

# THE UNEXPECTED NEWS: JOSEPH

Sunday December 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Matthew 1:18-25 (NLT)

**INTRODUCTION:** The first Christmas story is filled the unexpected. A young girl's life plans are redirected by God. A Savior is placed in a humble manger. Angels appear to night-shift shepherds and wise men from the East are guided by a star.

However, one of the hardest unexpected moments falls on Joseph.

The unexpected news he received wrecked his world and shattered his plans. He could not have imagined the divine process he would go through, a journey that at first felt confusing and impossible to make sense of.

Joseph story shows us how to walk with God when life brings news we never expected.

## I. THE UNEXPECTED NEWS THAT SHATTERED HIS PLANS (Matthew 1:18-19)

Joseph is introduced to us as “a righteous man” a man of integrity and spiritual devotion. He was preparing for marriage, building a future, planning a life with Mary.

Then the unexpected news came: (NKJV) “Mary... was found to be with child.”

Remember, when this story is written in Scripture, it is told looking back at what had already happened. But for Joseph, it was unfolding in real time, without warning or explanation.

All he knows is that Mary had gone to visit her cousin Elizabeth for three months and when she returned, she was pregnant. There was no angelic message for Joseph yet, only a confusing and painful reality he had to face and an unbelievable story.

Life often turns this way: everything seems secure and predictable until one moment of unexpected news shifts everything.

Joseph had not prayed for this. He did not anticipate this. He did not sign up for this. He wasn't consulted or invited into the planning. He was simply informed of the news of the pregnancy, and the story Mary told him was beyond human imagination.

She told him that the angel Gabriel had appeared, that heaven had intervened, and that this child had been conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit.

**The unexpected news revealed Joseph's heart.**

Though his world is collapsing emotionally, relationally, and socially, his first response reveals his heart and character. Even in his pain, believing he had been betrayed, he refuses to shame Mary and instead chooses compassion over anger.

**Unexpected news does not create our character, it reveals it.**

Proverbs 27:19 (NIV) As water reflects the face, so one's life reflects the heart.

Joseph wrestles quietly. He doesn't lash out. He doesn't seek revenge. He doesn't explode in public. He takes time to reflect and he comes to a quiet and difficult decision of simply releasing Mary from her obligation.

## **II. THE UNEXPECTED NEWS THAT CAME FROM GOD (Matthew 1:20-21)**

Just when Joseph decided on a plan and goes to sleep, an Angel enters his dream world and interrupts with new news, news even more unexpected: *"Joseph... the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit."*

This isn't man-made news. This isn't rumor-driven news. This is divine news.

Then God gives Joseph three unexpected assignments:

- Take Mary as your wife
- Name the child Jesus
- Raise Him as your own

Joseph receives unexpected news, not just about Mary, but about himself. God tells Joseph who he is and what he is called to do.

Sometimes God uses unexpected news to reveal unexpected purpose.

## **III. THE UNEXPECTED RESPONSE: IMMEDIATE OBEDIENCE (Matthew 1:24-25)**

Joseph wakes up and does exactly what God tells him to do, no hesitation, no excuses, and no conditions.

The Bible does not record a single word from Joseph, but his actions speak loudly.

Joseph shows us that a life surrendered to God is not always heard, but it is always seen.

Imagine how Mary must have felt. Not only had she heard from God, but now her husband had as well. She was no longer alone. Together, they were willing to submit as God's servants to a costly and sacred process.

Joseph's obedience was costly:

- **His reputation** - By staying with Mary, Joseph accepted the murmurs and judgments of others.
- **His social standing** - What should have been a celebrated marriage became a source of suspicion, affecting how he was viewed within his community and even among his own family.
- **His comfort** - Joseph's life became unsettled emotionally, financially, and physically. He was no longer preparing to raise his own child, he was entrusted with the responsibility of raising the Son of God.
- **His own plans** - Dreams of a simple life, a predictable marriage, and a quiet home were gone in a moment.

But obedience is Joseph's response to unexpected news. The process would not be easy, but the outcome would be the redemption of the lost.

When God brings unexpected news, the right response is unexpected obedience.

#### **IV. THE UNEXPECTED JOURNEY (Matthew 2:13-23)**

Just when Joseph thinks the surprises are over, more unexpected news arrives:

- "Flee to Egypt."
- "Return to Israel."
- "Go to Nazareth."

Joseph remains in a continual process: Unexpected news - God's voice - Joseph's obedience - God's direction.

Joseph's faith isn't loud; it's lived. He didn't fight, resist or argue he simply takes quiet, faithful steps of obedient trust.

God grows us through continual trust, one instruction at a time.

#### **V. HOW GOD USES UNEXPECTED NEWS IN OUR LIVES**

1. Unexpected news positions us for God's unexpected purpose.
2. Unexpected news grows unexpected obedience.

3. Unexpected news prepares us for unexpected assignments.
4. Unexpected news reveals God's unexpected grace.

**Conclusion:** The question we all face is this: *What do we do with unexpected news?*

Do we panic, complain, argue, or resist? Do we lash out at God and question His care for us? Or do we respond the way Joseph did, by slowing down, creating space to pray, and reflecting on what God is asking of us in that moment?

Joseph teaches us that faith does not always react loudly. Sometimes faith pauses, listens, and waits for God's direction. Instead of rushing to conclusions, he allowed God to speak, and when God did, Joseph obeyed. His response reminds us that unexpected news can become a moment where we choose prayerful reflection over emotional reaction.

So, when unexpected news comes, remember this:

- **Pause.** Don't make life-shaping decisions in the first wave of emotion.
- **Pray.** Let your first conversation be with God, not with everyone else.
- **Practice.** Obey what you know, even if you don't see the full plan.
- **Perspective.** Ask not, "*Why did this happen to me?*" but "*What might God be forming in me through this?*"

Unexpected news doesn't mean God has lost control. It may be the very moment He is inviting us to trust Him more deeply than ever before.