

And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.

Matthew 1:19-21 (ESV)

When we think of Mary, the mother of our Lord, we often marvel at her humility and faith. But Joseph too was chosen by God for a holy purpose. The Scriptures call him a “just man”—a man of righteousness. This term goes beyond simply being morally good. In biblical thought, to be righteous means to walk in covenant faithfulness to God, reflecting His justice and mercy in human relationships (Micah 6:8).

Joseph’s story teaches us what it means to live righteously—not only before God but also before people.

Joseph Was Not the Biological Father of Jesus

It is crucial to remember that Joseph was not the natural father of Jesus. The conception of Christ was miraculous, the direct work of the Holy Spirit. Gabriel told Mary:

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God.

Luke 1:35 (ESV)

This fulfills the prophecy given centuries earlier:

Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel [God with us].

Isaiah 7:14 (ESV)

Thus, Jesus was not born of man's will but of God's power (John 1:13). He is the true Son of God, without sin, born of a virgin, fully human yet fully divine (Philippians 2:6-7).

Joseph's Dilemma

When Joseph discovered Mary was pregnant, he faced a painful dilemma. According to the Law, adultery was punishable by death (Deuteronomy 22:23-24). Though Joseph could have demanded public judgment, his righteousness was marked by both justice and compassion. He chose mercy, planning to dismiss her quietly rather than shame her.

At this critical moment, God intervened. Through a dream, an angel revealed the truth: the child was from the Holy Spirit, and His name would be Jesus—Yeshua in Hebrew—meaning “The Lord saves.” This name itself carries the promise of redemption, for Christ's mission was not political deliverance but salvation from sin (John 1:29; Acts 4:12).

Bearing Shame for the Sake of God's Plan

Even after receiving God's revelation, Joseph knew the world

would not understand. To protect Mary and the divine plan, Joseph accepted the reproach of others. People would assume he had broken God's law by being with Mary before marriage. Both he and Mary would be branded as immoral, and their son seen as illegitimate.

This willingness to embrace shame for the sake of obedience points us to Christ Himself, who "endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2, ESV). Joseph's quiet acceptance foreshadows the way of the cross: following God often means enduring misunderstanding, slander, and rejection.

Jesus later taught:

Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

Matthew 5:11-12 (ESV)

Joseph's life reminds us that righteousness often requires bearing

reproach with grace and trusting God to vindicate us in His time.

The Cost of Discipleship

Many today want the blessings of Christ without the cost of following Him. But true discipleship means denying self, taking up the cross, and following Him (Luke 9:23). To embrace Christ means to turn from sin—whether it is immorality, dishonesty, drunkenness, or worldliness—and to walk in holiness.

Paul warns:

Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: neither the sexually immoral, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor men who practice homosexuality, nor thieves, nor the greedy, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God.

1 Corinthians 6:9-10 (ESV)

Joseph and Mary embraced shame, rejection, and difficulty to

fulfill God's purpose. In the same way, following Christ will sometimes mean losing reputation, friends, or comfort. But those who suffer with Christ will also reign with Him (2 Timothy 2:12).

The Humility of Christ's Birth

Because of rejection and poverty, Joseph and Mary could not find lodging. The King of kings entered the world in a manger (Luke 2:7). This was no accident. God chose the path of humility to reveal His kingdom. As Paul writes:

For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.

2 Corinthians 8:9 (ESV)

The humble birth of Christ shows us that God's glory shines brightest in what the world despises.

Invitation to Salvation

Friend, have you surrendered your life to Jesus Christ? To follow Him is to turn from sin and embrace His righteousness, just as Joseph chose obedience over reputation. Scripture reminds us:

Behold, now is the favorable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.

2 Corinthians 6:2 (ESV)

Christ, once laid in a manger, now reigns in glory, dwelling in unapproachable light (1 Timothy 6:15-16). Soon He will return to judge the living and the dead. Will you be ready?

Prayer of Repentance

Heavenly Father, I confess that I am a sinner and deserve Your judgment. But I believe that Jesus Christ, Your Son, died for my sins and rose again. Today I repent and turn from my sins. I confess Jesus as my Lord and Savior. Wash me in His precious blood and make me new. Thank You for receiving me as Your child. In Jesus' name, Amen.

If you prayed sincerely, now live in obedience: forsake sin, join a Bible-believing church, be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and grow daily in His Word. Just as Joseph obeyed God's word even at personal cost, so must we walk in faith and righteousness until Christ returns.

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