

Mary & Joseph

Message #2 of the series, "How I met Jesus"

1. Jesus came to rescue us from sin and death.

"For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life." -John 3:16 (NLT)

2. How Mary heard about Jesus.

"In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, 'Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!' Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. 'Don't be afraid, Mary,' the angel told her, 'for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!' Mary asked the angel, 'But how can this happen? I am a virgin.' The angel replied, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.'" -Luke 1:26-35 (NLT)

Note: It matters that Mary was a virgin.

"When Adam sinned, sin entered the world. Adam's sin brought death, so death spread to everyone, for everyone sinned." -Romans 5:12 (NLT)

"For I was born a sinner— yes, from the moment my mother conceived me." -Psalm 51:5 (NLT)

"God made Christ, who never sinned, to be the offering for our sin, so that we could be made right with God through Christ." -2 Corinthians 5:21 (NLT)

"What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she's now in her sixth month. For nothing is impossible with God." -Luke 1:36-37 (NLT)

Life Application: Nothing is impossible with God.

"O Sovereign LORD! You made the heavens and earth by your strong hand and powerful arm. Nothing is too hard for you!" -Jeremiah 32:17 (NLT)

"'Have mercy on us and help us, if you can.' 'What do you mean, 'If I can'?' Jesus asked. 'Anything is possible if a person believes.' The father instantly cried out, 'I do believe, but help me overcome my unbelief!'" -Mark 9:22-24 (NLT)

3. How Joseph heard about Jesus.

"This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. 'Joseph, son of David,' the angel said, 'do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.' All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: 'Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'" -Matthew 1:18-23 (NLT)

Note: God delights in using ordinary people to carry out his plans.

“(Jesus) returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue... they scoffed, ‘He’s just the carpenter’s son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. All his sisters live right here among us. Where did he learn all these things?’ And they were deeply offended and refused to believe in him.” -Matthew 13:54-57 (NLT)

“Remember, dear brothers and sisters, that few of you were wise in the world's eyes, or powerful, or wealthy when God called you. Instead, God deliberately chose things the world considers foolish in order to shame those who think they are wise. And he chose those who are powerless to shame those who are powerful. God chose things despised by the world, things counted as nothing at all, and used them to bring to nothing what the world considers important, so that no one can ever boast in the presence of God.”

-1 Corinthians 1:26-29 (NLT96)

“Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is holy, and he has done great things for me. He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him. His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands.” -Luke 1:46-53 (NLT)

Life Application: God wants us to trust and obey Him NOT worry about the approval of others.

“Am I now trying to win the approval of men, or of God? ...If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a servant of Christ.” -Galatians 1:10 (NIV)

“Mary responded, ‘I am the Lord's servant, and I am willing to accept whatever he wants.’” -Luke 1:38 (NLT)

“When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.”

-Matthew 1:24 (NLT)

“Many people did believe in (Jesus)... including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn’t admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. For they loved human praise more than the praise of God.” -John 12:42-43 (NLT)

Life Application: God is looking for people who are available and obedient.

Connect Group Questions

To prepare for this week's meeting, take some time to focus on the following questions and write out a few brief answers. Be prepared to share them with your group.

My Story

1. Looking back at your notes from this week's teaching on Mary & Joseph was there anything that particularly caught your attention, challenged or confused you?
2. What is your best Christmas memory? What is your worst Christmas memory?
3. What is the biggest miracle you have ever experienced in your life?
4. If you are a parent how did you react when you first heard that you were going to become a father/mother? - OR- If you have a younger sibling how did you react when you found out your mother was expecting?

Going Deeper

1. Read and discuss the following prophecies concerning the birth of Jesus and how they were fulfilled:

- Isaiah 7:14 & Matthew 1:22-23
- Micah 5:2 & Matthew 2:1
- Jeremiah 23:5-6 & Luke 1:32-33

How does it make you feel to know that the details of Jesus' birth were written down hundreds of years in advance? (Micah lived 742-687 B.C., Isaiah lived 740-681 B.C., Jeremiah lived 627-580 B.C.) How were they able to make such accurate predictions?

2. What can we learn about obedience and trusting God from the following people?

- Matthew 1:24
- Luke 1:38
- Hebrews 11:7
- Hebrews 11:8- 10,17-19
- Acts 8:26-40

How did each these people respond to God? Of all the requests that God made of these people, which one would have been the most difficult for you to obey? Why?

3. Read Luke 1:39-45. Where did Mary go after the angel appeared to her? What happened to Elizabeth when she heard Mary's voice? What did Elizabeth mean when she said, "Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me?"

Life Application

1. Read Luke 1:37 & Jeremiah 32:17. Why do many of us struggle with trusting God in difficult situations? What do we trust instead? Are you facing a difficult situation right now? If so, describe the problem to others in your group and then spend some time praying for each other.
2. Read Galatians 1:10 & John 12:42-43. Why do so many of us struggle with what others think about us? How do we overcome this?
3. Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-29. In his message this week John pointed out that God delights in using ordinary people to carry out his plans. Why? How have you seen God use ordinary people? How has God used you?
4. React to the following quotations:
 - "It does not require great learning to be a Christian and be convinced of the truth of the Bible. It requires only an honest heart and a willingness to obey God." -Albert Barnes
 - "Courage is simply the willingness to be afraid and act anyway." -Robert Anthony
 - "I am the Lord's servant, may it be to me as you have said." -Mary (Luke 1:38 NIV)
 - "One man with courage is a majority." -Thomas Jefferson