

Being a Courageous Christian – The Advent
Pastor Tim Vanderwater
The Well Church of Lewisville

Introduction

Being a Christian today requires great strength and courage. We are increasingly facing ridicule, rejection, and being told to keep our faith and our prayers to ourselves. We are in a time like no other in our country, where God and Christianity are being taken out of everything surrounding us in our culture.

When looking at the life of Joseph, the soon to be step-father of the King of Kings, he too had to face great adversity. He had to stand up and be strong and courageous in order to face rejection, ridicule and an unknown future.

Read Matthew 1:18-24 (Joseph finds out He is going to be a Dadday)

Point 1 – We need to be like a journalist and ask the who, what, when, why and how in Scripture

Unchurchify the story!

Mat. 1:18 This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph.

- **Joseph was in love! He was engaged**
- **What do you think Joseph had in mind for his future with Mary?**
- **He was expectedly waiting for the day when he finally got to marry his beautiful bride**
- **The celebration, the gathering of family and friends, the beginning of his new life as a husband.**

Point 2 – Joseph was about to go from a dream of bliss to a complete nightmare

Mat 1:18 But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit.

- **Imagine a long engagement. The anticipation of the marriage.**
 - **All of a sudden, you find out your spouse is pregnant with someone else's child!!!**
 - **What a devastating blow!!!**
- **How would you respond to such news!**
 - **Furious!**
 - **Thoughts of betrayal!**
 - **How could Mary do this to me!**

Point 3 – Joseph began to put Mary above Himself

Mat. 1:19 Joseph, her fiancé, was a good man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.

- **Joseph still loved Mary, regardless of the harm and embarrassment she has caused Joseph.**
- **Joseph realized the struggles that lay ahead of Mary**
 - **Adultery was punishable by death!**
(Read Leviticus 20:10)
10 “If a man commits adultery with his neighbor’s wife, both the man and the woman who have committed adultery must be put to death. (NLT)

- **Joseph was also thinking about Mary's family**
 - **He did not want to bring shame to the family**
- **By divorcing her quietly, He was putting Mary first.**
- **Amongst his pain and anguish, he wanted to do what was right!**

Point 3 – Joseph stood strong and courageous during extreme adversity

Matt 1:20-21

20 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. 21 And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

- **Joseph was laying in bed.**
 - **Heartbroken**
 - **Confused**
 - **Uncertain**

- **As if this was not enough, now He sees an angelic being**
 - **What could he have been thinking now!**
 - **Maybe Mary's pregnancy was also just a dream!**

- **The Angel says, do not be afraid!**
 - **Be courageous and trust God!**
 - **You are about to face all kinds of potential ridicule.**
 - **Your family and friends might persuade you to abandon Mary.**
 - **They might tell you that you are crazy!**

- **With all of these things weighing on Joseph What did he do!**

Mat 1:24 - When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.

- **Joseph probably had doubts, even with the angel speaking to him**
- **He stepped out in faith, knowing what might lie ahead of him.**

The Census

Luke 2:1-5:

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. 2 (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) 3 All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. 4 And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he

had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. 5 He took with him Mary, his fiancée, who was now obviously pregnant.

Joseph now had to take his wife, who was several month's pregnant, on a long journey.

Would this boy possibly be born away from

- **our family,**
- **the midwives,**
- **those who could support them and rejoice with them?**

They get to a town in Bethlehem, and Mary goes into labor.

A baby boy is delivered with no midwives to help,

no family to celebrate,

just Mary and Joseph in a lowly stable.

The Escape to Egypt

After the Census, Joseph is probably thinking:

We can finally go home and celebrate with our families!

Joseph again faces adversity:

Matt 2:13-14

13 After the wise men were gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. “Get up! Flee to Egypt with the child and his mother,” the angel said. “Stay there until I tell you to return, because Herod is going to search for the child to kill him.”

14 That night Joseph left for Egypt with the child and Mary, his mother, 15 and they stayed there until Herod’s death. This fulfilled what the Lord had spoken through the prophet: “I called my Son out of Egypt.”

- **Joseph finds out that a king is out to kill his son!**
- **He flees to Egypt instead of going home!**
 - **Once again, heartbroken, scared and now on the run**
 - **His family was now in exile, hiding**

- **Joseph remains the course and stands strong on His faith, trusting God**

After nearly 2 years of exile, he finally gets to return home!! Right??

Matt 2:13-15

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One again, Joseph was in fear of the life of his baby boy, Jesus!

Conclusion

- **We all face fears, trials, and adversity**
- **According to some, the Bible says, “Do not Fear”, “Fear Not” or “Don’t be Afraid” 365 times.**
- **God wants us to step out in faith, especially when facing adversity**
- **He wants us to stand and be courageous to what is good and just –**
 - **What if Joseph simply divorced Mary quietly?**

- **Or worse, what if he called for a trial to have Mary stoned to death?**

- **What if Joseph went straight home instead of listening to the Lord?**

- **We can learn a lot from Chester Cheezy, the mascot for Cheetos – It aint easy being cheezy.**
 - **Or – It aint easy being a courageous Christian**
 - **But Courageous Christians is what God seeks**

- **Next time you face adversity for doing what is right, ask yourself this:**
 - **What if Joseph took the easy way out?**