

To My Victory Baptist Church Family,

I read a story this week about a man named Wilmer McLean who refused to participate in the Civil War. He adamantly opposed taking sides because he had friends in the North and friends in the South.

In order to keep out of harm's way, McLean retired from his successful grocery business and moved to northern Virginia. He was convinced that by this move, he could escape any conflict between the North and the South. He bought a beautiful estate near Manassas Junction, Virginia, where he settled into a plantation lifestyle.

The trouble began when the very first battle of the Civil War occurred in Manassas Junction on July 21, 1861. The battle was called "The Battle of Bull Run" and more than 50,000 soldiers were engaged in a fight that lasted all day. This was the famous battle in which General Jackson earned his nickname "Stonewall Jackson" for his unwillingness to back down. And where did Stonewall Jackson do some of his fighting? Some of the fighting happened on Wilmer McLean's plantation! When the battle was over, McLean's buildings had been destroyed. A cannonball actually went down his chimney and destroyed his home. Even his beautiful stone barn was demolished.

McLean wanted nothing to do with this war, yet he was found in the middle of the very first battle. It cost him nearly everything. Bitterly, Wilmer McLean decided to move again – this time to southern Virginia. He bought another plantation in a town called Appomattox. Poor guy – Appomattox is exactly where not only the last battle was fought in the Civil War, but where General Robert E. Lee and General Ulysses S. Grant signed the terms of surrender. The problem was that the two generals needed a place to meet and agree to the terms. They chose to meet in the parlor of a plantation home – the one owned by Wilmer McLean. So, on April 9, 1865, the meeting took place in McLean's parlor and lasted two and a half hours. When it was over and the generals had departed, soldiers from both sides, officers, and citizens wanted mementos of this once-in-a-lifetime occasion. They took pictures from his walls, silverware and settings, furniture, and even the drapes. When it was over and the people were gone, nearly everything from Wilmer McLean's home was gone. This was the man who had just wanted to steer clear of the Civil War, but it seemed to hunt him down. It started in his backyard and ended in his parlor. And it cost him nearly everything. Poor Wilmer McLean – he longed to stay uninvolved and out of sight, but the conflict just seemed to find him. Then it boxed him in, and there was nowhere for him to run.

In much the same way, Joseph seems to be "an innocent bystander" in the whole Christmas narrative. This year's Christmas series is called "A Strange Way to Save the World. This series has been carved out of the song by the same title. During this series, we have learned that nothing about the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is as we would have designed. The fact that God became a man is not how we would have done it. But the fact is, from eternity past, God chose to come to earth in the form of a man. That man, of course, was the Lord Jesus Christ. We have also learned that, before the foundation of the world, God chose a small, insignificant village named Bethlehem to be the birthplace of Jesus. And again, although Bethlehem is not the place we would have chosen for Him to be born, that was what God had planned.

This weekend, Lord willing, we will consider the answers to the question, "Why Joseph?" Again, from what we know from the Scriptures about Joseph, there is nothing that stands out that would qualify him for this critical position. In fact, here is a partial list of what we do know about him:

- In the entire Christmas narrative, Joseph never speaks. He is spoken to, He is spoken about, but he never speaks a single word. Someone has written, "Joseph is remarkably simple, but he is also simply remarkable."

- Joseph has been called the forgotten man of Christmas.
- Joseph was Jesus' legal father, but he was not Jesus' literal father.
- Joseph seems like an extra, almost like an incidental element in the Christmas story.
- Joseph could have been a royal person, a potential king, according to his genealogy (Matthew 1, Luke 1:27, Luke 2:4).
- Joseph was a very poor man, as witnessed by the fact that he and Mary offering 2 turtledoves as their offering in Jerusalem after Jesus was born (Luke 2:24).
- Joseph was a carpenter (Matthew 13:55, Mark 6:3) by occupation.

But the Scripture does indicate that there are actually several answers to the question, "Why Joseph?" We will discover these answers, Lord willing, on Sunday morning, and in doing so, will find some Biblical principles for our lives as well.

In addition to our Sunday School and Adult Bible Study on Sunday morning, here is a list of activities and events that are happening in and around the ministry of Victory Baptist Church over the next several days for your edification and spiritual growth:

### **Sunday, December 16, 2018**

- 8:00 am - Prayer
- 9:15 am - Sunday School & Bible Study
- 10:30 am - Morning Worship
  - Series: "A Strange Way to Save the World"
  - Sermon Title: "Why Joseph?"
  - Text: Matthew 1:18-25
  - Jr. Church for kids age 3 thru grade 3. Nursery available for infants
- 6:00 pm - Jesus Freaks Christmas Party

### **Monday, December 17, 2018**

- 10:00 am - Prayer

### **Tuesday, December 18, 2018**

- 8:30 am - MOPS group
- 6:30 pm - Adult Bible Study

### **Wednesday, December 19, 2018**

- 11:00 am - Dine with a Doc
- 6:00 pm - Kids 4 Christ (kids age 3 thru grade 6)
- ALIVE (grades 7-12)

### **Thursday, December 20, 2018**

- 8:00 am - Clinton Area Men's Bible Study (at Co-Op Grill)

I sure hope to see you this weekend as we worship Almighty God together. God is sooooo good! Please come to worship with a Bible in your hands, and excitement in your heart. God is an awesome God, and He is worthy of all of our praise and our worship.

Pastor Larry