

Luke 2:1-7

In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.² This was the first registration when^[a] Quirinius was governor of Syria.³ And all went to be registered, each to his own town.⁴ And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the town of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed,^[b] who was with child.⁶ And while they were there, the time came for her to give birth.⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in swaddling cloths and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn.^[c]

Think about it, Joseph had to look at Mary and his son...his son...and, also the Son of God,



and asked: “Am I enough?” Can I do this? Can I raise the Son of God? Oh, the doubt that had to be in Joseph’s heart. **We all doubt!** We all ask the question? “**Am I enough?**” I remember when Katy, our first child was born...we got her home and I looked down at her little face in the bassinette and I asked: “Am I enough to be the dad she’ll need for me to be? Mom’s ask the same question, “Am I capable of being the mom I need to be?” A student may ask, “Am I enough to pass this class or make this team?” Someone in a struggling marriage situation may ask, “Am I enough to make this relationship work?” For others it’s something else...it could be a personality quirk, “an irrational anxiety,” that causes us to question: Am I enough? I love that term “irrational anxiety,” as coined by the psychological community...it’s not irrational if it’s your anxiety now is it? ...after all...you feel what you feel. And so, we ask, “Am I enough?”

As you are turning, let me tell you about Joseph. He was a common man. Even today, he’s barely even that. You see, if you try to Google his name, it doesn’t pull him up...it pulls up “Joseph the son of Jacob,” who became second in command to the Egyptian Pharaoh. Yeah...he was important...but, Joseph...the father of the Son of God... Nope! He doesn’t pull up. He’s so unthought of that you can’t even Google him. In fact, I had trouble even finding a picture to show you of what he might have looked like... I finally found this one...



I love the smile... This is the actor who played Jesus in the movie, "The Nativity." I think they did a pretty good casting job... Just a common-looking Jewish man...a Carpenter...a "**Tekton**" in the Greek... That word can refer to a craftsman that used wood, as we often think of Joseph...a carpenter making tables, but it can also mean a worker of metal or stone, or even just a common laborer. Some scholars say he could have been little more than the guy who mixed the mud to lay stone for a stonemason. That's why I like this picture...

He's got a trowel in his hand, laying stone. He's a common laborer and that means he doesn't have much...in other words...he's poor. Remember when he and Mary went to the Temple on the 8th day and had Jesus circumcised. They offered two doves. That's what poor people did. Joseph was literally JUST YOUR AVERAGE Joe and guys like that don't show up on Google. And I guess that's why guys like Joseph ask, "Am I enough?"

Joseph...we don't know a lot about Joseph. Writers of antiquity...of the first century...don't say much about a person's early life. That's even true of Jesus. Just as we don't know anything about Joseph after Jesus turns 12 and they lost Him in the Temple...we don't hear anything about Jesus' life again until He turns 30. Writers of antiquity only talked about the really important stuff...not the mundane.

So, we don't know anything about Joseph's life until we pick up with him in Scripture in the Gospel of Matthew when he's betrothed to Mary...

Matthew 1:18-25

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ^[e] took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed^[f] 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.

Yes, Joseph was a common, “behind the scenes” kind of guy. He’d never been in the spotlight in his entire life and the truth is...he never would be. There’s never a spotlight shined on Joseph, remember, you can’t even Google him. But, we saw that Matthew described him as: “just” man, righteous, virtuous, a good man...a humble man...a man who lived life that WAS NOT ABOUT HIM.

You know I don’t believe Joseph ever expected anything but a common life...a normal Galilean life. He would work hard as a carpenter and he would marry the young Nazarene-teenager, Mary and he’d make a life for them and their future family ...until that fateful day that Mary told him, “I’m pregnant, Joseph” Try to imagine that conversation?



Can you imagine the shock of hearing that Mary is pregnant? Joseph must have said: “What you’re pregnant? But, we’ve not been together, Mary! What in the world is going on!” You see as we learned Wed. night, Joseph and Mary were betrothed to one another and that betrothal usually lasted about a year, which would give the young man the time to build them a home so they could start their lives together. We don’t know how long they had been betrothed when Mary became pregnant by way of the Holy Spirit, but for Joseph, this was grounds not only for divorce but, according to the Mosaic Law...it was grounds for public stoning.

Oh, this is so embarrassing! Joseph must have been in unbelievable, gut-wrenching turmoil after that conversation with. SHE’S PREGNANT! I CAN’T BELIEVE IT! Listen, this was such a personal insult to Joseph and would most certainly become a scandal in the town of Nazareth... As soon as she started showing...everyone would be talking...



This would be a great public embarrassment to not only Joseph and Mary, but to both sets of parents, who would have been involved in the betrothal to begin with. This is a “no win situation” for Joseph...that’s the point. He’s stuck between the proverbial “rock and a hard place.” You see, if he stays with Mary, everyone will think it was him, and that would mean he was impure; but if he walks away, everyone would think she was impure and unfaithful. Which one would he choose? Pick your poison Joseph. What did he choose? Look back at verse 19 again...

Matthew 1:19

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

Church family, talk about a good man...Joseph loved her enough to refuse to put her to public shame... Yes, he’d have to get a “Certificate of Divorce” (which you had to have in that day, because a betrothal was binding, like a marriage, except for the fact you didn’t live together or have intimate relations). And that’s God’s design folks...even for today. But, before Joseph could get the Certificate of Divorce, something happened... He, like Mary, was visited by the angel Gabriel... Verse 20...

Matthew 1:20

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.

Now the question is this...just like for Mary...will Joseph say, YES to what the Lord is asking him? Will He believe? Mary had to believe...she had to say: “Yes” to that which seemed crazy. Would he?

Matthew 1:24

²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife,

So, we’ve SEEN IT AGAIN church...Joseph is the real deal...he was willing to do what the Lord said. Joseph said: Yes! He did the same thing Mary did...HE SURRENDERED to God’s will and His purposes! We saw this Wed. night, didn’t we... Saying “Yes” to God is surrendering to His will...no matter the cost! Joseph believed in God and he responded by obeying. And Church...**that’s what belief looks like**...it’s when you believe and you ACT on that belief. Belief is more than just saying you believe...TRUE BELIEF is acting on that belief even if it costs you everything!

Listen, Joseph asked, “Am I enough?” Of course the answer is: NO! 😊 But with God...he’s more than enough! Listen, when we obey the Lord, we’re more than enough. No matter the circumstances, no matter the situation, even though it may look like a loss to the world, we win when we obey.

You say, “Wait a minute...Joseph and Mary are going to have to deal with public shame and ridicule...**how is that a win?**” It’s not... You see, according to the world, the majority of things we do in this life in our obedience to the Lord looks like a loss to the world! We can’t look to the approval or disapproval of the world to define who we are. Oh church, when will we realize: It doesn’t matter what PEOPLE say or think...it matters what the LORD says and thinks! We live this life to an audience of ONE...God!! Listen carefully, we are enough, because God says we’re enough, when we live for Him in obedience!

But it doesn't mean things will be easy. Joseph obeyed...he took Mary as his wife...but, then it got even harder. He's got to take his pregnant wife on a trip. You see, there was a call from Rome for a census...and a census meant: the taxing of the people...and so, being the good citizen that he was, Joseph obeyed Rome and packed up and he and Mary were off to Bethlehem, the homeplace of his ancestors, which was the requirement of the census...go register in your ancestral hometown.

Church, can you see a pattern here with Joseph? He's always obeying! He's obeying God...he's now obeying the government...He IS a JUST man! That's what JUST men do. Do you think maybe...just maybe that's one of the reasons God chose Joseph to raise His Son, Jesus?

You know, perhaps it was a relief to Joseph and Mary when they left Nazareth for Bethlehem. It would be good to get away from the ridicule and gossip. Bethlehem. Joseph had to go there because he was a descendant of King David. Almost 1000 years had passed since King David had been alive...but, God had promised David that the Messiah...the Son of God, would be born of his royal line. Therefore, Jesus was a legal descendant of King David, because Joseph was (and so was Mary, by the way), descendants of David.

You know, traveling with a pregnant wife would have been tough...



a logistical nightmare, really. All of those people on those dirt roads...paths...making their way to their ancestral hometowns for the census. It would be like all the people on the roads for Thanksgiving today. But, they finally make it to Bethlehem. But, because they had to travel so slowly because of Mary's condition, there was no room in the little inn. UGH!! You've got to be kidding? It's one thing after another for this couple, isn't it?

Can I ask you a question... do you think everything in this life is supposed to work out just because you are a believer? No room in the inn? Can you imagine the fear?



Isn't this pouring salt in the wound. I mean, hasn't this couple been through enough? I mean, Mary said "Yes" ...Joseph said "Yes" ...surely the Lord would let them find a place so Mary could give birth to Jesus...surely after all they've been through God would do that for them. Right? Nope!

Church, just because we're believers doesn't guarantee a bed of roses for us. Why? Because God has a bigger a plan... What's the bigger plan for Mary and Joseph? **Room for shepherds**, that's what! See the scene...



Shepherds are coming!! No...Joseph and Mary didn't know this...but, God did and they would need to be in a place that shepherds would be welcomed...and that would have been in that outdoor, carved-out, cave that served as a stable for those staying in the inn. That's where Joseph and Mary needed to be!

And church, God knows what we need. He knows our circumstances, our needs. But, if He allows it, then it's part of His will for our lives. The question is: will we trust Him and say, "yes?" Oh, I know when we get to those "no room in the inn" places in our lives we're going to say, "Lord, are you kidding? I CAN'T DO THIS!" And that's exactly when we're on the cusp of seeing God...because when we say, "Lord, I can't do this...I'm not enough?" that's when we come to the end of ourselves, and that's when we can collapse into the arms of our loving Heavenly Father.

Think of Joseph...standing in that stable-cave... He had to look around at the setting and shake his head, "**This is where the Savior of the world is going to be born? There are donkeys, sheep, dung, straw, and it doesn't smell good.**" Do you think as he eventually fell to his knees...oh he had to, so he could deliver Jesus, do you think he thought: "What a Strange Way to Save the World."

"Why me, I'm just a simple man of trade...I'm not enough." See Joseph...



You know much of Joseph's life...the parts that we know...(which again, aren't much), could have been viewed as unfair. Yet, he never complains. He treats his wife, Mary with such kind and gracious compassion...even when he didn't understand, "I'm pregnant, Joseph." Husbands...oh that we would be like Joseph with our wives... treat our wives with such compassion, kindness, and gentleness (1 Peter 3:7). And Joseph would show that same kindness and compassion in raising Jesus...the Creator of the universe how to be a carpenter and how to be a man. It's astounding!

Joseph thought he wasn't enough...and he wasn't, nor are we... But, when we say "Yes" to God...when we surrender to Him, we're more than enough. Because with God we can do anything. We can bear anything. We can be satisfied and complete even in a smelly stable in a cave surrounded by animals with the smell of dung. Yes, I'm enough, because He's enough!
