



Advent

Title: Unwrapping Unexpected Love

Main Scriptures: Matthew 1:20-23,
Matthew 2:13-15

Why was Joseph God's choice?

Joseph was a righteous man.

(Mat 1:19, 13:43; Job 36:7; Ps 5:12; Prov 15:29; Jam 5:16)

Joseph was faithful.

(Mat 1:19; Ps 31:23, 101:6; Prov 28:20; Rev 2:10)

Joseph was gentle and compassionate.

(Mat 1:20-23, 11:29; Eph 4:2)

Joseph's choices came with a cost.

(Lk 2:1-6; Mat 2:13-15; Rev 12:2-17)

Joseph loved and cared for the body of Christ.

“Unwrapping Unexpected Love” | December 16 & 17, 2023

Small Group Sermon Study | Matthew 1:13-15, 20-25

Opening Prayer: *God, we thank you for today. We thank you for the opportunity to sit in Your presence with those here. We pray that through this time together that you will be glorified and praised in our study and in our conversation. Amen.*

Read the key passages of Scripture and review the sermon notes, then answer the following questions:

1. What did you like and appreciate about this message?
2. What was something you learned from this message?
3. Read Matthew 1:18-25. What stands out to you?
4. Pastor Al speaks about the idea that Joseph is the forgotten man of Christmas. Why do you think that is?
5. Pastor Al emphasized that difficult situations always require a difficult choice because our nature is to be selfish and self-protective first. How does this speak to you in your current situation?
 - a. Where in your life do you see that you have had to make some difficult decisions where you wanted to go the selfish route?
6. Read Matthew 2:1-6. What stood out to you?
7. Pastor Al speaks to this idea that Joseph’s decision came with a cost as there was a war going on around them that they didn’t even realize.
 - a. What can we learn from how Joseph walked the road that he was called to by God?
 - b. How can we be attentive to the war that is around us that we cannot see?
8. As Pastor Al concluded his sermon, he brought up four key ideas:
 - a. Facilitating Growth - personal growth in righteousness and collective growth in the body of Christ.
 - b. Pay attention and responding to the challenges in life instead of shrinking back or avoiding difficulty.
 - c. Responding to spiritual battles we face with knowledge, and...
 - d. Hearing and listening to God’s voice and responding to His directions.

How can you live out these opportunities in your life based on the courage Joseph showed to all of us with his determination through all his trials?

Silently re-read the key Scripture(s) from the message, asking the Holy Spirit to speak to you.

As a group, ask each other how you can pray for one another this week.

Prayer: *God, again we thank you for today. We thank you for this space that we can come to and grow closer to you as we grow closer as a community. We want to thank you for the way that you led Joseph as Jesus was on the way. May we not forget his part in Your great plan for redemption. And we pray that as we go on from here, that we embrace the calling You have for us, the tough decisions and turn away from our selfish desires, in order that Your will be done. We thank you for everything You have done throughout the history of the world, what You are doing right now and what you will do in the years to come. Amen.*