Joseph’s Surrender

Matthew 1:18-24

**Introduction:** Have you ever seen a Christmas play where Joseph was featured? He is one of the most important players in the drama of Christ’s birth and raising but little is written about him in the scriptures and even less is preached about him from our pulpits. I want to change that somewhat today. This is a message about Joseph the husband of Mary and guardian of Jesus, the Christ. There are at least three areas of life that Joseph had to yield to God in order to accomplish what God desired of him. They are the same areas that He requires of us when He calls us to serve Him.

**First he yielded his Pride.** A careful reading of this story reveals that there was no messenger sent to tell Joseph about Mary being pregnant until it found out that she was with child. Surely he must have asked her just who the child’s father was but it was too much for him to accept. He began to plan to dissolve the union. He could have done it publicly and denounced her so that he would be absolved of the blame for having relations outside of the marriage bonds. She would have been shamed as well as her family but he would have a reputation of morality. And who would believe her story anyway? His choice to settle this privately shows his incredible respect and love for Mary. It shows that he is willing to take a big hit to his reputation to blunt the effect of the hit on Mary’s reputation. Forever he would have a stain on his reputation in the Jewish community.

He falls asleep one night and has a dream. The Angel of the Lord appears and tells him not to be afraid. Were you aware that fear is what causes unbelief? “Joseph you have nothing to fear; the Holy Ghost is at work here and He will handle all the details.” “What about my reputation? Will you tell the other people that I am still a righteous man?” “That is on a need to know basis.”

Joseph accepted what God said. God, Joseph, Mary, and Elisabeth were all that were ‘in the know’ for a while.

**Second he yielded his Privacy.** Can you imagine how much his life was about to change? He was about to adopt Gods Son and fill the father role for Him. Think about it Joseph cannot find suitable housing for Mary and so Jesus is born in a stable and His first bed is a feeding trough for cattle. While there, all of a sudden, a dozen or so shepherds come and tell them that Jesus birth has been announced by about a million angels stretched across the sky. Not too much time passes before several wealthy merchants show up to shower them with some very expensive gifts claiming that they followed a star to their house. For the rest of his life Joseph will live in the shadow of Jesus. He will father other children but none will be like Jesus.

**Third he yielded his Priorities.** Joseph had plans. He was a carpenter and no doubt plied his trade there in Bethlehem but, because of Jesus, He would move at least three times in the first several years of His life. He would have to reestablish his carpentry business and rebuild his clientele every time he moved. He was required to provide instruction to Jesus. Think of that responsibility! Because Jesus was taught by Joseph, we read in Luke 2:52 “And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man.” As a normal child Jesus would require all the training provided to boys of that culture. He would require training in Jewish history and lots of study of the law and the Torah. Joseph was, most likely, the one who taught Him about His biological Father. Jesus would go to temple with his dad, and sit with his dad, and ask questions about what was being taught from His dad. Do you wonder if Jesus siblings resented Him for getting the most attention? These were issues that Joseph had not planned for but he yielded his priorities and plans to a God who had grander plans than he could have ever imagined.

**Conclude:** What fears keep us from trusting God? Perhaps you and I have some pride that needs to be yielded to Christ. Maybe you have been a private Christian for too long. It’s time to come out of the closet and speak up for our savior. If you and I yield to Him He will make a change in our priorities. I can promise you that you will love what He does in your life.