

Advent 2025 Unexpected Cost **Text:** Matthew 1:18–25

Big Idea: Sometimes we pay a cost not because we disobeyed God, but because we followed Him.

1. The Cost of Godly Character

Joseph is described as a righteous man. His righteousness limits his options rather than expanding them. He chooses to protect Mary from public disgrace even though he believes he has been betrayed. Godly character means doing what honors God even when we are hurt. **It refuses gossip, revenge, and public shaming. There is a real cost to choosing the godly path instead of the easy one.**

Truth: Righteousness removes the easiest (fleshly / sinful) options.

2. The Cost of Control

Joseph is not asked for his opinion. God commands him to take Mary as his wife. Later, God commands him to flee to Egypt to protect the child. **Obedience requires surrendering control of our plans and future. Calling Jesus Lord means trusting Him even when the path is hard or unclear.**

Truth: Obedience often means giving up control, not gaining it.

3. The Cost of Being Misunderstood

Joseph lives under suspicion and misunderstanding. Others do not see the angel. Others do not hear God's call. **Following God does not guarantee support or understanding from others. Faithfulness may lead to loneliness and unanswered questions.**

Truth: Some obedience is never fully explained or publicly vindicated.

Closing Reflection

Joseph paid a real cost for his obedience. Yet through his faithfulness, God brought salvation into the world.

Being obedient to God can be costly, but it is always worth it. God is good, His purposes are trustworthy, and He honors faithfulness.

Romans 8:28

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Devotion 1: The Cost of Godly Character

Scripture Matthew 1:19 “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.”

Reflection: Joseph’s righteousness did not make his situation easier. It made it harder. Because he wanted to honor God and protect Mary, he chose the harder path. He absorbed pain rather than passing it on. He refused to shame someone who, from his perspective, had deeply hurt him. Godly character often limits our options. It calls us away from retaliation, gossip, and self protection. Joseph reminds us that obedience sometimes means choosing what honors God even when it costs us emotionally.

Challenge: Where are you tempted to respond in anger or self protection? Ask God for the strength to choose godly character even when it is costly.

Devotion 2: The Cost of Control

Scripture Matthew 1:24 “When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.”

Reflection: Joseph is not asked what he thinks. He is told what to do. Obedience required surrendering control of his plans, reputation, and future. Later, God would command him again to flee to Egypt. Following God did not give Joseph control. It took it away. Calling Jesus Lord means trusting Him even when we do not fully understand the path ahead. Obedience often requires releasing our grip on outcomes.

Challenge: What area of your life are you trying to control instead of surrendering to God? Pray honestly and place it in His hands today.

Devotion 3: The Cost of Being Misunderstood

Scripture Matthew 1:25 “But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.”

Reflection: Joseph obeyed quietly. He offered no explanations. He lived under misunderstanding and suspicion. Others did not hear the angel. Others did not see God at work. Faithfulness does not always come with affirmation or understanding from people around us. Sometimes obedience leads to loneliness. Joseph’s story reminds us that God sees what others do not and honors faithfulness even when it goes unnoticed.

Challenge: Are you discouraged because others do not understand a step of obedience you have taken? Take comfort in knowing God sees your heart and honors your faithfulness.