



Part 2: Invited into Decision

December 9 & 10, 2017

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Matthew 5:17-20

“Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them. ¹⁸ For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth disappear, not the smallest letter, not the least stroke of a pen, will by any means disappear from the Law until everything is accomplished. ¹⁹ Therefore anyone who sets aside one of the least of these commands and teaches others accordingly will be called least in the kingdom of heaven, but whoever practices and teaches these commands will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰ For I tell you that unless your righteousness surpasses that of the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, you will certainly not enter the kingdom of heaven.

The Pharisees enforced the rule of religion, but Jesus had seen an entirely different form of right living in his father, Joseph.

Joseph's Story *MATTHEW 1:18-25*

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: 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. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

It's the Perfect Recipe for a Scandal

A righteous man with a good reputation

A pregnant fiancée

A small town where everybody knows everybody's business

A group of religious scorekeepers

Joseph's Options According to Old Testament Law

Deuteronomy 22: Public execution

Numbers 5: The truth test

One more option...

Grace, sacrifice and obedience.

²⁰ 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. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Joseph took her home (legally received her as his bride in spite of the scandal)

Joseph named the child (legally claimed Jesus as his own)

Joseph gave up reputation, status and comfort for the sake of love.

Simple Application

**Will you choose to obey God’s call to share his love,
even if it means people don’t look at you the same way?**

But how can they call on him to save them unless they believe in him?

And how can they believe in him if they have never heard about him?

And how can they hear about him unless someone tells them?

- Romans 10:14 (NLT)

Next Step

Ask God who he wants you to personally invite to a Christmas Eve service. For each person he brings to mind, pick up an invitation in the Commons. Deliver these in person, and let the recipient know which service you’ll be attending so they have the opportunity to join you.

Small Group Questions

- 1) What are your plans for celebrating Jesus this Christmas?
- 2) How much did you know about Joseph before the message? Has your impression of him changed? Why?
- 3) If you were Joseph, how would you have reacted to Mary’s news?
- 4) Has your reputation ever suffered for following Jesus? What happened, and what did you learn?
- 5) Romans 10:14 asks the question, “And how can they hear unless someone tells them?” How does that verse affect your perspective on inviting people to Christmas Eve?
- 6) How can we pray for you right now and throughout the week?