Peace in the Chaos — Delivery Transcript

Matthew 1:18–25 (CSB) · Wes Terry · Sunday, December 7, 2025 · *When Christmas Comes*

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We're going to be in the book of Matthew chapter 1. You can go ahead and turn there. And we're doing a Advent series in the book of Matthew and probably tackling the book as a whole. And the Advent words we've talked about in the lighting of the candles, but this morning we're going to talk about peace. And before we talk about peace, one of the things in my life I've noticed in order for me to get any kind of peace and quiet so that I can go to bed, the first thing I've got to do is tell my kids a bedtime story.

Is that true of any other parents in the room? I don't know what it is about my storytelling. I don't think it's all that great. It's probably the characters like Daddy Bob that make them interesting, but the kids just got to have a bedtime story before they go to bed and it's not really unique to little kids. Every adult I think loves a good story. Yeah, you like a good story, I like a good story. Every good story has certain elements. There's interesting characters, there is some kind of engaging plot.

Some kind of conflict or tension that needs to be resolved and there's a plot that does a good engaging job of resolving that plot that keeps you engaged. And then there's got to be some kind of compelling story or moral or some kind of takeaway that that makes the that makes the story worth worth hearing. And everybody has their own story. You've got your story, I've got my story. You can say the world has its story. Some of the world's story gets recorded in books that we call history books. And certain individuals and their stories get recorded in history.

And in a similar way, I would say God has his story and God's history, the history of God's story is recorded for us. Our lives are the pen of the story that God is writing, but certain lives get literally pinned onto paper or etched into stone, in the case of the old school way of doing things. And that's revealed to us in the scripture. And the story of Jesus, I would say, is the greatest story ever told. And not just the greatest story in general, the story of Jesus is the greatest drama that's ever been told.

The greatest human drama. And by soap by drama I don't mean soap operas. That's what a lot of people think of when they hear drama. I don't mean it in its negative sense, like, girl, you got so much drama like a negative drama. All that drama means is intense emotion. A story with characters that engender or demonstrate intense emotion. And so one of the reasons that people like watching dramas is because you get invested in the characters. You're like, oh, I hope that I hope they get together. You know, it's just dramatic.

It's and in that way, I would say the story of Jesus is the greatest human drama because the characters of that story are very complicated. You get very attached to the characters. And what Jesus essentially accomplishes through his story, you cannot be neutral about. As C. S. Lewis said, when people encountered the genuine Jesus, they were never neutral. They either hated him and tried to kill him. Or they bowed down to him and worshipped him as Lord. Nobody was like, meh. Jesus doesn't do that to people. And that's why his story is the greatest human drama.

We're looking in Matthew chapter 1 at the origin story of Jesus. We looked at the genealogy last week. This week we're going to look at the arrival of Jesus. And the arrival of Jesus unleashes a series of events that create great chaos in the lives of the people near it. And when I think of chaos, the thing that comes to my mind is that opening scene from home Alone. Can I anybody know what I'm talking about? The pizza party at the house. Everybody's come over and they're going to be flying out the next day for Paris.

And they order pizza and it's just an absolute chaotic scene at the McAllister house. For those of you who've never seen the movie, I'm going to give you the best gift of Christmas. I'm going to show you a little clip of this scene. So let's play home alone opening scene so I can paint a picture of Matthew one for you. We're going to print windows. Do you want to be pleased? Well yeah, we did it. But if you want any, somebody's going to have to pop the ball and it's gone.

Four, fell easy on the passing. Get away. What is the matter with you? He started giving up bees on purpose. You don't make sausage and almonds and you little jerk. Classic line. Classic line. Gotta love it. How many of you say my life feels a little bit like home Alone right now? Yeah, some of you. That is your Christmas right there. It's a great story if you haven't watched home Alone. Essentially the McCallisters leave town the following morning. And they leave Kevin behind. He sleeps in and by the time they notice that Kevin isn't with them on the plane, it's too late.

The plane's up in the air and their Christmas piece is basically gone. And they're the whole time the whole movie trying to find their way back home, trying to find their way back to Kevin. At first Kevin wakes up and he's like, what's going on? A little bit unsettled, but then he's like, wait a second I can do what I want. And so he does all the things that he's ever

wanted to do, and he's having the time of his life until the villains show up and the thieves trying to break into his house thinking that the family's gone.

And you essentially see chaos unfold and build on every side of the equation, with the family, with Kevin, with the thieves, until eventually I would call it the climax of the movie or maybe right before the climax of the movie where Kevin is in the church house. He goes to church and the choir singing the songs of Emmanuel and O Holy night and he sees his neighbor who he thinks is a very scary man and is spooked by it, but then the neighbor, the scary neighbor comes over and him and Kevin sit down and they talk.

And in their conversation, they arrive at kind of a coming to terms of what who they are and what's going on and what's most important in life. And they find peace. And as a result of that the story resolves and it and they live happily ever after. That dynamic I think is a beautiful picture of what's going on in Matthew chapter one. Matthew chapter 1, you have the genealogy of Jesus, but then the announcement of Jesus' birth unleashes chaos in the life of Joseph and Mary. Now the thing about Matthew is he tells it differently than Luke's gospel.

He really focuses in on Joseph's perspective, whereas Luke focuses more on Mary's perspective. Nevertheless, what you see happen in the heart of Joseph, he goes from this place of chaos and bewilderment and what in the world am I going to do? And to a place of wholeness and peace and everything's going to be okay. And what you end up discovering as you look at Joseph's response is that true peace is not determined by the circumstances that you may be in. True peace is really determined by your proximity to a person, and that person, of course, is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And even though the person of Jesus created chaos in Joseph's life. It was his nearness to Jesus that unlocked true peace in his heart. And in doing so, I think Joseph is a blueprint of sorts for us, for how we can discover that same gift of peace. Because our peace is also dependent upon our nearness to Jesus. And so let's read the first A couple of verses in Matthew chapter 1 starting in verse 18. The genealogy, of course, is that first section, the first 17 verses, which was shocking in its own right.

We looked at that last week. Now we're going to see the shocking nature of the announcement that Jesus would be born. And so verse 18, the birth of Jesus, the Messiah, came about this way. Notice the prepositions. After his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, it was discovered before they came together that she was pregnant from the Holy Spirit, aka not Joseph. So her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her publicly, decided to divorce her secretly. But after he had considered these things, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife.

Because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She'll give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. All of this, Matthew says, took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet. See, the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son. And they will name him Emmanuel, which is translated God with us. A classic Christmas text. And yet does not have most of the things people think about when they think about the Christmas story.

All of those things are in Luke's gospel. Shepherds in their fields watching over their flocks by night. Luke's gospel. Angels declaring, joy to the world, the Lord has come. Luke's gospel, no room for the little baby in the inn, and so they had to go to the manger, surrounded by ox and the A word that no one sings. Everybody sings at Christmas time, but there you go. None of that is in Matthew's gospel. Some of that's not even in the Bible, but what is in the Bible, all is in the Gospel of Luke.

Matthew removes all of it. Not because he's contradicting Luke, not because those things didn't happen. Obviously they did happen Luke is being selective for a reason, and his reason, like we said last week, is theological. He is trying to establish a key truth for his audience, which would have been predominantly Jewish readers, and he is saying to them, Jesus is the Christ. He is the anointed king of Israel. He is the completion of God's promise to king David that his kingdom would never end, that his throne would endure forever and that from his seed would come a king who would reign forever.

And Matthew saying Jesus is that Christ, he is that Messiah. Who completes the covenant to David, which began in Genesis 3. 15, went through Abraham. We looked at all that last week. What you're going to see in Joseph's response to that truth is a journey of moving from chaos to true peace. And again, Matthew tells it from Joseph's perspective because Joseph is the son of David. The legal heir of the throne of David, and God chose him for whatever other reasons for because of that fact. And Joseph's experience of peace comes to him in a season of incredible difficulty, which is the first thing I want us to notice about this Christmas story.

True peace, real peace, peace that comes from God is peace that can be experienced despite your difficult circumstances. I know people say that and you've probably heard that. But you really don't appreciate it until you see the fullness of what Joseph and Mary were going through. We don't feel it because we're you know, we live in America, lots of good things about America The one thing that's different from the west and the Middle East is the Middle East culture was called an honor-shame culture. And so the idea of what people thought about you, the preservation of honor for not just yourself, but for your family.

That was incredibly important and the loss of it was devastating. You would literally cut your child off from your name if they shamed you. And that is essentially what Joseph and Mary carry as a result of what happens. You notice it even in the prepositions that Matthew uses in

verse 18. Did you pick up on it? It says it was after Joseph and Mary were engaged, but it was before they came together. That is a an appeal to what every Jewish reader would have understood the two stages of a Jewish marriage.

Every Jewish marriage had a it was called a betrothal period. The actual term is a it starts with a K. Kiddushin, I think is the name of it. It was essentially a six to twelve month period of engagement. But it wasn't like our engagement. When boys and girls get engaged today. You give your girlfriend a ring, you say, well you love me forever, I'll love you forever, and let's let's get married. And sometimes it's a couple of months, sometimes it's sometimes a couple of days, you know, sometimes it's longer. But essentially, if you call it off during the engagement, no harm, no foul.

I mean it's pretty bad heartbreak, but nobody blinks an eye. That is not what a Jewish engagement look like the Kiddushin as they called it was essentially a contract it was a legally binding contract. It was typically the parents were involved. The parents would kind of help arrange the marriages and once mom and dad found a suitor for their child they would exchange an object of value, there was a public giving of that object. Kind of like we give a ring today, they would give some kind of value. Some kind of token.

And then in front of God and all the witnesses, there would be a commitment, and they would essentially say these people are one. God is going to make them one. Now they're not going to become one for another six to twelve months. And that would be that was what was called the starts with an end like a kedushim but it starts with an n. I can't remember the exact the exact title. But it was essentially where the husband and the wife would come to their new home and then they would consummate the marriage and there was this seven-day festival.

But between those two poles the couple in question was legally married, they were socially married, in every respect they were thought to be married, which means when fun funny business went down between the spouse and the other person. It was funny business that would be equated to if that same thing had had happened after marriage, especially something like adultery. And so when Mary finds out that she is pregnant, and it is not from Joseph, it says he's from the Holy Spirit, but from Joseph's point of view. He can't really be sure.

Certainly no one else looking at the situation would assume that to be the case. And Mary finds herself with a child even though she had done nothing wrong. To say that their marriage plans were disrupted is to say the least. It would not just have derailed their plans to live happily ever after, it would have upended their lives totally. Because in the Old Testament, not only was God's design for marriage laid out, there were penalties associated with violations to God's design. And the penalty for adultery for a woman engaged to be married was the death penalty for that woman and whatever man was involved in the act.

The only mercy was given if the woman did it without consent. If there was some kind of abuse or something of that nature, then only the man would be you know th stoned to death. But if it was a woman, both of them would be taken outside the city gates and pummeled. And that's what Mary is probably afraid of when she finds out she's pregnant. Could you imagine what she would have been thinking? Can you imagine what Joseph would have been thinking? All his hopes and dreams. Finally found a good woman.

Remember it says Joseph was a righteous man. Joseph was a righteous man. Mary was a righteous woman. They came from a righteous family. They had cultural expectations to live a righteous life. And the strength of their righteousness is a strong contrast to the stain of this. Appearance of immorality and adultery. And the Old Testament law, if there's a young woman who's a virgin engaged to be a man, and another man encounters her in the city and sleeps with her, take both of them out of the gate and stone them to death.

No wonder Mary says to the angel in Luke 1. 14, how can this be? How can this be? I have never been with a man. Now I imagine she probably told Joseph the truth. And Joseph being a righteous man, maybe he even believed her. Maybe he believed God is Mysterious. His plans are not our plans. That does not nullify the reality that their plans and their life had been upended because of a thing that God was wanting to do in the world. Which means your peace is not determined by your life going a certain way.

God can derail your plans and you still experience true peace. If it can happen for Joseph and Mary, it can happen for you and me. But it wasn't just the plans getting derailed, it was also the other thing, and this is the other source of why a lot of people lose peace. And that is the disgracing or shaming of their name. If you look in verse 19, her husband, Joseph, being a righteous man, not wanting to disgrace her, publicly, decided to divorce her secretly. When it says disgrace her publicly, the reason it says that is because when you were betrothed in a Jewish marriage, if you wanted to get out of it, you couldn't just say I got cold feet, I'm out.

You had to give them a public certificate of divorce. You had to go to the city gates, you had to get the JP or whoever the city tribal chief was. And say, I don't want to be married anymore, and here's why. There had to be a record of the reason. And so Joseph knows that and he knows that by virtue of our situation, an impossible situation, Mary is essentially going to begin to show that she's pregnant. You can have a lot of things in your life. Being pregnant isn't one of them, right?

Eventually she's going to start showing, which means people are going to start talking. And when people come up to me or Mary and they begin to ask, what's happening? We can either lie and become unrighteous, or we can tell the truth and be seen as unrighteous. Either way, the person I love the most is going to be harmed in the process. And because I love her and I don't want to shame her. The path of least resistance is for me to try and divorce her secretly.

There'll still be a record, but maybe if we find the right person and everybody, if we keep the circle really tight.

Maybe I can keep her from being marked for life as an immoral person. Obviously she would have to leave town and she could never be seen again, but that's what he's thinking through. In a way, what Joseph is doing, I think, is a beautiful picture of true righteousness. Biblical righteousness is not cold-hearted legalism. It's not how dare those sinners be so sinful, whereas I am so righteous. Look at me, I'm so good. That's not motivating Joseph. His righteousness is a righteousness marked by merciful sacrifice. He is like our Lord in that he is full of grace and truth.

He cannot marry her without living a lie because if people came to him and said what happened, for him to tell the truth would have brought shame on her. At least even if she was innocent, even if some people believed them. By and large, everyone else would assume something shady happened. And yet he can't and yet he can't divorce her and tell the full truth without also shaming his wife. And so he's caught in this tension of grace and truth. Just like our Lord who has mercy and love for sinners, but can by no means clear the guilty.

He cannot live a lie. He cannot tolerate sin. He cannot say of something that's not okay that it's okay. And yet at the same time he desires to give forgiveness and grace. And well, I wonder if one reason why the Lord didn't choose Joseph is because of his character in that way. Him wanting to maintain grace and truth and he got it wrong, it's we're going to see, but he did what he did to try to shield her from disgrace the truth is you can have things happen in your life where people disgrace your name and the things that they say about you are untrue and are unfair.

And that can rob you of your peace. Has that not ever happened to anybody? I don't know how many nights I've stayed awake stressed out about what people are saying because I know it isn't true. But once a narrative starts taking hold, there's really not much you can do about it. And you can be crippled by the things that people think about you. And it doesn't matter how innocent you are and it doesn't matter how good your case is. Some ways people are going to believe what they're going to believe.

But what Matthew is saying is your peace doesn't have to depend on that. Your peace does not have to depend on your good reputation. And whether you lose your good reputation because you deserve it, or whether you lose your good reputation undeserved, God's peace in your life is not dependent upon that thing. God's peace is deeper. God's peace is deeper than your very worst day. Can you think of your very worst day? Do you remember when it happened? As a pastor, I've walked with people in our church through some really, really bad days.

Days where I scratched my head and I thought, God, I don't understand. I don't know why you're doing this. And in their case, they know it's from God because the angel said, rejoice, you've been chosen by God here. Have you ever had such a bad day and deep down you knew this is this is God. God is doing this. Maybe not even to punish me. Maybe not because I deserve it, maybe you do deserve it, but you have to reconcile what you believe to be true about God as a wise and sovereign and faithful loving Father and the pain and heartache and brokenness of your situation.

It's a crisis of faith. Mary and Joseph would have had a crisis of faith. And what they come to discover is God's peace is deeper than that day. That your very worst moment, as bad as it is, does not have to rob you of genuine peace. Genuine peace is deeper still it's like Teflon. It can take the blow. It's beneath the surface so that when the storms of life come, it's maintains its roots because it isn't rooted in your circumstances, it's not rooted in the opinions of other people, it's rooted in something deeper, something more lasting, something eternal.

And that's the peace that's available through through Jesus. So I don't know about you, I don't know what your worst day was, but I know you've had one, and I know you probably can now say I can see what they were feeling. If that's what they were going through, I've been there. Maybe not even as bad as that, but I've been there. And my point is, even then God can give you peace. Even there. So the question is, well, how does he do it? How do you how do you get that kind of peace even in that type of low?

And Joseph I think is a blueprint. Look at verse 20. After he had considered these things, in other words, he had he had come to decide I am going to divorce her quietly. This is not what I want. This is just the best way to protect her. And after he had decided that an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. And the angel says, Joseph, notice the line, son of David. In other words, not son of who his dad was, son of who, way, way, way, way, way, way, way back in Israeli history, the king of Israel I'm addressing you as a descendant of that man.

Listen to what I'm about to say, son of David. Don't be afraid. Don't be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Because what has been conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. He's probably affirming what Mary had been pleading with Joseph. You've got to believe me. This is from the Holy Spirit, and the Lord is saying, she is not lying, she is not impure, she is not guilty, she is innocent. This is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son. And you are to name him Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins You got to imagine put yourself in Joseph's shoes.

You finally kind of settled on what you're going to do. You're not feeling good about it, but you know it's going to happen. And then God shows up to you in a dream, and the first thing he says is, don't be afraid. And then he goes on to confirm some things you really needed to

know, but then he asked you to do something that was going to be extremely difficult. And now the ball's in your court. And this is how peace works. If you're going to experience genuine peace, it's going to require a personal response from you.

True peace does not flood over you like a river, it is not passive, it's not like something that comes at you against your will it's not like you know falling in love and you just feel like you're a victim to the process. True peace, biblical peace, is something you receive, but it's something you receive with your will, with a choice. Every time God gives an invitation to experience peace, the only way the peace is experienced is if you decide to receive it. It requires a personal decision. And I would say what Joseph's about to do is a one-off, it's a one thing, but these actions, when done daily, will enable you to live in a season of peace.

I can say this from experience. There's a lot of chaos that's happened here and there in my life. When I live in this way, God's peace. Is deeper still. The troubles don't go away, but my peace in God remains. So what are those things? I'm going to show you four of them at least, maybe five. The first is that he has to not be afraid. The second is that he has to discern or listen to the voice of God. So denounce fear, discern God's voice. Depend upon God's promise and then do what God says do.

Denounce the voice of fear, discern the voice of God. Depend upon God's promise and then do what God says do. If you'll do those things, you'll have peace in your life, no matter what the world throws at you, no matter how difficult it is. I want to take them just one at a time. The first thing God says is don't be afraid. And that's to me very interesting because it comes first, not second. He doesn't say, hey, here's some reasons why you shouldn't be afraid. He leads with, don't be afraid.

And the reason I think it comes first is because for you to hear the reasons why you don't have to be afraid, you've got to turn down the volume of fear to hear the truth of God. So often what fear does in your life and in my life is it fills the room. It demands all of our attention. It blinds us, it deafens us to the things we really need to see. The anger has has so filled every other faculty we've lost our ability to discern anything. And that's the power of anger.

Anger's weird like that. It can take something that is a true threat and magnify it so that untrue threats and uncertain futures feel as certain as the true threat that you face. In other words, it's a true threat, people are going people are going to think something about me and Mary. What you don't know as true is what that's going to look like six months down the road. What you don't know is true is whether the child being born to the two of you is going to be suffering the rest of his life.

What you don't know is true is whether God has a plan, whether God is going to do something through it. You don't go there because you're focused and obsessed with some

other future because that's what anger does. I'm sorry, not anger. Anger does it too by the way, but that's what fear does. Fear fills your heart with potential unknown but devastating futures and it's all you'll ever think about. And that's why God says if you want peace, the first thing you got to do is turn that down. You cannot live your life by fear you've got to denounce it.

Denounce is the opposite of announce. If you're going to announce something, what do you do? Shh. Here's an announcement. Everybody listen. He's saying do the opposite of that. You tell your fear to shh, trying to hear what God is saying. I'm not going to be controlled by fear. I'm trying to hear what God is saying. That's what you got to do first. And then after you've turned down the fear, then you can hear. With discernment. And I chose the blank discern what God is saying instead of discern the truth or discern God's word on the one hand, because God doesn't come to him in a Bible study, God comes to him in a dream, which I think is interesting.

God does sometimes speak to people in dreams. It's very, very rare. So if you're waiting on God to give you a dream, the odds are stacked against it. I think there's like seven dreams in the whole Bible, and most of them are actually in Matthew But God does speak in dreams right now in the Muslim world. He's speaking through dreams and visions left and right. People are coming to Jesus. So I'm not saying it doesn't happen. But God primarily speaks through his word. God's word is his self-revelation is given to us so that we might know what God is like and we might know what God desires and so much of hearing what God is saying depends upon a an ability to understand what God's Word said then and how it applies today.

And then God can speak a handful of other ways. But the key discipline to find peace is to discern what He's saying. It's not just reading the Bible is important, it's a good start, but you're reading the Bible to hear from God. You're reading the Bible assuming God speaks to me through his word. This is not trivial knowledge, this is not like academic. God is going to speak to me through his word. And when you begin to learn how just how to discern that and get a sense for what God is saying, then you can find your way towards genuine peace no matter the circumstance.

And notice what God does. This is really instructive. God first says, don't fear, and then he directs Joseph's attention to the things that mattered the most. He essentially affirms for Joseph that your worst fears are not true. Mary is innocent. Her child is from the Lord. This is not Pagan magic, this is not the devil, this is not evil, this is from God. She is not guilty. And thirdly, you are chosen as well. You are the son of David. You are going to name him Jesus. I need you in this thing.

You are not discarded goods. You are not worthless. You are not shameful. You are not your worst fears. You were chosen by God for a purpose. And then finally, what I'm doing is part

of a bigger plan. This has been foretold. What this child is going to do is fulfill the covenant, not just to David, not just to Abraham, but to Adam and Eve in the garden. He's going to save God's people from their sins. And that's how God's word generally works. He may not give you every answer to every question.

In fact, I know he won't. There will be things that you're afraid. Of and you're fearful about and you're wanting God will you please tell me how my child's not going to suffer? Will you please tell me how this medical diagnosis is not going to take me away from the people I love. Will you please whatever the case may be. And God may may not give you answers to those questions, but what he often does through his word is re-orient you to the more important questions, to the more important truths, and that's what he does to Joseph.

These things are true no matter what. And then after he does that, he gives them three things to do. Marry her. Don't divorce her, but marry her. Don't be afraid and name him Jesus. Name him Jesus. When you think about what it looks like to hear the word of God, those principles are always true. One of the ways to distinguish God's voice from the counterfeit, according to the Apostle Paul in Philippians 4, he says the way to hear, or the way to peace is to whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is excellent, whatever is praiseworthy, whatever is just, think on these things.

That's the way to peace. Yes, you first it's not fear. In fact, in Philippians 4, don't be anxious about anything. But in everything, through prayer and petition, let your request be made known to God. Then the peace of God which surpasses human understanding will guard your heart and mind in Christ Jesus. But right after that, what does he say? Listen. Discern. Discern the truth of God. Discern by what? Whatever's true, whatever is praiseworthy, whatever is excellent, whatever is noble. Dwell on these things. That's how you find your way to peace, no matter your situation.

You turn down the volume of the fear, you turn up the volume of what God is saying, and what God is saying may not answer every question, but it will answer the most important questions so that you can keep doing what he's called you to do. And then the third thing, you got to depend upon God's promise. Now Joseph gets a little hint. Jesus is going to save his people from their sins. But then Matthew comes behind him in verse 22 and says, all of this took place to fulfill what was spoken long ago by the Lord through the prophet Isaiah.

And then he quotes that Isaiah passage, Isaiah 7. 14. See the virgin will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and they will name him Emmanuel. In other words, Joseph, your bad day is part of a much bigger story. And if you know your bad day is part of God's bigger story, that bad day is still bad, but it's not im unbearable. Because God's doing something. I can suffer if it's towards a particular purpose. It's kind of like when you go to the doctor and you get a diagnosis. The diagnosis is a real bad diagnosis.

But it's the process of everything that leads to the doctor's visit that gets you all worked up and anxious. When you have certainty, even though the certainty is not what you wanted to hear, it's almost as if something rel is relieved inside of you because Somebody knows what they're doing, somebody's given me an answer, and I can kind of suffer better now that I have those things in place. And that's what you see with Joseph. He's he's depending that God is working through all of this. And he's working for his plan.

His plan is a good plan. And so whatever struggles my future child is going to face. I can let those things come without fear because God is good all the time. It doesn't matter. Mountain high, valley low, God is going to work it out. And then the last thing that he does is he does what God says too. Look at verse 24, one of the best verses in the whole text. When Joseph woke up, he did as the Lord's angel had commanded him. He married her, he did not have sexual relations with her until she gave birth to a son, and then he named him Jesus.

God says do three things. Don't be afraid. Marry your fiance and name him Jesus, and he does those same three things. He marries her. He is not afraid in that he doesn't have relations with her that entire time. I'm sure he might have been tempted because then he could say, well maybe it's mine. I mean, you know. He doesn't do that. He says no it's going to be from the Lord and I'm going to know it's from the Lord because I'm not going to I'm not going to sully that. And then he names him Jesus.

And that's the way to peace in your life and my life. It always comes through obedience. And I don't mean that by saying if you obey God, then you'll earn his peace, like he's going to hold withhold his peace until you prove your way. That's not what the that's not what the text is saying anyway. More so God's peace is like it's like a cloud of rain, it's a rain cloud. Pouring down rain on this location. And if you want to experience the peace of God from that rain, then you actually have to bring yourself into alignment with where the rain cloud is placed.

And it doesn't matter how sincere you are, it doesn't matter how badly you want it, if you're going west when the rain cloud is east, you're never going to get the blessing of God's peace. I didn't know that was going to rhyme. Really bad. You cannot experience the peace of God and at the same time reject the commands of God. That is just not the way it works. God's peace is always attached to his commands. Your experience of God's peace is always attached to your obedience to what God has said.

And I'm sure there are many of us in this room this morning who desperately desire the peace of God. And maybe even you believe some of what I'm saying. God has a plan and God's peace is better. And I know I all I know all that's true. I just don't feel it. I don't feel it. I don't feel it. And you're wondering why don't I feel the peace of God? And it may be because you know what God is wanting and you refuse to do it. Well, if that's going to cost too much, that's going to be too painful.

I might lose my friends, I might we might have a fight. Whatever the reasons are, the point is you'll never experience God's peace without doing what he says. None of those things. Right when he woke up, he did what God said do, and as a result, God gave him peace. In all of these ways, I think what Matthew is suggesting is that if you really want true peace, you've got to devote your life to Jesus Your peace depends on proximity to Jesus. Your nearness to Jesus determines your experience of peace.

And in some ways Joseph is a blueprint, but it's ultimately not even about Joseph. Joseph shows us how to find peace, but Jesus is the source of peace. And Jesus is the source of peace because he does those four things and more. Jesus, more than anyone turned down the dial of fear in his life. He did not live by fear, he lived by faith in his Father's will. Jesus, more than anyone, discerned the Father's will He discerned what his father was saying. He said, I only go where the father says, go.

I only say what the father says, say. He was in tune with the word of God. Jesus, more than anyone else, depended upon God's promise. He even when he was on the cross and he cries out, my God, my God, why have you forsaken me? He wasn't actually saying, God, you've forsaken me. He was saying, he was quoting a scripture in the Old Testament that promises God is faithful. And so even though I feel forsaken by God, and even though in a way I am being forsaken because I'm bearing the sins of the world, I do so mindful my Father is faithful and that he will raise me once again, like he will raise me from the dead.

I die in confidence, even in my worst day. I die with confidence because God's plan. Because God is faithful to his plan. His per promises and purposes will prevail, and Jesus demonstrates that on the cross. And ultimately it's because Jesus demonstrated those things and lived a sinless perfect life of love and obedience and died for our sins on the cross that you and I can receive God's peace even though we don't deserve it. Joseph didn't deserve that peace. Mary didn't deserve that peace. It was a gift of grace. A gift of grace through Jesus.

But God's grace is like any gift. You'll only experience it if you receive it. And you'll only receive it if you have true humility and recognize your need for peace. So we're going to enter into a time of response and I'm going to ask whoever to come back up. I know there's a lot of people in our room this morning who are probably experiencing chaos You came in this morning full of chaos. You're going to walk out of these doors right back into that chaos. And this morning God has spoken to you and He's given you an invitation to peace.

And if you have a question of what that looks like practically and you want someone to pray with you or someone to follow up with you, if you'll use your connect card on the chair in the seat in front of you and put your name and a number down. And say, hey, I want to talk to a pastor this week. I'd love to follow up with you. You may just be burdened and heavy laden.

You just want someone to pray with you. You just want someone to know and care about the burdens that you are carrying.

And God can often deliver people. Through the prayers of the saints. You may go grab someone you know and come up here and pray at the altar. I'd be happy to pray with you if you want to pray. I'd be happy to do that as well. You may just want to indicate that in a connect card. But during this time of response, it's one of the most important times in the service because real peace comes through a decision. It's not something that overshadows you, it doesn't overcome you, it isn't passive, it's a decision you must make.

It's a choice from your will. And if God is calling you to make some kind of decision this morning, especially if it is to make Jesus Lord of your life, then don't let this time pass by without making that decision. So let's bow our heads together and as the Holy Spirit works in your heart and is impressing upon you what to do. I want to pray for you. Father, we thank you for your word and for Joseph's life, even though he's often neglected and forgotten about. He's such a beautiful picture of sincere and humble faith.

And so I pray for every person in this room who is living in a life of chaos? Would we pray not that you would necessarily remove them from the chaos, but that you would give them the presence of Christ in that chaos. Such that they are able to endure and cooperate with your redemptive purposes. God, we believe that you are good, mountain highs and valley lows. And we believe that your peace is deeper. Available to every single person through repentance and faith. And so show us the way of what that looks like.

Help us to be humble, to turn away from fear, to turn away from pride, and all the things that keep us from where we know you desires to be to keep us from where blessing and goodness and joy reside. Would you draw us back to yourself as we respond now in faith and we pray it in Jesus' name. Amen.