

The Great Commandment 3: Joseph and Mary

Introduction

We continue to look at stories of how lives change because of Jesus' great commandment. We see the difference even before Jesus utters the words. This week we look at the lives of his parents, Joseph and Mary. They were challenged to follow God to places that could damage their reputations, and futures. What can we learn from them?

Discussion Questions

1. How important is your reputation? What are the things you are known for or want to be known for. What's the difference between reputation and identity?
2. Read Matthew 1:18-24. How would Joseph's reputation suffer if he did what the angel said? To marry someone already pregnant was not in keeping with the Torah. Joseph was known for following the law. Discuss what you think his thought process was beginning with finding out his fiancé was pregnant and then being visited by the angel.
3. Joseph was willing to give up his reputation to find his identity in God. Mary had a similar experience. She was asked to let go. Of her past, present, and future and let God's plans replace it all. Have you ever had to let go of plans that didn't come to pass or they got replaced with something God had for you. Talk about those experiences together.
4. Mary responded to God's call with a song of Joy. Read Luke 1:46-55. Pick out the main themes in Mary's song. Do you see these again in the teachings of Jesus?
5. What does vocation mean to you? Are there secular and sacred vocations, or spiritual and non-spiritual ones? How do you go about discovering God's purpose for you? What's was Mary's purpose/vocation? Does our purpose share any similarities with Mary?

Changing Your Mind

"My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me— holy is his name. His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors." (Lk 1:46–55).