

Living the Dream Sermon

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Matthew 2:7-12 The Magi Visit the Messiah

⁷ Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. ⁸ He sent them to Bethlehem and said, “Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him.”

⁹ After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰ When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. ¹¹ On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. ¹² And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

Matthew 2:13-23 The Escape to Egypt

¹³ 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.”

¹⁴ So he got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, ¹⁵ where 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.”^[c]

¹⁶ When 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. ¹⁷ Then 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.”

The Return to Nazareth

¹⁹ After Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt ²⁰ and 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.”

²¹ So he got up, took the child and his mother and went to the land of Israel. ²² But 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, ²³ and he went and lived in a town called Nazareth. So was fulfilled what was said through the prophets, that he would be called a Nazarene.

SERMON

Well here we are: Only 362 days left until Christmas. I hope you all had a good Christmas.

Now we have to take down all of the decorations, put away all of the lights, and try to figure out how all of it all fits into the boxes we took them out of and where we are going to store them until next year. And the hardest thing will be giving up the 24/7 Christmas movies on Hallmark and Lifetime.

And we return to the same old work routines, social and family demands.

But our Christmas probably wasn't as crazy as that first one was for Joseph and Mary. Giving birth in a barn, having a bunch of shepherds dropping in uninvited, just getting used to having a new baby, just getting used to being new parents and then have these guys on camels showing up.

Today I would like to focus on Joseph. This guy gets very little mention in the Bible. But he does give us some insight into what it is like being in tune with God and we have to remember he was chosen by God to be the earthly father of Jesus. Living the Dream – God's plan.

First, he finds out his wife to be is pregnant, not by him. Then he has a dream where the angel tells him that GOD is the father and the baby will be the savior of the world. So, he forgets about breaking off the relationship and takes Mary as his wife, and accepts Jesus as his earthly responsibility. Acceptance of Responsibility and God's Wish.

Second, he has another dream. He needs to get up and get out of Bethlehem because there will be a dangerous situation for his child. What does he do? He packs up and leaves immediately, in the middle of the night. He doesn't question God. He just obeys. He heads to Egypt where it will be safe. Obedience.

Some time passes. They probably are getting settled and comfortable in Egypt, and he has another dream. Leave Egypt, head back to Israel. Pack up and take off, again. Now things still aren't good in Bethlehem so they go to Nazareth, in Galilee. Raise our Son.
Again - No Questions asked, just do it.

Joseph shows faithfulness and unwavering obedience. Joseph again obeys without and question or complaint. He says not a word, but his prompt obedience is crucial to God's plan. **He doesn't know the plan but knows what the next step of the journey, and he takes that step.**

Our obedience crucial to God's plan as well. We cannot see the fullness of God's plan for our lives any better than Joseph did for his life, but we can be assured of one thing: our faithfulness will lead to great things. We may not or will not be aware God's plan and we may not see the fruits or results of our faithfulness and obedience, but we can be assured, God will not fail to bless our faithfulness and obedience to his plan.

Christmas should always change our lives forever! - not a for a day or few days then back to the old life BUT permanent relationship status w/Jesus as Lord

Jesus should be the center of our lives - every day. moment-by-moment keeping Him the center of our thoughts, decisions, beliefs, actions, behavior, dreams, work, finances, generosity, service and everything else.

Like Joseph we need to be faithful, obedient, trusting, accountable and responsible, always looking for God's direction and guidance.

CAN YOU LIVE THE DREAM? Are you living your dream, or are you living God's Dream?

Will today be different, will next year be different, will you be willing to be faithful, obedient, caring and responsible?

Do you know where the best place is? It is always where Jesus is. Just like Joseph and Mary
- in scary times they were protected - Have you been scared? Health, dangerous situation, did God Protect you?

- they were poor but provided for – gifts of the Magi were portable, easy to convert to cash or barter. I remember reading the Christmas story and getting to this part and thinking what would these poor people do with this expensive stuff? To me it was like getting a box of chocolate covered cherries. Nice thought, but what I am going to do with them. But then I realized It was part of the plan. How many times have we been blessed and provided for when we needed it most.

- they were at content with the place and provisions God gave them. Are you content with what God has given you? It has been said that rich and poor are states of mind. Are you Rich or Poor?

So what is God's Dream for you? What can you do to Live the Dream?

- To visit someone in a nursing home>
- to feed the hungry
- to visit the prisoner
- to bring peace among brothers & sisters, breakdown any barriers you have with a spouse, parent or child
- to sing in the choir
- to serve on a committee for LOVE, Inc., Workgroup 2020, or within the church
- to cook for the community meal
- to do the dishes with a smile and attitude of love

Putting Jesus in our lives is the one thing that makes all the difference - that gives us a solid foundation, the strength to endure, & even to overcome. To share the God's love. So the real work of Christmas is not over. It is just now starting! Are you willing to live the Dream? Will you let Jesus Christ become a bigger part of your life and let the joy of Christmas live within you for the whole year.

Let us Pray Dear Lord we give you thanks for the birth of Jesus and ask that you help us fill our homes with the sounds & excitement of Christmas all year long. We want more of you in our lives. Help us take the Christmas message with us so that all the world might be touched by it. We ask this in your name and for your glory. AMEN