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Willerup United Methodist Church
Sermon Notes
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Christmas: Joseph



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This Advent we are meditating on the scene around the manger and the different characters who surrounded it.

In the story of Christ's birth, we find the Inn-keeper in the town of Bethlehem, who allowed the expectant family to have a place where they keep their animals. The Emperor August Caesar who made a decree for the census to be taken. The angels and the shepherds, Joseph and Mary, and later King Herod, and the Wise men from the East who were guided the Star, all connected with the birth of baby Jesus.

This week we will look at Joseph.

Matthew 1:18-24, 2:13-23

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" --which means, "God with us."

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

...

¹³When they (the Wise Men) had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

¹⁴So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: "Out of Egypt I called my son."

¹⁶When Herod realized that he had been outwitted by the Magi, he was furious, and he gave orders to kill all the boys in Bethlehem and its vicinity who were two years old and under, in accordance with the time he had learned from the Magi. ¹⁷Then what was said through the prophet Jeremiah was fulfilled:

¹⁸"A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning,
Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted,
because they are no more."

¹⁹After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead."

²¹So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was reigning in Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. Having been warned in a dream, he withdrew to the district of Galilee, ²³and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets: "He will be called a Nazarene."

The name of Joseph in Hebrew is a form of the verb Y-A-S-A-P which means “to add.”

May he (God) add (sons), is what it means in Genesis 30:24.

He was betrothed to Mary and became Mary’s husband. He was also a descendant of King David (Matthew 1:20). Luke in chapter 3 indicates that through genealogy, Jesus was not the son of Joseph, He was Son of God. Matthew traces his legal relationship back to David and Abraham. Joseph took the boy Jesus to temple in Jerusalem every year and acted as a father. He finally settled at Nazareth (Acts 2:22, Matthew 2:23).

Joseph was a righteous man and did not expose her (Mary) to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

We are going to learn how the prophecies were fulfilled in his life. How God used him as an instrument to be a partner with God and His spirit to bring Jesus to the world for us.

1. Joseph’s First Dream, and the prophecy being fulfilled

He considered leaving Mary, but wanted to protect her from public disgrace, when he realized that Mary was with child before their marriage (Matthew 1:18-19). Then the angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.” (Matthew 1:20-21)

The prophecy of a virgin bearing a child is found in Isaiah 7:14, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”

2. Joseph's Second Dream, and the prophecy being fulfilled

Matthew 2:13, "And when they had gone (the wise men), an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream, 'Get up,' he said, 'take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.'"

The prophecy was fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet Hosea.

Hosea 11:1, "When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son."

3. Joseph's Third Dream, and the prophecy being fulfilled

Matthew 2:19-20, 23

"After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, 'Get up, take the child and his mother and go the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead.' ... and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through prophets: 'He will be called a Nazarene.'"

What do we learn through the life of Joseph?

1. He was a God-fearing gentleman. He did not want to disgrace others through his action, so he wanted to divorce Mary *quietly*.

2. He put aside his ego and reputation with regard to Mary being with child, and obeyed God. A man of God is always is obedient to the command of God.

3. He was in communion with God, getting warned and getting communication from the Lord from time to time, especially when taking decisions in difficult times.

4. He provided guardianship to Jesus and took care of a father's duties and responsibilities in taking him to the house of God, and to the religious feasts.

5. How do we react when we face a similar kind of situation?