

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. ***Enjoy discovering more about Him!***

"THE ROAD OF OBEDIENCE" | MATTHEW 1: 18-25 | PASTOR BRIAN BELL

WARM-UP QUESTION:

Have you ever been around a very obedient pet? A very disobedient pet?

"Obedience Begins Where Your Plans Break" Matthew 1: 18-19

Joseph was engaged to Mary when he finds out she's pregnant and is planning to divorce her quietly to guard her from shame.

What are ways Joseph may be experiencing disappointment? What are unwise ways people deal with disappointment today?

"Obedience Grows When You Listen to God's Voice" Matthew 1: 20-21

An angel appears to Joseph, telling him to not fear and marry his pregnant fiancé. This son will be the savior. **What is hard about slowing down and taking time to listen to God? What kind of message does Joseph receive because he listened?**

"Obedience Is Proven By the Steps You Take" Matthew 1: 24-25

Joseph goes ahead and takes Mary as his wife and names the boy Jesus as commanded. **What would have been hard about obeying God for Joseph? What are ways obeying God have a cost today?**

"Obedience Always Leads to God's Presence" Matthew 1: 23

Matthew includes the prophecy from Isaiah about the virgin birth as part of Joseph's story, showing this was part of God's plan.

How did Joseph get to experience God as he obeyed Him? How have you or others in your life experienced God in obedience?

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

Joseph, in the midst of huge personal disappointment and drama, listens to God and quietly obeys despite all the struggle he'll face. He gets to experience God in a special way as he is part of the coming of world's savior, Jesus. **Have you been struggling with disappointment? Is God asking you to obey in the middle of something that doesn't make sense? What is one step of obedience God is nudging you toward you can take, even if no else will see? Ask God for direction and courage to obey Him this week.**

The Road to Bethlehem

12-7-25

4 The Road of Obedience

I. Announce:

- A. Welcome to those watching online (2nd).
- B. Slide1-3 Shane: CK Play. Christmas Eve. Men's Breakfast.
 - 1. 80% of culture says, *IF someone invites me to church, I'd go!*
- C. Read Church Letter.
- D. Slide4a Prayer: Corrie Ten Boom *Never be afraid to trust an unknown future to a known God.*

II. Intro:

- A. We've been walking together down - *The Road to Bethlehem* (6 Sun's leading us to Xmas)
 - 1. This *Journey of Faith* that leads us to the manger.
 - 2. The road to Bethlehem is *more than* a journey through ancient Judea - *it's the road of every believer's heart*. We've looked at *The Road of*: Promise, Preparation, and Surrender. *Today is on Obedience* (Wonder, Worship).
- B. Slide4b *The Road of Obedience* - *Joseph Chose Faith over Fear!*
- C. We left off last week after the angel Gabriel told Mary she was pregnant, she went to Eliz house 3 months. Now in Mt we pick up the story when she gets back home.
- D. Joseph is often depicted as *a background character* to the Nativity story. Let's be honest he's the hardest to figure out in the Nativity scenes. *Baby Jesus* easy, *Mary* (always kneeling or shorter). *But Joseph*, he looks like the shepherds, and often one of the wisemen. Slide4c,d
 - 1. *But* out of all the men - God picked Joseph! (*Illust*: The children's Xmas play where Joseph go sick, too late to have another child stand in. *so they wrote Joseph out of the script.*) Only a few people even missed him.
- E. Before I read our text in Mt.1:18-25 - I want to point something out ...
- F. Matthew's gospel starts with *Jesus' Foster Fathers Genealogy*. (Mt.1:1-17)
- G. Matthew's gospel starts by saying *Jesus* is the *rightful heir* to the *throne* of Israel.

1. **Racially** - thru **Abraham** [Abraham's seed *would be blessed*]
2. **Royally** - thru **David** [couldn't build God a house, **but** God would build a house through him! 2 Sam.7:13]
 - a) **And** since **Herod** destroyed all genealogies in **A.D.70** - **There is no Jew today** who can claim w/certainly **and** authority to be a **son of Abraham** **and** a **son of David**, except **Jesus**. [**and** you hold *the only preserved genealogy* in the world to back it]

H. **Slide5 Read** Matthew 1:18-25.

III. **Slide6 1 OBEDIENCE BEGINS WHERE YOUR PLANS BREAK (18,19)**

- A. **Joseph's world falls apart:** His fiancée is pregnant - and not by him. **His reputation is at stake**. He's torn between **compassion** **and** **integrity** (*unwilling to put her to shame*).
- B. **Joseph shows:** Obedience often begins with disappointment. When your plans collapse, your **faith** is revealed.
- C. **Woodworker Metaphor:** *Plans on Paper vs. the Reality of the Wood*.
- D. **The woodworker always starts with a plan:** *a sketch, a design*. **But** once you get into the shop, you realize something: **the wood doesn't always cooperate**.
 1. The board might be slightly **warped**. The **grain** may resist the cut. **Knots** show up where the blueprint didn't account for them. **Measurements** that look perfect on paper, don't align perfectly in real life.
- E. **So the woodworker has a choice:** force the wood to match the plan, **or** adjust and work with what's actually in front of him.
 1. **That's Joseph** - He had a **blueprint** for his life: **marriage, work, community, reputation**. **Then** the "wood" of real life didn't match the plan.
 - a) **Mary is pregnant**. **Timeline is off**. **People whisper**. Everything looks warped.
 - b) He was **risking** his reputation, business, community standing, **and** his future.
- F. **Joseph shows us something important:** obedience is trusting **the Master Carpenter** *even when* the *wood of life* doesn't match the blueprint in your head.
 1. You **keep** working. You **adjust** your expectations. You **trust** the **One** who knows how to shape rough pieces *into something beautiful*.

G. Where is God asking you to **obey** *right in the middle of* something that doesn't make sense?

IV. Slide7 **2 OBEDIENCE GROWS WHEN YOU LISTEN TO GOD'S VOICE** (20-21)

A. **The turning point isn't Joseph's strength** - it's **God's revelation**.

B. **As he considered these things...** - Joseph doesn't react rashly; he brings his confusion before God. God speaks into the fog. The angel gives Joseph the "*why*": **the child's identity** and **mission**. [Joseph, *the human stepfather* of God in the flesh]

C. **Before Joseph acts, he listens.**

1. God often speaks into our lives: *through Scripture, the Spirit, and wise counsel* - **but obedience** only begins when ***we stop ignoring His voice***.

2. **Just like a GPS:** It can give direction. It can offer a better route. It can help you avoid danger (accident ahead!).

a) **But** it's *useless* if you keep blowing past the turns.

3. **Joseph listened.** He didn't **argue** with the angel, **debate** the message, or **delay obedience**. [He heard - and he adjusted his route. *Lit to Egypt 2:13*].

D. **Jesus = *Jehovah saves***. [6 names in ch.1: 3 in vs.1 **Jesus Christ**, son of David, son of Abraham. Christ 16, **Jesus**, Immanuel/*God w/us* 23].

E. Where do you need to slow down, listen, and let God define the situation instead of your emotions?

V. Slide8a **3 OBEDIENCE IS PROVEN BY THE STEPS YOU TAKE** (24-25)

A. **This is the heart of the passage:** Joseph **did** as the angel of the Lord commanded him. [he did, he took, he knew *her not*, he called ... *His name Jesus*].

1. **He takes Mary as his wife** (absorbing the ***social cost***). **He names the child *Jesus*** (legally adopting Him - **taking on the role God** gave him).

a) No speeches. No debates. Just action.

B. Slide8b **Faith** is **not shown** in what Joseph **said** (he said **nothing!*). **Faith** is shown in what Joseph **did**.

1. We don't have 1 word of Joseph speaking, **but** yet we have **God** speaking to Joseph on **4 separate occasions** (4 dreams):

- a) **This** dream. **Then** the dream to flee from Herod to go to Egypt. **Then** the dream that Herod is now dead to go back home. **And then** the dream to end up in Nazareth.
- b) **21 dreams** in all the Bible. **11** in Gen w/*another dreamer* also called **Joseph**. **Next** in **Daniel**. **Then 5** in Jesus' birth narrative (1 to Wiseman, 4 to Joe).
[*also dreams in end times. Many muslims, maybe *the begging of the end?*]

C. The **Umbrella** You Refuse to Use. *Someone hands you an **umbrella** in a storm. You **believe** it works ... **but** unless you open it, you still get **drenched**.*

1. **Belief** without **obedience** still gets you **wet**. - Joseph didn't just **believe** the angel - he **acted**.

D. **Hidden obedience**: The things you do when *nobody is clapping*, may become the most important things God ever uses.

1. **The Dog Who Obeys Only When Watched**. We have lil Sully, a *black Cocker*. Kelly decorated the house, and Sully follows behind **sampling/eating** most of it (Kit Kats, paper, lil red deco balls). Last night I was on my computer on the couch, and I keep hearing her getting upset at sully (like full on conversation w/him - about eating everything). I finally walk back there. He listens perfectly when she is looking — but the moment she turns away, he sniffs something else out.
a) **That's performance obedience**. Joseph shows *hidden obedience* - **obeying** when **no one's** *watching, writing, or applauding*.

E. What's one step of obedience God is nudging you toward - even if no one else will see or applaud it?

VI. Slide9a **4 OBEDIENCE ALWAYS LEADS TO GOD'S PRESENCE (23)**

A. Matthew ties Joseph's obedience to the name **Immanuel** - *God with us*.

1. Joseph's obedience didn't make his life **easier**... **but** it brought him into the center of **God's presence** and **purpose**.

- B. **Obedience may cost:** *Your reputation. Your comfort. Your expectations.* **But** it never costs you **God**. - In fact ... it draws you *closer* to **Him**.
- C. **Slide9b** Joseph's story isn't *loud*, **but** it's **faithful**. - He teaches us that God does His greatest work through people who **obey in the quiet places**.
- D. This week: *take 1 step* that costs you something, **and** **trust** that **God** meets you in it.

E. Slide10 Let me Land the Plane. Regarding our Quiet Hero Joseph.

- F. Joseph never preached a sermon. He never penned a letter. He never stood centerstage. He simply obeyed.
1. And God used his *quiet yes* to **bring Jesus** into the world, **protect Him, raise Him, and fulfill** prophecy.
- G. **The road of obedience isn't loud.** It's steady. It's hidden. It's costly. **But it always leads to God's presence.**
- H. **So here's the invitation today:** **Do** the next thing God has asked of **you**. **Even if no one notices.** **Even if it costs you something.** **Because God always meets us on the road of obedience.** [*worship Team come on up]

I. Communion:

J. Bread:

1. Lord forgive me for the sins I've committed, that I knew were sins.
2. Lord forgive me for the sins I've committed that I didn't recognize at the time
3. Lord forgive me for forsaking the right path.
4. Lord forgive me for my *false steps, trips, and blunders*.
5. Lord forgive me for my faithlessness.
6. Lord forgive me for completely missing the mark in so many areas.
7. Lord forgive me for my shallowness, short sightedness, and selfishness.

K. Cup:

1. Lord TY for **Immanuel**, coming to be **with us**.
2. Lord TY for Your presence.
3. Lord TY for this specific Christmas season.
4. Lord TY **Christmas** is not a feeling but a fact!

5. Lord TY for Your mission statement - *He will save His people from their sins.*
6. Lord TY for restoring the brokenhearted.
7. Lord TY for setting free those held captive to sin.
8. Lord TY for hope, love, passion, joy, assurance, friends, and *shalom*.

L. Keywords: obedience, Joseph, angel.