



Discussion Questions from Weekly Message

Feel free to customize this to use in your small group, family or for you personally

From Message on: 12/13/20

Optional Opener Question

What's a memory you have in which Santa plays a part?

Introductory Thought

As we go into this season, we want to look at the various players in the Christmas story. This week we begin with a person who is often relegated to the narrative background, but who was central to the story: Joseph, husband to Mary, earthly father to Jesus.

Discussion Question

- Women: imagine that moment when you had to approach Joseph with your pregnancy. What might your expectation be for how this conversation would end?
- Men: picture a very young, hesitant, fearful Mary standing in front of you. What would be going through your mind after Mary told you her hard-to-believe story? As you consider your choices of both how to think of all this and then of what to do, what is going through your mind?
- We actually know very little facts about Joseph, only a few verses are recorded in Scripture. The last mention of him – indirectly – is the incident with a 12 year old Jesus in the Temple. Flash forward, He is by inference absent from both Jesus's ministry years and absent from the Crucifixion. It is assumed that he died somewhere between the Temple incident and the death of Jesus. Even the "by tradition" accounts are silent. Read these verses and make a note of what we do know and then build a description of his character.
 - Matt 1:16-19 Matt 1:20-25 Luke 2:4 Matt 2:13-15
 - Luke 2:21-24, 39 Luke 2:41-52 Matt 13:53-58
- Brent talked about the Sacrifice of Joseph. How do you think he might have been spiritually prepared for this major pivot in his life? What decisions do you guess that he made in his life up to that point? In what ways might the decisions of today affect the major choices of tomorrow?
- Quote: "Evict us from our comfort zone." What do you think the author meant by that? Why might we prefer the comfortable and predictable? How does a focus on self-interests cause us to want to settle into comfort?
- In Heb 13:15 and Psalm 116:17, the Bible talks about a Sacrifice of Praise. Can you imagine a situation where praise might be a sacrificial offering, i.e. it costs you something to praise God? Add 2 Sam 24:24 to the discussion.
- Salvation: It's easy to lose the focus that God gave so that we might receive. Read Acts 4:12, John 14:6, Romans 3:22, and Matt 21:37. Do those verses add a layer of understanding to the manger?
- Submission – what stops us from submitting our will to God? What might a "blank check made payable to God" look like? What part does pride play? What about fear of the unknown? Where is Peace: in the yes or in the no?
- Digging deeper: Read Jonah 1:1-3, then contrast Joseph's response to God with Jonah's response to God. You know how Joseph's story unfolded, read the rest of Jonah to see how Jonah ultimately submitted. Both jobs given by God were difficult, which response brought greater joy?

Practical Application & Next Steps

- Is there an area that God is putting His finger on that you have settled for comfort? Have you had "selective hearing," never really saying No to God, but neither saying Yes? Consider what permission and then obedience will look like for you.
- What habits can you be forming today that might bear fruit in the future? What obedience is God calling you to and are you willing to leave the outcome to Him?
- As we continue into the Christmas season, what can you do to add value to this season in the middle of a pandemic where so much has changed? Traditions, foods, gatherings, habits all will change to some degree. Make Heb 13:15 your prayer.