



Dear Friends and Loved Ones,

December 2014

"This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. 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. 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." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet, "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means God with us)." When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus." Matt.1:18-25

Joseph was the legal father of Jesus, but not His literal father. We don't know much about Joseph. In all four gospels there is not one quote from Joseph (we never hear him speak). What kind of man was Joseph? We know that he was a carpenter. Was he the strong silent type? Did he have callouses on his hands from working with wood? Obviously he was a man of integrity and responsibility, obeying the law as he led Mary to Bethlehem to register. But, does his silence imply that he's not vital to the story? I don't think so. The truth is, he was just what Mary needed at this time in her life. Imagine not only Joseph's love for Mary, but his commitment to her. Young people had little to do with the process of marrying as most marriages were pre-arranged. His love for her was a choice, a decision, a commitment, not just a feeling. So, how stunned was Joseph when he found out she was pregnant? The Bible says that the child was conceived of the Holy Ghost...we know that, and Mary already knew that, but Joseph did not know that yet! There was a dilemma here between law and love/conviction and compassion.

Joseph decided to be faithful to the will of God, do what God told him to do, bear the responsibility and shame as if he and Mary had sinned! They lived under a cloud of public shame, thought to be guilty of immorality, and Joseph accepted the responsibility of caring for and rearing a child thought to be illegitimate! Joseph decided to do what was right no matter the cost, to do God's will, even in the face of criticism, even if misunderstood or falsely judged! Joseph stayed by Mary's side...from Nazareth to Bethlehem...in the stable that miraculous night, and for the rest of his life. What a faithful man to his God, a faithful husband to Mary and a faithful dad to Jesus, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! I wonder if Joseph thought of Proverbs 3:5, 6 as he faced each day in his life's journey with Jesus: "Trust in the Lord with all your heart and don't lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and he will direct your steps." As we focus on the birth of our Savior this Christmas, may we be as faithful as Joseph.

As we think about faithfulness, we are reminded of you, our supporters who are so faithful throughout the year to pray and give. Thank you for remaining faithful to us and our ministry.

Walking in faith with you,
Wayne and Jeanine Allen

