



Welcome!

SERIES: DON'T MISS CHRISTMAS
Today's Message: The Choices We Make
Dr. Lance D. Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: Loving God, today we remember and celebrate the birth of Jesus. We share in the song of the angels, the gladness of the shepherds, and worship of the wise men. Close the door of hate and open the door of love all over the world. Let kindness come with every gift and good desires with every greeting. Deliver us from evil by the blessing which Christ brings and teach us to be merry with clear hearts. May Christmas morning make us happy to be your people, and Christmas evening bring us to our beds with grateful thoughts, forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake. Amen.

ICEBREAKER: What's the biggest choice you've had to make this year? How did you make it? What things did you have to consider? How did you finally decide?

MESSAGE RECAP: From the time Joseph heard the news of Mary's pregnancy, through living on the run for three years in Egypt, he was constantly making choices that were sacrificial and generous. Joseph sacrificed his pride, his livelihood, his plans for the future, and his financial security for the sake of obeying the Word God had spoken to him. What about us?

SCRIPTURE: Read St. Matthew 1:18-25 (NLT)

DISCUSSION:

1. **What was your biggest takeaway from the message?** What's one thing you learned? What questions came to mind as you listened to the message today? What points did you find most insightful? How did the message challenge you?
2. What are the tabloid headlines this week? Why is our society so drawn to gossip and scandal? How do people typically react when facing embarrassing situations?
3. Mary became pregnant before she and Joseph were married. What do you think Joseph initially thought upon hearing this news about his bride-to-be?
4. What positive character qualities did Joseph possess? How did Joseph plan to handle this delicate situation? Why did Joseph change his plans to divorce Mary? What did the angel command Joseph to do and why? How did Joseph choose to respond to the angelic message?
5. How might you have responded in Mary's situation? What would have been your reaction had you been in Joseph's situation? How do you think a typical church might have handled Mary's pre-marriage pregnancy? How do you imagine the "grapevine" treated the Mary-Joseph situation? How does it feel to be the victim of unsubstantiated rumors and gossip? How does it feel to know that you are innocent and yet have people attacking your character and whispering behind your back?

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CHALLENGE: What is one “a-ha” moment you had in our group discussion today. Note it and write it down. If you applied your learning from this week’s message, how would the next week be different for you?

SERVE: How is God calling us to live out this message this week? As individuals? As a group?

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Church wide and campus specific announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also “find, follow and like” our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications.

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g., answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

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We Care!

A large, solid red heart is positioned behind the text 'We Care!', with the heart's center overlapping the letter 'e'.

NOTICE: PLEASE BE PATIENT AS WE GRADUALLY REOPEN OUR CAMPUSES IN THE SAFEST MANNER POSSIBLE. As a small group leader, we depend on you to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472
EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)
EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177
EMAIL: Barnabas@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR:

CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial By Name Directory

EMAIL:

- Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams: Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org
- SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org
- Dreamchasers (20-29): Juan Shackelford: juan.shackelford@myspbc.org
- Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr.: lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org
- Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend: michelle.townsend@myspbc.org
- Encore (50-59): Jamie Duncan: Jamie.Duncan@myspbc.org
- Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman: maceo.freeman@myspbc.org
- Refiners (70+): Roscoe Jones: roscoe.jones@myspbc.org

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177
EMAIL: Barnabas@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)
EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000
EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.

GPS is a study guide based on the weekend message. The purpose of this guide is to assist small groups in study.
Previous GPS Guides are available online at www.myspbc.org.