

“CHRISTmas is Calling: Peace (Joseph)
Matthew 1:18-25 (NIV)
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<https://www.sermonspice.com/product/57498/first-christmas-joseph>

Why Joseph? Why did God call Joseph to be the earthly father of the Son? Have there been times when you don't know why God has called you? With Joseph, as we will see, there was chaos, confusion and concern. Why me?

Let's realize the circumstances around Joseph. We know according to scripture that Joseph was “pledged” to be married to Mary. Some translations say “espoused,” “betrothed,” or “engaged.” But this was more than the type of engagement that we would think of today. It was a legally binding relationship. It was more than a commitment, it was legal, however no sexual relations took place. If there were a decision to no longer be “pledged” then an actual divorce decree had to be offered. Couples in this day that were pledged to each other were called husband and wife.

Joseph was faithful to the law and rules of God. When it was known she was pregnant he could have divorced her. And perhaps that had even crossed his mind. He knew the child was not his.

¹⁹ 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.

He had in his mind to divorce her quietly. He was actually showing great compassion. In the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy, in Jewish law she could have been taken and made a public spectacle out of her unfaithfulness and by law she could be stoned to death.

But after he had considered this, and angel of the Lord came to him in a dream. Again, I wonder what Joseph's reaction was. The angel says do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. Well first of all if it were me, I'd be afraid because an angel is talking to me in my dream!!!! The angel tells Joseph to not be afraid to go ahead with the marriage. Joseph knows Mary's ‘condition’ and that is when the angel says the Holy Spirit has come upon her, and that is how she has conceived.

Now again, me---I'm saying. “Say what?” But Joseph listens to God's word through this angel. So, no surprise at the Gender Reveal Party, but this child is going to be a son, God's son. He is to be named Jesus. Well, so much for Joe Jr. Somehow during all of this Joseph seems to retain a peace and calm about him.

Prophecy is being fulfilled. 12 times in the Gospel of Matthew it talks of Old Testament prophecy being fulfilled (Matthew: 1:22; 2:15,23; 3:15; 4:14; 5:17, 8:17; 12:17; 13:14,35; 21:4; 27:9)

And then we have verse 23. ²³ **“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).**

This is the first of at least 47 quotes from the Old Testament, most of them dealing with the Messiah, the anointed One. The name Jesus tells us what this child is to do. Jesus means “God saves.” The Messianic title “Immanuel specifies what this child is: “God with us.”

Oh, to receive and know the calling of Peace. Here at this first chapter of Matthew prophecy is fulfilled that this child Jesus means God is with us. In the last chapter of Matthew, the last verse of the entire book, Jesus Himself says, “And behold I am with you always, even to the end of the world.” YES!!!! God is with us!!!

Joseph accepts God’s Word. He receives the calling to be the earthly father of his heavenly Father’s Son. Oh, give me faith to trust what you say. Joseph was going to try to do what is right and do it the right way. And there was peace.

Oh, to have peace---when you had not had relations, but your engaged wife is pregnant. To be probably ridiculed by friends. Imagine Joseph telling friends and relatives what was going on. “Yeah, sure, an angel told you all of this. No problem.” Joseph was faithful to God, listened and believed God’s Word.

Hmmm, peace because you are faithful to God and believe God’s word. Friends, I believe this is the inspired Word of God. Inspired and still speaks to us today. Are you listening? Do you hear what I hear? How is His word calling you? What is he calling you to do through His word? Do you know His word?

Today we experience an anxiety and uneasiness and pressure about Christmas. Christmas comes earlier and earlier, and I’m not talking about the date. Why it is even beginning earlier than I have ever remembered. It may not be new, but I heard a new word this year. **(image)**



Is that what it’s all about? Where is the peace? Do we tussle with our hustle and bustle? Next week scripture will be from Luke 2 and a message on Joy.

I love Christmas! I love Christmas Eve! Be sure and take an invite card for our 4 Christmas Eve services and invite a friend, enemy, or neighbor. On Christmas Eve, you will once again hear THE Christmas story of Luke 2. Many know it by heart, or parts of it. Why even those who aren’t necessarily churchgoers are familiar with parts of the Luke 2 passage.

Somewhere have we lost the peace and got caught up in commercialism and special deals. Certainly, with parody and tongue in cheek let me share with you an American contemporary version of Luke 2. This is not original; I’ve had it for years and have adapted it. Rather than joy to the world, is called “Joy to the Mall!

And it came to pass in those days' that there went out a decree from the U.S. Treasury, that all of America should go shopping. (2) (And this decree was first made when leading economic indicators dipped to their lowest point.) (3.) And all went out shop, each to his own store. (4) And a Christian also went up from his home to the city with many stores and malls because he wanted to prove he was from the household of prosperity. (5.) And with him was his wife, who was great with economic worry. (6.) And so, it was, that while they were there, they found many expensive presents, a various assortment of video games, and the newest updates on everything electronic.

(7.) And the woman used her debit card for those they could afford and charged the rest on many different kinds of plastic cards; she wrapped the presents in bright paper and laid them in the garage; for there was no room for them in her closet.

(8.) And there were in the same county children keeping watch over their stockings by night.

(9.) And, lo, Santa Claus came upon them; and they were sore afraid (for they were expecting to see the special effects they had seen in the movies.) (11.) For unto you will be given this day, in your American home, great feasts of turkey, dressing, and pie---and many, many presents. (12.) And this shall be a sign unto you: you shall find the presents, wrapped in bright paper, lying beneath a tree adorned with ornaments and lights."

(13). And suddenly there was with Santa Claus a multitude of relatives and friends, praising one another and saying, (14) "Glory to you for getting me this gift; it is just what I wanted."

(15.) And it came to pass, as the friends and relatives were gone away into their own homes, the parents said to one another, (16) I sure am glad that' over. What a mess! I'm too tired to clean it up now. Let's go to bed and pick it up tomorrow."

(17) And when they had said this, they remembered the statement that had been told to them by the storekeepers: "Christmas comes only once a year." And they that heard it wondered at those things that were sold to them by the storekeepers, (19.) But the children treasured all their things in their hearts, hoarding toys from each other, (20.) And the parents went to bed, glorifying and praising each other for all the bargains they had found in the stores.

(With some adaptation, originally written by Chris Dolson who at one time was pastor of Shreveport Bible Church in Shreveport, Louisiana)

Where is the peace?

I believe our society is craving peace in the middle of Hallothanksmas, and yet we are driven by society and does what society says. If Joseph would have done what society said he would have had Mary stoned to death.

How are we called to peace? Pope John Paul II at his Discourse at the Vatican in (December3) 2003, said this, "Build peace in hearts first of all by laying down the weapons of rancor, revenge, and every form of selfishness. The world cries out for this peace."

Do you believe our world is crying out for peace? XXXXXX May we be called to live out a life of peace.

Howard Thurman years ago, wrote this prayer, I find appropriate event today.

Lord, Lord, Open Unto Me, by Howard Thurman

**Open unto me — light for my darkness.
 Open unto me — courage for my fear.
 Open unto me — hope for my despair.
 Open unto me — peace for my turmoil.
 Open unto me — joy for my sorrow.
 Open unto me — strength for my weakness.
 Open unto me — wisdom for my confusion.
 Open unto me — forgiveness for my sins.
 Open unto me--- tenderness for my toughness
 Open unto me — love for my hates.
 Open unto me — Thy Self for my self.
 Lord, Lord, open unto me!**

Joseph opened himself up to listen, hear, and receive and apply God's word. What about us. I realized that there are 17 more days until Christmas. What if we tried to open ourselves up to peace in these next 17 days? Now each week I have scripture verses that relate to the message, you will find those and a draft of the sermon manuscript at the Welcome Center. But besides the regular daily scriptures for this week, there is another page out there that has 17 scriptures----1 for each day from now till Christmas that deal with peace. You see Joseph was called to peace through the word of God via an angel. We too are called to be people of peace. May we use God's word to equip, settle, and remind us to carry the Prince of Peace into the world. And hear 17 times the Word of God and peace:

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So, don't be troubled or afraid. John 14:27

I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world." John 16:33

Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need and thank Him for all he has done. Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus. Philippians 4:6–7

You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you! Isaiah 26:3

This is the message of Good News for the people of Israel—that there is peace with God through Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all. Acts 10:36

Therefore, since we have been made right in God's sight by faith, we have peace with God because of what Jesus Christ our Lord has done for us. Romans 5:1

Now may the Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times in every way. The Lord be with you all. 2 Thessalonians 3:16

Isaiah 54:10"; Though the mountains be shaken and the hills be removed, yet my unfailing love for you will not be shaken nor my covenant of peace be removed," says the LORD, who has compassion on you."

In peace I will lie down and sleep, for you alone, O Lord, will keep me safe. Psalm 4:8

The Lord gives His people strength. The Lord blesses them with peace. Psalm 29:11

The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need. He lets me rest in green meadows; He leads me beside peaceful streams. Psalm 23:1-2

Now may the Lord of peace Himself give you His peace at all times and in every situation. The Lord be with you all. 2 Thessalonians 3:16

The Lord says, "I will guide you along the best pathway for your life. I will advise you and watch over you. Psalm 37:8

'May the Lord bless you and protect you. May the Lord smile on you and be gracious to you. May the Lord show you His favor and give you His peace.' Numbers 4:24-26

¹⁴ "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests." Luke 2:14 New International Version (NIV)

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Isaiah 9:6

Oh, to have peace, peace like Joseph who was called to be the earthly father of Jesus, Immanuel.

That Prince of Peace, Jesus, makes an eternal difference.

Missionary Don Richardson who served for many years among the primitive tribes in Papua New Guinea wrote a book entitled "The *Peace* Child." He tells the story of two tribes in Papua New Guinea who maintained a blood feud between themselves for several generations. Each generation fought and nursed their wounds only to fight again killing and maiming more and more people. After years of struggle the two tribes realized that they must stop fighting or nothing would be left of their peoples. But what could they do to end years of warring between the two tribes?

Don Richardson goes on to tell that the chiefs of the two tribes came together and brought with them a child they called “The *Peace Child*” This child was the son of one of the opposing chiefs which was adopted into the family of the opposing chief. As long as that child lived the two chiefs promised to cease their fighting so that all could live. Richardson had finally found a perfect picture of God’s love for us in sending His Son, the Prince of *Peace* to die for us. (*Lou Nicholes - Missionary/Author*).

May the Peace Child live within you.