

Brian – Zach – Angel Fire...spent three days by a wood burning fireplace reading books

Christmas story – Simpler than we think...more incredible than we can imagine | **LIGHTS**

Simple – Baby born (385k) (7 V.in Matt.) | *Incredible* – God in Flesh – Mission to redeem sinners

Who was there? Wisemen? Shepherds? Little Drummer Boy? Reindeer? Joseph – Mary – Jesus

Three weeks...look at a simple yet incredible Truth about Christmas exemplified by one of those three

(BI) Simple yet Incredible Truth - Christmas is a story of faithfulness

Joseph...Man of Faithfulness – Cheesy Sunday School Lesson - Bibleman episode DK - JAM

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ^{al} took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed^{bl} 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. | **PRAY**

Most remember angels: Mary – Zechariah – Shepherds...Joseph left **What do we know about Joseph?**

Very little – Jew – David and Abraham - Born in Bethlehem - Nazareth – Craftsman | **NOBODY!**

How particular are you about who you leave your child with? The Father choose a faithful father

ONE POINT - Joseph was a man of decency who had a dilemma and made a decision

.. Joseph was a man of decency

⁸ 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.

Betrothal - Engagement...not really – Signed binding contract that was sealed with a dowery

Legally married but not allowed to live together or sleep together

Up to a year – Little contact – Time of probation & testing of fidelity – Broken by formal divorce

‘Before they came together (sexually) she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit’

Ve have the whole story...guess who didn’t...Joseph! How do you think that conversation went?!?

Legally married – Paid Dowery - Sexually abstinent – Testing sexual fidelity

Joseph...we need to talk – Holy Spirit | Come with fairy dust and a map to Neverland

What do leprechauns, unicorns, and pregnant virgins have in common? Don’t exist!

Two ways to divorce: Publicly or Privately

Publicly – Joseph could contend she was an adulteress - get his dowery back – have her punished

Privately – Public opinion would be that he was the adulterer – forfeit dowery – put to shame

¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

For another Joseph: Laid aside his rights | Forfeited financial gain | Accepted public shame

Who did God choose to raise His Son? A faithful father...a just man...a man of decency

Today...Who does God choose to tell of His son? Faithful people | Lay | Forfeit | Assume | Decency

.. Joseph had a dilemma

²⁰ But as he considered these things | **I LOVE these six words...I know them well...bet you do too**

He was a just man’ – Followed the Laws of God – laws of man – Learned a noble skill - Worked hard

GOD: Why is this happening? What did I do? What should I do? | Running senecios

Ve don’t know the length of time between Mary’s angel and Joseph’s dream

We have no idea how many fitful nights Joseph had considering his decision

Lights = Up – Down – Toss – Turn – Pray – Angry – Sad – Deal – Doubt

I’m one of the good guys God – Why is this happening God – What do you want of me God?!?!

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.

God meets him in his desperation – Mary said is True | What you believe is true

Ruin reputation – Give up rights (child not yours) – cost you...Believe God...worth it! | **FAITHFUL!**

Christian Conundrum – Give up anything to gain everything | Make sacrifices for the joy of obedience

(No Angels) Faithful as Joseph in a dilemma...willing to say, ‘Yes’ to God when it will cost you much?

3. **Joseph Made a Decision**

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.

• Most important words in the world **‘Did as the Lord commanded’**

People will say, ‘The disciples were the first to follow Jesus’ – Disagree – Parents

Mary did you know...Come on what about Joseph?!?! – Yes...yes, they knew

Birth fathers reserved the rights to name their children...Joseph named Him Jesus = God’s Son

• Joseph made a decision...he would be the earthly, adopted, father of the Son of God

Provide for the Son of God a home – Protect Him as his own – Take him by the hand up hill to work

He decided God’s way was better than his own...why?

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).

Joseph was faithful...because he believed God was faithful

Joseph was a man of decency who had a dilemma and made a decision to obey God because God promised a deliverer

Simpler than we think...more incredible than we can imagine

Simply Incredible: Christmas is a story of faithfulness alright...God’s faithfulness!

Joseph was a man of faith...he knew the prophecies...hundreds of years

• **Isaiah 7:14 ‘Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us)**

• **The baby in your wife’s womb is the one who will save people from their sins**

The virgin birth is only impossible if it isn’t God...and Joseph knew it...and acted on it...**have you?**

The Christmas Story is the story of God’s faithfulness to fulfill his promise to save sinners

It’s simpler than we think...more incredible than we can imagine

Beginning – Joseph was a nobody...known the world over...used powerfully by God...why?

Jesus illuminates lives...normal...nobody lives

• Willing to lay aside their rights – forfeit financial gain – assume shame for His name

Believe Jesus is Immanuel, God with us, who has come into the world to save sinners

Make this your Christmas Story: Jesus has, like Joseph, illuminated my life

End of the year giving - \$45,000 | Plan for People – 40% over last year here and we planted a church