

Bethlehem Herald Series
Wanting
12/7/24
Newport News

Opening

-**Matthew 1:18-25** (handout)

-“breaking the fourth wall” is a theatrical term...explain...this is what the people in the Christmas story of the Bible are doing with us!

-(shout out to Pastor Justin...)

Introduction

*-God's idea of promotion rarely looks like ours. We envision notoriety, ease, and enjoyment, but that often isn't the case with God. God picks Joseph because he is a trustworthy man of character. Matthew even refers to him as righteous. Getting promoted by God, however, often leads to things we didn't expect, and wouldn't want! **The sacrifice of loss. The suffering of risk. The shadow of obscurity.***

-Who else does the NT refer to as righteous?

1. John the Baptist
2. Zachariah and Elizabeth
3. Simeon
4. Joseph of Arimathea

-talking tonight to the people who have this stirring inside of them of WANTING “the more” that God has for you...**a holy ambition**...(what to expect OR what just happened!).

-You might be feeling like God has forsaken you when in reality He has promoted you! OR...you are turning away from an opportunity because it feels like loss when in reality this is the path of His promotion!

-Consider Joseph

- **Family trade (a person of means)**

- **Betrothed wife**
- **Hope for a future (all the aspirations that come...)**
- **Spiritually mature**
- **Established character**

Why Joseph?

-Derick is going to come and offer some more insights as to why God selected Joseph to be Jesus' earthly, adopted father.

The Sacrifice of Loss

-What did Joseph lose?

- his reputation**
- his business**
- his family**
- his friends**
- his aspirations**

-Genesis 22:1-8 (ref)

...joke about Isaac's dysfunctional family as a father probably because he had some real childhood trauma...lol! (idea here is that we forget sometimes God let's the knife fall)

-Romans 12:1-5

The Suffering of Risk

-show maps here...

- Bethlehem over 2500 feet above sea level
- About 90 miles of difficult terrain
- 4-7 days
- injury, robbery, wild beasts, exposure...
- and another 1200 miles round trip from feeling to return

Joseph and Mary's hardships would have begun more than a week before the birth of their son when the couple would have left their home in Nazareth, in the northern highlands of Galilee, to register for a Roman census.

They probably would have traveled the usual route to the city of Joseph's forebears: south along the flatlands of the Jordan River, then west over the hills surrounding Jerusalem and on to Bethlehem.

Making that 90-mile journey would be like walking almost halfway through Pennsylvania from north to south: over the hills surrounding Allentown in the north, then east to the Delaware River, and south to Philadelphia.

"It was a fairly grueling trip," said Strange, who annually leads an excavation team at the ancient city of Sepphoris, near Nazareth. "In antiquity, the most we find people traveling is 20 miles a day. And this trip was very much uphill and downhill. It was not simple."

Mary's physical condition would not have been the only factor to make the journey grueling. The trip would have been troublesome because it occurred in winter, said Strange. And what's the Judean desert like during winter? "Sort of like New Jersey," he said. "It's in the 30s during the day, rains like heck. It's nasty, miserable. At night it would be freezing."

-2 Corinthians 6:5-10 (Bible)

-2 Corinthians 11:23-28 (Bible)

The Shadow of Obscurity

-I want you to think for a minute how thorough you are before choosing a babysitter for your children, how thorough you expect us to be before we approve people to work in the nursery...how about the fostering and adoption process...how hard do you think God worked at finding just the right man to be Mary's husband and Jesus adopted father?

-Is it just me or does it feel like Joseph really gets overlooked here...

-Value of those gifts from the Magi, was there a moment he could have bolted...

-Galatians 5:26

-Matthew 6:5

-Be careful to not let a desire for fame and celebrity status blind you to the path of obscurity that God might be asking you to sojourn.

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Band

-setup Communion