

The Keys for Jesus' New Kingdom
Christmas at Coast Hills 2022
Matthew 1:18-19
December 18th, 2022

Teaching Notes

Have you ever thought about what are the keys to success in the USA?

Matthew is writing to Jews showing Jesus is the Anointed One.

Jesus is the culmination and fulfillment of everything they had been waiting for.
He is the Christ, the Messiah, the heir to the throne, the true King.

So last week we looked at the genealogies of Jesus the king...

We saw the people Jesus chose to be in His family tree are the kind of people Jesus chooses to be in His family today!

- ...Men and women, young and old,
- ...failures and success, sinners and saints...
- ...the bar is low and the kingdom is open to everyone.

Big idea:

Jesus is a new kind of king with a new kind of kingdom.

We'll see the parents God chose for this new kind of king.

- ...What are the kind of people that God chooses and uses?

TITLE: The Keys of Success in Jesus' Kingdom?

Joseph and Mary are real people being used and chosen to serve God in the most unique way in all history.

God has chosen Mary to carry His Son and raise His Child!
God has chosen Joseph to be the father that would raise His Son!

What sort of people were they?

Sort of like going through the adoption process...

- Were they rich or at least well off? No.
 - Did they have a plan for giving birth? Clearly not.
 - Would they give Jesus a first class education? Doubtful.
 - Would he have amazing vacations? Probably not.
- ...These were not things God thought were important.**

Matthew 1:18

Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

Betrothed means promised.

The marriage had been arranged.

Mary and Joseph were committed, but not yet together.
Mary may have been betrothed as a 12 year old or younger.

There is commitment but not consummation.

The text makes it very clear they were not married...

...and they had not had sex.

What were some qualities of these 2 young people God chose?
...Holiness was a big one.

1. **Personal holiness is a key for Jesus' kingdom.**

...Holiness is key for being used by God and giving God glory.

Mary was holy to the Lord.
She was a virgin.
She is literally referred to as the Virgin Mary.

Jesus was God's Son in Mary's body.

Jesus is God incarnate.

This is a miracle.

...If someone is pregnant...

...that someone had sex with another someone.

...But in this case, God gave her this baby.

Why is this important?

- Jesus was fully God and fully man.
- He came eating and drinking and sleeping and walking.
- He has human DNA and also a perfect, divine nature.

Man's genealogy has a curse from Adam.

But Jesus breaks the curse and sets us free as the new Adam...

...God was His father and Mary carried the baby.

Jesus is a sinless man who could die for the sins of man.

Mary needed to be holy to be used by God in this way.

This theological plan had to be fulfilled in a personal life.

True theology is seen in real life not just in religious discussions.

Mary was holy...

Leviticus 19:2 "Speak to all the congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them: 'You shall be holy, for I the LORD your God *am* holy.'

Holiness is a spiritual state of your heart...

...that translates into an actual state of your life.

If she had already had sex...

If Joseph and Mary were already "experimenting"...

If they gave in to their lust or desires or were living together...

...Mary would not be qualified to carry this newborn king.

Remember from last week...All are welcome to His kingdom.

...**But if Jesus is the king** of the kingdom...

...and if we trust Him as our king...

... **then we obey Him** as His subjects.

The people that God chooses are not clean...

...**but the people that choose God will be cleansed.**

...They are not perfect, but being perfected.

- Abraham didn't continue to live in Ur, he went where God called and moved forward.
- Rahab didn't continue prostitution, she married a Jewish man and moved forward.
- David didn't continue in his sin, he repented, confessed, and moved forward.

Once you enter the kingdom...

...you need to keep moving forward and be ready for the King.

Mary was not perfect, but she was ready.

...She was uniquely gifted and qualified for her service...

...And it started with her heart to be holy to the Lord.

There are things that you can do and people that you can serve that you are uniquely qualified to do.

But...Mary couldn't get prepared when the angel showed up!

When opportunity knocks...

...**there is no time to get ready, you have to be ready.**

When the Angel appeared to her...

Luke 1:30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

She already found favor. God was looking and found her.

When God was looking to save the world from the flood, He found Noah.

...He was a unique man, holy and set apart for the Lord.

If we want to have the best chance to be used by God and for His glory, we need to be ready and be holy already.

What was Mary's response to God's crazy plan told by the angel?

Luke 1:38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word."

Holiness is surrender to the Lord.

Mary's heart was one of surrendered service.

I am yours. I am here to serve you. I am here to do your will.

The last verse I want to look at in this context is...

II Timothy 2:20 But in a great house there are not only vessels of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay, some for honor and some for dishonor. 21 Therefore if anyone cleanses himself from the latter, he will be a vessel for honor, sanctified and useful for the Master, prepared for every good work. 22 Flee also youthful lusts; but pursue righteousness, faith, love, peace with those who call on the Lord out of a pure heart.

...If we want to be used by God for His honor...

...it is pretty clear we need to be clean.

Being clean will help us be:

1. Vessels for honor
2. Sanctified or set apart
3. Useful for Him
4. Prepared for good work

This was a description of Mary...

She was a vessel for honor....God would be honored.

She was set apart for the Lord...She was for His use not her own.

She was useful for the Lord...She could be used by Him.

She was prepared for the work...She was ready for the work.

Often people think of “preparation for ministry” as training in theology when it might be more beneficial to think of preparation for ministry as “training in righteousness”.

God looks at the heart....God looks for holiness...

...Because holy people don't get in the way of God's work.

We get angry and make a mess.

We misrepresent God's grace because we can't forgive.

We don't serve others because it is all about our own needs.

We won't stop sinning because we think it feels good.

We don't want to be told what to do, we want control.

It is not that God uses perfect people.

Look at David, the great king...

...He was not perfect, he was a horrible failure...

...But he was cleansed.

When you sin, which we all do, don't hide it, confess it and be cleansed and then be ready for Him to use you.

As we look back at Matthew...

It is interesting that God did not find a woman by herself.

God desired Jesus to be raised in a committed home.

But not in a marriage that had been consummated.

The core design for parenting is a mother and a father.

That doesn't always happen for a multitude of reasons.
...But everyone starts off with a mom and a dad.

Jesus had God as His father and Joseph as His step dad.

...Most believe that Joseph died at some time.
...So Jesus most likely also grew up without a dad as well.
But let's take a few minutes to look at the other half of the couple God chose...what can we learn about Joseph?

1:18 ...After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit.

She was FOUND to be with child.
Joseph found his fiancé was pregnant and he knew it wasn't him!

Mary no doubt being chosen to carry and raise God's son must have been a pretty incredible young woman.

But Joseph's hopes are dashed.
He thought he knew her?!
The Mary he knew would never sleep with another man.
But, there was no doubt, here she is pregnant.

19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just *man*, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.

2. Justice and mercy are keys for Jesus' kingdom.

If Mary had slept with someone else...
...He was not ok with it.

He had standards.
He wanted to raise a family in righteousness.
He wanted to be equally yoked with one who desired God's will.
He didn't want to start off being betrayed.

But he also was merciful.
He didn't want to make her an example.
He didn't want to drag her into the street.

Balancing justice and mercy is an interesting challenge.
But it is who God is...just and merciful.

Isaiah 30:18 Therefore the LORD will wait, that He may be gracious to you; And therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the LORD is a God of justice; Blessed are all those who wait for Him.

God is merciful and just.

In his justice, God declares sin must be judged.
In his mercy, God paid for it Himself.

In his grace, God waits to bless you.

Micah 6:8

He has shown you, O man, what *is* good; And what does the LORD require of you But to do justly, To love mercy, And to walk humbly with your God?

Isaiah 16:5

In mercy the throne will be established; And One will sit on it in truth, in the tabernacle of David, Judging and seeking justice and hastening righteousness.”

This is the kind of man God desired to father His Son.

...This is the kind of person God uses...

...We are not called to one or the other, but both and.

We are called to be just.

We should do what is right and judge what is good.

Just: upright, righteous, virtuous, keeping the commands of God

But we do it with mercy.

We do it with the understanding that we are sinners as well.

We know the pain of failure and the temptation of pleasure.

Mercy doesn't throw the book at someone.

Mercy opens the book and shows them His truth and His love.

20 But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. **21** And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.”

22 So all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, saying: **23** “Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,” which is translated, “God with us.”

24 Then Joseph, being aroused from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took to him his wife, **25** and did not know her till she had brought forth her firstborn Son. And he called His name Jesus.

3. Faith and obedience are keys for Jesus' kingdom.

It says Joseph thought about these things...He didn't rush to judgement but he waited on the Lord.

And God showed up and speaks...

God reminded him of his identity...Son of David!

God cleared up his fears...don't be afraid the baby is My Son.

God revealed His plan...Jesus would save people from their sins

God gave him direction...name Him Jesus.

This was simple...but it would not be easy.
Living by faith is simple, but it is not easy.

Joseph trusted the word of the Lord.
It would mean humiliation, it would mean discomfort, it would bring challenges.

- He didn't get to name his own firstborn son.
- He didn't get to sleep with his bride until the baby was born.
- He would take some heat from a lot of people.

But Joseph trusted God and His word and He obeyed it all.
And God used Joseph and God was glorified through Joseph.

Personal holiness, justice and mercy, faith and obedience...
...These are the keys for success...
...in this new king's new kind of kingdom.

Discussion Questions:

1. If you were choosing someone to raise your child, what qualities would be important to you?
2. Without seeing inside a heart, how can we see or not see personal holiness?
3. Have you ever found yourself ready or not ready for an opportunity? It could be spiritual or not. How does it apply to being ready for God to use us?
4. How do the qualities we see in Joseph correspond with the qualities we should look for in our own relationships?
5. What do you think is challenging about being merciful and just together?
6. Faith and obedience seem simple, but why don't people always follow through?