

Thought for the Day

Friday December 27, 2024

Today's Scripture:

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 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. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

~ Matthew 1: 18-25

Thoughts on Today's Verse(s):

St. Matthew doesn't give near the poetic attention to the birth of Christ that Luke does but he does shine the light on someone else who was/is critical in the story of Christmas: *Joseph*. Actually, it's pretty easy to lose sight of how important he is in bringing The Messiah into the world. God chose him as much as he chose Mary; they were selected as a godly couple.

Can we blame Joseph for thinking he would dismiss Mary quietly. That is, set her aside as gracefully as he could as it was apparent to Him and everyone else that she had "stepped out on him". They were a betrothed couple and he knew he was not the father of her baby. Aaah, but that's where The Lord stepped in and sent his messenger/angel to deliver the message that this was a Holy Child, the long-promised Messiah who would save the people from their sins. Still, how many young men would believe that what he was hearing was real? How many would consider a dream to be real direction and heed it? Not all; but Joseph did. The faithful young Jew stood by his bride and in the end helped make The Lord's work come to fruition. Why? What was it that caused him to listen and believe and follow the instructions of the angel of The Lord?

Maybe we cannot be entirely sure but, this author suggests it was the quoting of The Holy Scriptures. The angel quoted Isaiah (7:14) saying, "*Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel, God with us*". Joseph was a Jewish man of faith and no doubt had heard this wonderful prophecy from God, through Isaiah, many times in the temple. It was God's voice being affirmed and endorsed in Joseph's devoted and loyal heart that stirred him to consider his dream to be authentic and thus caused him to obey the directions of the angel.

What does this mean for us? We can admire and appreciate the true and genuine persona of Joseph. We too can be a loyal and devoted servant of God, through His Holy Word. When we read and hear The Holy Scriptures, we too can be spurred to obedience and be incited to action like Joseph was; simple, loyal, humble action that helps The Lord grow His kingdom. When it seems that The Word is asking us to do something strange, we too can obey and do the thing that seems to fly in the face of conventional worldly wisdom. Joseph did and look what he helped to make happen.

Prayer:

Lord God, how Holy and powerful is Thy word. We read it today and marvel at the effect it had upon a young Jewish man whom You chose well to be earthly father of Your Son, Jesus, The Messiah. He had heard Your Words read in temple worship and when You sent Your angel to comfort him, he listened. May we be as faithful, O Lord. When we are given direction by You, through The Holy Spirit, may we be as obedient and faithful as Joseph that You may accomplish Your good, pleasing and perfect will for the people of God in Your kingdom. We praise You for Your wisdom and majesty in selecting a wonderful couple of saints to make the birth of Jesus come to fruition. Through Christ our Lord we laud and magnify Thy Holy Name and Word, Amen.