

DON'T GO QUIET

GM // newbies // online

Starting two-part Advent series ... better late than never.

Advent = word that means “arrival”. [ref. Jesus coming to earth]

It's amazing how Christmas is a respected holiday.

Even though many of us wouldn't buy into all of the religious claims.

Still its a fun time of year.

Gifts, presence, lights, egg nog.

Family, friends, christmas parties, great food ... more egg nog.

But us christians are always careful to keep “Christ” in Christmas. [bumper stickers and all]

We sing/listen to christmas carols.

We read the story of Christmas ...

- Jesus in the manger
- Angels singing to Shepherds
- Wise men bringing their gifts.

No doubt we got our nativities setup.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

Even with all that focus on Jesus it's easy to let the familiar story of Christmas become distant.

But Jesus' coming back then interrupted people's lives in ways that weren't sweet and sentimental.

But Jesus being born is much more than that.

That tends to be the story when God breaks into our lives. It's supernatural ... not loony ... just hard to explain.

Matthew 1:18

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

It's easy to read that and say ... yep got it.

But, let's be reminded that God put his son in a virgin womb.

That's not an easy one to explain today ... let alone back then.

I don't envy Mary or Joseph in that moment in their lives.

I would have been freaked out!

But God wasn't conducting focus groups with people to figure out what would be the easiest thing to believe.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

If he's God then we have to recognize that

God's ways are higher than ours.

Before they "came together", she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

So Joseph knew what Mary was claiming ... and what Mary's family was claiming. [Elizabeth / Zechariah]

Now, he may have respected their claim ... but he wasn't quite buying it.

Like Christmas for many of us today ... respect it ... but not buying into it.

Matthew 1:19

"And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly."

So there are two confusing things to clear up.

B/C we read modern marriage into ancient Jewish marriage.

If Joseph was her husband already ... then

(1) Mary being pregnant wouldn't have been a shocker.
// that's b/c ...

(2) Mary couldn't be a virgin

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

I'm going to geek out on you here a little bit and teach on ancient Jewish marriage tradition. [its a xmas present to myself].

In there day marriage happened in two stages.

- **Stage 1: Betrothal**

- The girl's family and the guy's family would come together.
- The fathers would work out the contract for the marriage between their kids ... this included the payment price for the bride.
- The marriage covenant was written and then sealed, interestingly enough, when the bride and groom shared a cup of wine.
- Now, at this point the bride and groom were officially in a committed marriage. The only way out was divorce.
- However, they didn't take on the full duties and privileges of marriage. This began a betrothal period that often lasted for one year.
- During this time the couple lived separately and never consummated the marriage.

It was during this betrothal period, the groom went away to prepare a place for his bride, while the bride focused on her personal preparations: wedding garments, lamps, etc. [anyone picking up on the Jesus/Church analogy]

Although the bride knew to expect her groom after about a year, she did not know the exact day or hour. He could come earlier. It was the groom's father who gave final

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

approval for him to return to collect his bride, once their home/bridal chamber were sufficiently built.

For that reason, the bride kept her oil lamps ready at all times, just in case the groom came in the night, to lead the bridal procession to the home he had prepared for her.

When the groom returned ... this was the final stage: The wedding ceremony

In their home they would finalize their vows in front of all their witnesses and then go into the bridal chamber to consummate the marriage.

Then they had a wedding feast that often lasted several days.

This is when the married couple entered into the full duties and privileges of a married couple.

So, Joseph has been thinking about Mary for who knows how long.

He's been patient ... he's committed to her ...

& he's a carpenter, so you know that house is going up quick. [kicking up dust]

And Joseph's a just and upright ... so they're still virgins.

You got to believe that Mary's on his mind.

He's looking forward to that wedding day.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

Let's add to the fact that they live in a small town called Nazareth (population: 500).

I used to snowboard in a 800 person town called June Lake.

The locals knew everything about each other.

The nice thing about living in a small town is that when you don't know what you're doing, everyone else does. - Immanuel Kant

News travels fast in small towns.

We've stepped into Joseph's shoes now.

How hard would it be to get that news.

Mary's pregnant!!! And the baby belongs to WHO?!?

Not only would you feel betrayed ... you had to deal with the embarrassment that everyone else knew.

Most of us would have responded with public outrage ... like an episode of Jerry Springer.

But Joseph doesn't seem to have written off the claim that Mary was pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

But he hasn't fully accepted it as well.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

He's trying to figure out what to do. "Do I divorce Mary or not?"

It says at the beginning of Verse 20, "But as he considered these things."

There is a very real wrestle going on in Joseph's soul.

What should I believe?

Maybe that's you. You know the big claims of Jesus being born of a virgin by the Holy Spirit.

That is a tough one to say, "I believe."

In one sense, you'll never believe until you take that first step of acknowledging that God's ways are higher than ours.

Joseph grew up in Judaism. The story of coming out of Egypt was God doing miracles and supernatural wonders that defied natural law.

He knew that God's ways are higher than ours.

But still, he didn't believe Mary could be pregnant with the Holy Spirit.

And the story of Christmas reminds us that we need more than information.

We need God to come and bring revelation.

DON'T GO QUIET

Belief is impossible without God initiating

That's exactly what God does ...

Matthew 1:20-23

20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

In the midst of Joseph's unbelief ... God intervenes.

Everyone in the room who's a Christian says “Amen” to that.

It took more than hearing about Jesus from a person.

Something more significant happened.

God visited us with that news.

DON'T GO QUIET

I remember Jared Riske telling me when Jesus became more than just a story.

This guy he served with would talk about Jesus.

He invited Jared to his Bible study ... and Jared started going.

Jared knew the Bible stories and all about Jesus.

But he didn't fully grasp how true they were.

Then one meeting ... God made it real.

God initiated ...

That is to say, he broke into Jared's heart in that moment.

Jared didn't have a vision ... but God intervened.

Jared describes sitting on a poppasson chair and listening to this man pray to God.

Suddenly, it was like the heat in the room was turned up.

God was intervening and making the good news about Jesus come alive.

That is what happened to Joseph in this story.

He gets visited by an angel of God.

He gets direct, first-hand revelation.

God confirms that everything he's been told about Mary is true.

She's been impregnated by the Holy Spirit.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

Let's be honest ... we'd need a divine messenger to believe something like that!

God did it then ... he still does it today.

We see the Holy Spirit's activity mentioned a couple of times in this passage already.

He is the third member of the Trinity.

God, the Holy Spirit, is the confirming, affirming, revealing presence of God.

When Jared was in that Bible study and all that truth about Jesus became real ... that was the Holy Spirit.

He confirms and affirms that truth.

That's why people often respond with emotion.

B/C it is a truth that is often met with unexpected emotion.

The Holy Spirit softens our hearts and makes that Gospel message real and powerful.

And this awakening to truth is both personal and shared.

God comes to you as an individual, just as he came to Joseph.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

But it was the same revelation he shared with Mary, and Elizabeth, and Zechariah...

So this one message united them to a shared reality.

And that's the message of Christmas ...

God's revelation brings peace and unity.

Joseph ... don't divorce ... don't kill your relationship with Mary.

Take her as your wife.

Commit to her.

That is the power of the Gospel ... it brings people together.

Ephesians 2:13-15

13 But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. 14 For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility 15 by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

But the Christmas story goes beyond mending our fractured relationships.

It is the fulfillment of a promise.

Let's read these verses again.

Matthew 1:21-23

21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

Let's stop and realize the gravity of these words in Joseph's ears.

See, Israel had a history of being unfaithful//committing adultery with others gods.

They were loving and worshipping false gods.

Serving them, bowing down to them.

Obeying their demands.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

God faithfully, and patiently, kept calling them back to himself.

The prophets of the Old Testament wrote extensively about this.

But God's people would cheat on him, again and again.

Finally, God sent them away ... just like Joseph was going to do with marry.

The phrase divorce her quietly ... literally means "send her away secretly."

God sent his people away from their land and from his presence because they continued in sin.

And over time he brought them back home ... but his presence wasn't there.

God was silent.

There was no prophets or prophecy for 400 years.

These 400 years between Malachi and Matthew in the Bible are called 400 years of silence.

This is what God is saying here.

Though you are guilty of infidelity.

I'm coming back to be with you.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

Fully committed.

Fully forgiving your sins.

All in.

His names will be:

Jesus = God is salvation

Immanuel = God with us

God is telling Joseph that something much bigger is going on here than his problem.

God's salvation and presence has arrived!

God gives us what we want by providing what we need.

Joseph wanted Mary ...

but what he needed was insight/revelation of the situation.

We want God to be real and with us.

But we need to be saved from our sins.

Jesus isn't one or the other.

He is both.

He came for what we NEED ... salvation from sin.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

To give us what we WANT ... God with us.

This is offered as a gift.

Joseph didn't deserve it.

Mary didn't earn it.

Neither do we.

And when we are confronted with this good news.

When we are confronted with the power of salvation and the presence of God ... it changes us.

There is only one response.

Surrender.

God's revelation requires your surrender.

Matthew 1:24-25

24 When Joseph woke from sleep [Joseph was “woke”], he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

We are saved by faith alone, but not a faith that is alone.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

God gives revelation, but that requires surrender.

The life of faith begins with surrender, and continues with surrender.

Surrender requires trust and patience.

- Joseph didn't "know" Mary until Jesus was born.
- **HK story: marine deployed 9 months came back. Asked the happy couple. "What was the first thing you did when you got back?"**
 - **I'm not sure what she thought the response was going to be? // "Ate a burger ... watch the latest episode of the Mandalorian?? ... "**
- That couple had to wait ... didn't have a choice.

The life of faith, the life of surrender to God's will and God's way, is like that. → Patient anticipation.

Joseph had the patience of Job.

He's been waiting for his wedding day ... he's a young guy.

So he's already thinking about it all the time.

Just when he's hit the final stretch and sprinting toward the finish line ... he's told to run a few more laps.

BAND COME UP

Maybe your going through something and can relate to that.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

You've been crying out, "Lord ... how long?!?"

"When is this going to end."

I know some of you are in the middle of tough seasons.

You needed God to intervene yesterday!

But he hasn't.

Maybe your wondering, "God why are you silent?"

Are you wrestling with what to do like Joseph?

As Christians, we get to look back on Joseph's life.

We get to see in this little story of Jesus' birth, the goodness and faithfulness of God.

See, we can't measure God's faithfulness in a moment.

It's measured in lifetimes, and generations, and across history.

You may not be living in His deliverance yet ... but one day you will in the fullness of His kingdom.

Until then ... God is with us ... with you.

In every circumstance ... every moment.

DON'T GO QUIET

DON'T GO QUIET

As we come to take communion today ...

Let's remember that Jesus was God with us.

He came ... "flesh" & "blood".

He surrendered to the Father's will to save us.

His flesh broken ... blood shed ... for our salvation.

If you are not a Christian:

- Your response is faith, surrender.

PRAY

DON'T GO QUIET