

Surprises

Matthew 1:18-25

"Behold the virgin shall conceive a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel (which means, God with us)."
- Matthew 1:23 (Isaiah 7:14)

Main Point: The very first Christmas surprise still impacts our lives today

Introduction: Use the following questions to introduce the topic of discussion -

What was the biggest Christmas surprise you ever received?

Have you ever been surprised by something that changed your plans? How did you deal with the shock of the news or event?

Sometimes surprising circumstances can radically change our lives. Surprises can re-orient our plans and possibly lead us into a time of confusion and stress. Even good news can cause anxiety! How life-altering do you think it was for Mary to find out she was pregnant because of the Holy Spirit before she had ever known a man? How do you think Joseph felt about it? This news was certainly a life-altering event, and we can be certain they both wondered why this was happening to them. The only thing they could do with this happy news was buckle down and trust in the kindness of the Lord. After all, through their son, God was going to bring about the salvation of His people!

Joseph got three very big surprises:

1) HIS FIANCE WAS PREGNANT AND HE WASN'T THE FATHER. Read Matthew 1:18-19.

How do you think Joseph felt when he first learned that Mary was pregnant? Why do you think the Bible highlights that Joseph was "a righteous man"?

What do you think of Joseph's impulse not to disgrace Mary publicly?

What can we learn from his reaction that could be applied to our daily lives? Share times in your life when you reacted the right way, the wrong way, and God's way.

2) THE APPEARANCE OF THE ANGEL WITH UNBELIEVABLE NEWS. Read Matthew 1:20.

Why do you think the angel calls Joseph "son of David"? For more information read David's words in **1 Kings 2:4**, and **Matthew 1:1-2; 6; & 16**. How do you think he felt about Mary after this visit by the angel?

How do you think Joseph felt about the upcoming birth of Jesus now, knowing he was conceived by the Holy Spirit?

Have you ever received unbelievable news, good or bad? How did it change you as a person? What can we learn from Joseph and the whole of scripture when it comes to handling change?

3) **THE IDENTITY OF THE CHILD. Read Matthew 1:21-25.**

Do you think that Joseph's life got any easier or more difficult after he found out the good news about Mary and her pregnancy? Why?

Why might God's blessing lead us into a time of difficulty and confusion as it did for Mary and Joseph?

When our lives are turned upside down, what are some ways we can find comfort that, in the end, our perseverance will be worth it?

Apply It:

Jesus' name was significant because it meant 'salvation.' The angel reminded Joseph and Mary that He was to be called Immanuel, meaning 'God with us.' Knowing why Jesus came and the importance of His mission, read Matthew 28:20. How does the way Matthew close his book bring the gospel story full circle and remind us to have hope?

What interruptions are you experiencing, and how are you questioning what God is doing in your life right now? Where must you choose to simply trust and obey as Joseph did?

Pray:

Father, thank you for the surprises you brought to Joseph's life and the hope they gave to all of us today. We pray the surprises in our life, welcome or not, would be accepted as offerings from you and that we would respond in obedience and faith. Thank you for revealing the way, the truth, and the life to us and may we follow His example.

Coming up at VillageChurch:

Nov 29th - Operation Christmas Child Packing Party

Dec. 3rd - VillageKids Happy Birthday Jesus

Dec. 10th - A Village Christmas