



### **TODAY'S READING:**

Matthew 1:18-21:

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."

Matthew 2:1-15:

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

“But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.”

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route. When they had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up,” he said, “take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.” So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.”

2 Timothy 1:7:

For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline.

## **THE PEACE OF DIVINE PURPOSE**

Fear can stop you in your tracks. It can make you run and hide. Satan loves to distract us with fear to keep us from seeing the safety of God’s direction. Fear

threatened the fulfillment of Christmas multiple times, and God was intentional to remind His story's key players over and over, "*Do not be afraid.*"

Matthew 1:18-21 tells us Joseph's side of the Christmas story. Mary became pregnant before she and Joseph were married, and Joseph, "being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly." But an angel from God appeared to him in a dream, reassuring him that he had been chosen to raise God's Son on earth.

Joseph initially responded to the news of Mary's pregnancy by trying to preserve both his and Mary's reputations, fearful of all the implications. He had no way of knowing Mary's claim of virginity was legitimate, and he was going to break off their engagement. In the midst of a painful, confusing time for Joseph, God came to him in a dream, challenged his fear with the peace of divine purpose, and set him on course to be the earthly father of the greatest Man the world has ever known.

In our moments of fear, God wants to speak truth to us and break the power of whatever lie is holding us back. When we seek His peace, He will conquer our fears with His love. Ask God to come and speak truth to whatever lies are giving you anxiety today. He will be faithful to respond and empower you to move forward into the incredible purpose He has for you.

*Prayer: Father, your Word says that You have not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. Thank You for giving me everything I need to move forward when the enemy tries to hold me back. I praise You that fear has to bow to the name of Jesus. During this Christmas season, and always,*

*help me take fearful thoughts captive and immediately bring them to You so that  
Your peace can reign in my life.*