

Theme: True righteousness desires to submit to God, show mercy to others, and humbly receive correction from God so that it might fully obey.

I. Where is Joseph?

- A. Our trip to Florence - amazing art!
- B. A LOT of pictures of Mary, and annunciation
- C. My favorite - Botticelli's annunciation
- D. Where is Joseph? Almost no pictures of him
- E. Michelangelo - Holy Family - Joseph in background
- F. But in Matthew Joseph is front and center!

II. Joseph - A Righteous Man

- A. Notice that in Matthew everything is told from Joseph's perspective
 - 1. Joseph receives the dream of angelic visit
 - 2. Joseph receives four dreams - out of six in all of Matthew's Gospel
 - 3. Joseph is the one acting to protect and provide for Mary and Jesus in Matthew 1-2
 - 4. Joseph is truly front and center!
- B. Joseph was a righteous man
 - Because **Joseph ... was a righteous man** and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. Matthew 1:19
 - 1. This is a key description of Joseph
 - 2. Explains his actions throughout the story

- 3. Righteous or just - here has idea of "law abiding"
- 4. Joseph committed to obeying God & His Word

C. A problem for Joseph the righteous man

This 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. Matthew 1:18

- 1. Joseph discovers Mary, his betrothed, is pregnant!
- 2. Matthew tells us how this happened - through the Holy Spirit
- 3. But Joseph does not know - he thinks Mary committed adultery
- 4. Deepening the problem - understanding Jewish marriage
 - This 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.** Matthew 1:18-19
 - a. Pledged to be married - but divorce her?
 - b. Jewish marriage had 2 parts
 - 1. Betrothal - pledge to marry - usually lasts 1-2 years
 - (a) Formal, signed, legally binding contract
 - (b) Called husband and wife from that point forward - or widow if partner died
 - (c) But no sex until the final ceremony

(d) Any sex was adultery and punishable by divorce or death

(e) This was part of God's law

If a man happens to meet in a town a virgin pledged to be married and he sleeps with her, ²⁴you shall take both of them to the gate of that town and stone them to death — the girl because she was in a town and did not scream for help, and the man because he violated another man's wife. You must purge the evil from among you. Deuteronomy 22:23–24

2. Wedding

(a) A formal ceremony that completed betrothal and initiated marriage proper

(b) They went to a prepared place and consummated the marriage

c. Joseph and Mary were in stage one - betrothal

d. It appeared Mary had committed adultery!

5. Joseph the righteous must obey God! But he loves Mary - how will he do this?

III. The Obedience of True Righteousness

A. True righteousness desires to submit to God and obey

Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. **Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man ... he had in mind to divorce her quietly.** Matthew 1:18-19

1. Joseph wants to be obedient to God's law

2. He does not want to simply excuse Mary's sin

3. Even if he loves her - He must obey God first

B. True righteousness desires to show mercy

Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ **Because 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.** Matthew 1:18-19

1. Joseph did not want to publicly disgrace Mary

2. Joseph was not looking for revenge

3. Joseph wanted to do this as quietly as possible to protect Mary

4. Even though he thought she had betrayed him!

5. No hint of the Pharisee in righteous Joseph

6. True righteousness does not desire to shame or punish others - it is full of grace

7. Righteousness not angry, but full of peace & mercy

C. True righteousness humbly receives correction and guidance from God - and obeys

But 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.... ²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. Matthew 1:20, 24

1. God corrects Joseph through dream of angel

2. Joseph does not argue, but obeys

3. Righteousness is willing to admit fault and change

4. Righteousness is full of humility - not pride

D. The nature of true righteousness

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

1. Righteousness does justly - obeying God
2. Righteousness loves mercy - not judgement
3. Righteousness is humble - not arrogant

IV. The Full Extent of Joseph's Obedience

A. Joseph obeys and takes Mary as his wife

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. Matthew 1:24

1. He completed the betrothal and married her
2. This probably destroyed his reputation
 - a. Either he must not mind if Mary sleeps around OR
 - b. Joseph was sleeping with Mary - he is a hypocrite!

B. Joseph had no sexual union with Mary until after Jesus' birth

But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. Matthew 1:25

1. No memorable honeymoon weekend here!
2. He doesn't claim his "rights" - after waiting a year!
3. There are two bigger concerns for Joseph
 - a. To show it was truly a Virgin birth
 - b. To protect the sacred nature of this pregnancy

4. Righteousness concerned with God's plan - not "rights"

C. Joseph adopts Jesus and raises Him as his own son

But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. **And he gave him the name Jesus.** Matthew 1:25

1. Naming Jesus is the father's prerogative
2. This shows Joseph is taking Jesus as his own
3. Adoption - picture of reception into God's family!
4. Righteousness not momentary act but lifelong practice

D. The continuing cost of Joseph's obedience

When they 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." Matthew 2:13

1. Joseph has to flee Judea to Egypt - adopting Jesus has endangered Joseph!
2. When able to return years later has to move to a different area
3. Matthew stresses this - 4 or 6 dreams are to Joseph
4. Righteousness doesn't shrink from cost of obedience

E. What a model Joseph is for young Jesus - and us!

V. Applying the Word

A. Is true righteousness growing in my life?

He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

1. Do I act justly - obeying God's no matter the cost?
2. Do I love mercy - and extend it to others, even if they have wronged me?
3. Do I walk humbly with God - receiving His correction rather than pridefully asserting my own way?
4. 'Righteousness' today warped - even in the Church!
5. How do I line up with biblical righteousness?

B. The coming of Jesus our Savior

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." ²² All 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." Matthew 1:21–23

1. This is the heart of the Gospel and Christmas
2. Jesus is Immanuel - God with us
3. But He is with us to forgive our sins!
4. He has not come to condemn but to save!
5. Receiving that forgiveness today
 - a. Only Jesus is truly righteous - forgiveness
 - b. But we ask Him to help us grow in real righteousness- sanctification

C. The Table of Righteousness

1. The Table of Jesus' righteousness

2. The Table where we ask to grown in righteousness

Joseph - The Obedience of True Righteousness

Matthew 1:18-25

December 14, 2014

Communion

Micah 6:8

Teaching keywords: Advent and Christmas, biblical characters, faith, obedience, humility, mercy and mercy ministry, correction

May the Father send His Spirit so that you may act justly and love mercy and walk humbly with your God, through the mercy and salvation brought by Jesus - our righteousness, holiness, and redemption. Micah 6:8

18 This 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. 19 Because 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.

20 But 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. 21 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."

22 All 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."

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. Matthew 1:18–25