

Joseph

Introduction

We are taking a short break from our verse-by-verse series through the Gospel of John to slow down and focus on the Christmas season. This is the most wonderful time of the year, not just because of lights, traditions, or family gatherings, but because we remember the most wonderful story of all time.

For three weeks we are walking through a short series called Heroes of Christmas, focusing on three individuals God used to bring the Christmas story to life.

Last week, Pastor Chris taught on Mary, highlighting the real cost and sacrifice she embraced to participate in the promises of God. Today, we turn our attention to Joseph, Mary's husband, an often overlooked but deeply faithful man. Next week, during our Christmas service, we will focus on the ultimate Hero of Christmas, Jesus.

- Mary last week.
- Joseph this week.
- Jesus next week.

This message applies to everyone, but men in particular should pay close attention. Our culture is increasingly confused about masculinity, leadership, and conviction. Masculinity is labeled toxic, headship is framed as oppression, and strong conviction is mistaken for aggression. As a result, many men are unsure what God expects of them, and many families feel the effects of that confusion.

Joseph's life gives us a clear and grounded example of godly faithfulness, especially for men who want to honor God in ordinary life.

Who Was Joseph?

Joseph's story is found primarily in Matthew and Luke and appears almost entirely within the Christmas narrative. The Gospels focus heavily on Jesus' public ministry beginning around age 30, and it is likely Joseph had passed away by that time.

Before looking at the text, here are a few important things we know about Joseph.

A Simple Man

Joseph was a carpenter, the Greek word *tekton*, meaning a skilled craftsman.

- He was not a priest.
- He was not a prophet.
- He was not a scholar.
- He was a blue-collar man who worked a physically demanding job, provided for his family, and lived faithfully before God.

Joseph represents the everyman. He is relatable. He feels like us.

We often talk about figures like Abraham, Moses, David, Elijah, Peter, Paul, and John. While they were human like us, they often feel larger than life. Joseph does not.

He was just a husband, a father, and a worker, yet his obedience shaped the story of redemption and still speaks 2,000 years later.

- Do not discount yourself.
- You do not need to be a pastor to make a difference.
- You do not need to be a missionary to leave a legacy.
- You do not need to be a scholar to be used by God.

A Quiet Faith

Joseph never speaks a single recorded word in Scripture.

- There is no quote from him. No recorded prayer. No public declaration.

This strongly suggests that Joseph was a quiet man, more concerned with doing the right thing than saying the right thing.

Many Christians are very good at saying the right things. The more important question is whether our actions match our words.

Joseph reminds us that faithfulness matters more than volume.

- You do not have to be loud to matter.
- You do not have to be loud to be used by God.
- You just have to be faithful.
- For the quiet, introverted, steady believers, Joseph is a hero for you.

Joseph Led His Family Spiritually

Joseph was faithful to bring his family to synagogue and the temple. He ensured Scripture was central in their home and raised his children in the rhythms of worship.

Men, this matters.

Your children need the people of God.
They need the house of God.
They need consistency and example.

Showing up occasionally will not shape lasting faith. Children will never treat church as a priority if their parents do not.

Why This Matters

Multiple studies show the spiritual leadership of fathers has a profound impact on families.

Swiss Federal Statistical Office Study (1994)

Patterns of religious retention based on parental involvement:

- Both parents active → about 33% of children became regular churchgoers as adults
- Mother only active → about 2 to 3%
- Father only active → 38 to 44%
- Neither parent active → almost none

Baptist Press / Southern Baptist Convention Summary

- Child converts first → 3 to 5% of families follow
- Mother converts first → 15 to 20% follow
- Father converts first → 70 to 90% or more follow

Study after study shows that when men take spiritual responsibility seriously, families tend to follow.

The Story of Joseph

Matthew 1:18–25

Joseph and Mary were betrothed, a legally binding commitment lasting about one year.

- They were considered husband and wife
- Sexual relations were not yet permitted
- Mary remained in her father's home
- Joseph prepared resources and a home

During this time, Mary was found to be pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

Joseph, An Everyman's Hero

A Hero for His Mercy

Joseph learns that Mary is pregnant before they came together. From his perspective, she has broken their covenant and offered an unbelievable explanation.

Despite his pain, anger, and confusion, Joseph resolves to divorce her quietly.

He chooses mercy.

- He could have exposed her publicly.
- He could have ruined her reputation.
- He could have pursued severe punishment.

Instead, he protects her dignity and future.

Even when wronged deeply, Joseph chooses mercy over vengeance.

We bear the image of Christ most clearly when we endure wrong and respond with mercy.

A Hero for His Obedience

An angel appears to Joseph in a dream and tells him not to fear, that the child is from the Holy Spirit, and that he is to name the child Jesus.

Joseph immediately obeys.

He abandons his plan and follows God's instruction.

Naming the child was significant. In Jewish culture, naming a child was a public claim of fatherhood.

Joseph was not just protecting Jesus, he was adopting and raising Him as his own.

Joseph said yes to a life of misunderstood obedience:

- A reputation that would never fully recover
- Shame that was not his
- Being thought immoral, foolish, or weak
- Economic uncertainty
- Raising a child who was not biologically his

He obeyed simply because God asked him to.

A Hero for His Faith and Action

Matthew 2:13–15

When warned in a dream that Herod intended to kill the child, Joseph immediately fled to Egypt with Mary and Jesus.

When God spoke, Joseph acted.

- No delay.
- No hesitation.
- No argument.
- Faith was not theoretical for Joseph. It was lived.

A Hero for His Wife

Imagine Mary being woken up in the middle of the night and told they must flee immediately because God warned Joseph of danger.

Mary trusted Joseph because he had a proven track record of faithfulness.

Men, this matters.

Your wife needs to see you:

- Reading Scripture
- Praying
- Serving
- Growing
- Working hard
- Putting her needs before your own
- Talking openly about the Lord

Trust is built over time through consistency. When faith is visible, leadership is believable.

Conclusion

Joseph was not famous.
He was not powerful.
He was not impressive by worldly standards.

He was faithful.
He was a hero for his mercy.
A hero for his obedience.
A hero for his faith and action.
A hero for his wife and family.

And that makes Joseph a true Hero of Christmas.