

**Time for Christmas: Love**  
**Matthew 1:18-27**  
**Week of Dec 13**

*As you enter into prayer now, take a moment to settle your mind. Put aside your concerns and what needs to get done today, or what didn't get done today. Take a slow, deep breath. Center yourself in His Peace. He is the Alpha and Omega. The Beginning and End. You are found in Him.*  
*Be Still.*

Today as we enter the third week of advent, we will be reading more about Mary and Joseph in chapter one of Matthew. This traditional German hymn, titled "Joseph Dearest, Joseph Mine" is an advent hymn that will help us meditate on the marriage and family that Jesus was born into.

1 Joseph dearest, Joseph mine,  
help me cradle the child divine;  
God reward thee and all that's thine  
in paradise,  
so prays the mother Mary.

Refrain:  
He came among us at Christmastime,  
at Christmastime, in Bethlehem;  
let us bring him from far and wide  
Love's diadem: Jesus, Jesus,  
lo, he comes, and loves, and saves, and frees us!

2 Gladly, dear one, lady mine,  
help I cradle this child of thine;  
God's own light on us both shall shine  
in paradise,  
as prays the mother Mary. [Refrain]

3 All shall come and bow the knee;  
wise and happy their souls shall be,  
loving such a divinity,  
as all may see  
in Jesus, Son of Mary. [Refrain]

**Pause and Pray.**

Jesus, I am here because I want to experience You. As I meditate on this passage, draw to mind those things that You would have me become more aware of. Center my heart and mind on Yourself. Use your Word to draw my heart to You. Amen.

Today we reflect on Matthew 1:18-27. It tells the story of how Joseph and Mary came to be together—despite Mary’s unexpected pregnancy. As I read, listen for a word or phrase that God seems to want you to concentrate on in Joseph’s story. Matthew 1:18-27.

<sup>18</sup> This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about<sup>[a]</sup>: 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<sup>[b]</sup> 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,<sup>[c]</sup> 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”<sup>[d]</sup> (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.

## **REFLECT.**

Much to his surprise, Joseph finds the young woman he is to wed is going to make him a stepfather. I am struck by Joseph’s faithfulness. His loyalty both to his God, and his commitment to Mary. What special, humble hearts Mary and Joseph must have had to set aside the expectations they had for their futures and walk in faith toward what God had for them—raising the Savior of the world. May it be as you have said.

I have a very special stepdad in my life. My husband Marcus is not my daughter’s biological father, but he has loved her deeply and without reservation since he met her. He takes the hits of a real dad—does the discipline, the coaching, and puts up with her middle school sass. He is with her day-in-day-out through the challenging and the ugly and the mundane of homework, attitude and daily chores.

Joseph was there when Mary went into labor, and he was there when a toddler Jesus began to walk. He taught him his trade. He fled to Egypt to protect Him, and he looked for him when he was 12 and disappeared in Jerusalem.

There is so much love and faithfulness in walking through all of life's things with our friends and family. Today as you reflect on the faithfulness of Joseph to a child who wasn't his own, do you have someone that you would like to thank for showing you faithfulness? (PAUSE)

Who has God called you to be faithful to? (PAUSE)

Share with God now where in these relationships you need help to continue in your faithfulness. (PAUSE)

### **PAUSE, PRAY AND ASK.**

Now God, I think of someone I know who needs to feel your loving faithfulness. I bring them before you now. I ask that you would speak your love to their hearts today. (PAUSE)

God, I ask for you to strengthen the families that I love in my extended family, my friend circle, and my church community. Build the loving faithfulness that is displayed in the life of Mary and Joseph in the families I know and love. (PAUSE)

I mention before you know a specific family that I know is struggling. I ask that you would make a way for them. (PAUSE)

### **YIELD.**

God, I now give you this day, and welcome Your involvement with eager anticipation. Make me sensitive to your leading. May I follow You with my whole heart, and may I show this kind of faithful love to those I encounter today.

### **CLOSE IN PRAYER.**

**We close with this prayer for the third week of advent.**

I lift my heart up to you, Lord,  
to thank you for the blessings  
you shower on me each day.

You are the 'joy of my soul.'  
I know that in your great love,  
I am held and protected by you.

I pray and listen to the good news you send;  
I ask and feel the healing.  
I am freed by you  
from the things in this world  
that let me hide from you.

I rejoice, I rejoice, down to my soul.  
Help me to prepare my heart  
to be open and able to receive your immense love. Amen.