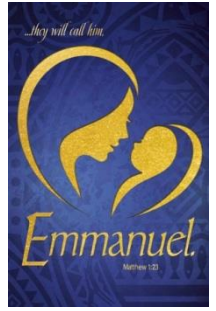




They will call him Emmanuel

Week 3



Last week we looked at how Mary was given the message about the baby she was carrying and the plans that God had for her to be his mother. We considered what Mary might have been afraid of when she received the message from the angel. One of those fears was what Joseph her fiancé might have said and done when he heard her news. This week we look at God's plan from Joseph's point of view.

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

Matthew chapter 1 verses 18-25

Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. But just when he had resolved to do 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 as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

All this took place to fulfil what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us." When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

Now we have a clear picture of what Joseph decided to do. He was not going to humiliate Mary but he wanted to follow the letter of the law and decided to marry her and then quietly divorce her, so sparing Mary the embarrassment of bearing a baby when she was not married. But God had other plans and once again the angel was dispatched to Joseph and in a dream explained that Joseph should not be afraid to take Mary home as his wife because the virgin was to bear a son and Joseph was told to call him Jesus, because he would save his people from their sins. See how God was addressing all the points that would have been causing Joseph to be afraid? Mary was a virgin – Joseph had not had a part in the conception of the baby Mary was carrying. Joseph was to continue their plans to be man and wife. Joseph was told what to name the baby – Jesus; he will be called Emmanuel which means "God with us". The last two verses of this passage tell us that when Joseph awoke he knew that he had to follow the instructions the angel had given him.

Just like when Mary was visited by the angel, the message began with “Do not be afraid”. God knew that both Mary and Joseph needed to be reassured, so he began with the message “do not be afraid”. Then, in both cases the angel went on to explain God’s plan and despite the extreme information in that plan Mary and Joseph opened themselves up to be “players” in that plan. Mary and Joseph could have said they wanted no part in these plans, and who knows what might have been the outcome. But their trust in God was complete and they committed themselves whole-heartedly to God’s plan. They trusted God implicitly.

I will say of the LORD, “He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.” (Ps 91 v2)
He has delivered us from such a deadly peril, and he will deliver us again. On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us (2 Cor 1 v10)

God our Father, help us to imitate the faith and trust of Joseph, the earthly guardian of your divine Son Jesus, and to seek your help in all our troubles.

Immanuel, God with us

1. How many titles that Jesus has been given can you remember? E.g. Immanuel
2. Can you remember any occasions when you have decided to follow a particular path, but then felt that God wanted you to go a different way?
3. What did you do about it?
4. Have your friends ever suggested doing something naughty, but you knew it would not be something God would want you to do about it?
5. How did you resolve that dilemma?
6. Why don’t you commit 2 or 3 verses to your memory, so when you are afraid, you can be reminded that God is with you and you should trust him to be with you.
Psalm 91 verse 2; Matthew ch 1 verse 23;
2 Corinthians ch 1 verse 10



Further resources from the church porch as well as

www.nasebygroup.org

www.churchofengland.org/resources/preparing-advent-christmas-2020-comfort-and-joy

www.facebook.com/AdventonlineFaith/