

Message: ***"The Forgotten Man of Christmas"***

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

(12-01-24 Pastor Tony Hao)

When we look closely at the Christmas story, Joseph is barely present. Matthew 1 and 2 are practically all we have about Joseph, and if you'll notice, the man doesn't even speak! And after this, Joseph disappears from the gospel before Jesus is even baptized and is never heard from again. But despite his wordless presence, Joseph is a key player in the Christmas drama. Joseph is faced with a gut-wrenching decision, on which rests the fate of baby Jesus and God's salvation plan. What is his life all about?

Most likely Joseph did not understand fully the how and the why of this whole thing, but he acted in simple faith on the word of God's messenger. He believed that the word from God was true, and he complied with what God had said. Joseph obeyed the Lord. From Joseph, we learn: (1) Remain Faithful in Difficult Circumstances; (2) Humbly Trust in God; (3) Follow God's Plan, Not Your Own.

There will be times we are called to trust the Lord when everything around us is telling a different story. May we have willingness of Joseph to have our stories turned around and changed by listening well to the Lord.

GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. Can you imagine how Mary would have shared her pregnancy with Joseph? If you were Joseph, how would you respond?
2. Joseph was given the truth about Mary's pregnancy. This is the work of the Holy Spirit. Joseph was invited into deeper personal sacrifice by taking Mary as his wife for the sake of God's mission in the world. How can he accept it?
3. Paul Tripp said, *"It is important to understand that Jesus came to be our savior, that is, the one who would save us from the thing we could not save ourselves from: sin. Sin is the biggest of all human problems, and it lies at the heart of all human tragedies."* Are you convinced of this?
4. There will be a cost for joining God's mission in the world. As Joseph learned, it is an invitation to be misunderstood, to endure shame, and even loss. The question is: Is Christ and His gospel are worth it?