility of being born in a manger, but also the humility of dying on a cross. It is in Jesus' perfect life without sin and His innocent death in the place of sinners that we have the forgiveness of sins. Sin has been dealt with once and for all—and that is where we find true Christmas peace: the forgiveness Jesus gives us.

But we find true Christmas joy in knowing this Savior, this Baby is ours: Here was this child that Joseph thought would end his marriage, but this child would not only save his marriage, but save him. The son that he would adopt as his very own, would turn around and adopt Joseph as His child. Just as Joseph would have carried Jesus over the threshold into his home for the first time, Jesus would one day carry Joseph into His own heavenly home. Just as this child brought lasting joy to Joseph, He brings you joy. He is yours to bring home.

Our children have come today to share this message with us. Jesus is our Savior too. The Savior is real, the sin he forgives is real, and the joy he brings is real. Amen.