



## The Unpredictable Work of God

Matthew 1:18-25

## Luke's Account of Christ's Birth

- Seen through the lens of Mary – “Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart.”



## Matthew's Account

- Seen through the lens of Joseph
- Mary, the contemplative; Joseph, the person of action
- Joseph is the first person in Matthew to align himself with Jesus



## Joseph's Dilemma

## Mary is Pregnant

- Marriage process: Engagement – Betrothal – Wedding
- They are in the betrothal stage, Mary is still living at home



## Joseph; a Righteous Person

- Righteous (v19) means to be committed to the Torah in all aspects
- In this case the woman is to be divorced (Deuteronomy 22:13-30)



## An Ethical Crisis

- Joseph loves Mary but is committed to the Torah – a frustrating experience for Joseph
- The reality that faith takes place in complicated times



God's Intervention

## A Dream

- An angel appears & tells Joseph the truth – Mary's child is through the Holy Spirit (v 20)



## “Do Not Be Afraid”

- You are not breaking the Torah by keeping Mary as your wife



## A Higher Righteousness

- Joseph is called to transcend the old ways for God's new work in Jesus
- He is on a new journey to follow God – the path of discipleship



## Choices

- We are all called to make our choices for God
- In complex times we need to keep focused on God
- At times that means taking risks in following Jesus



Mary's Child:  
Emmanuel, Jesus

## Emmanuel

'Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel', which means, 'God is with us.'

Matthew 1:23



## Emmanuel

- Translated 'God with us' taken from Isaiah 7:14 – originally speaking of Hezekiah, the son of Ahaz
- Ultimately refers to Jesus Christ



## God Travels With Us

- God wants a close relationship – not a long distance one
- A daily conversation



## Jesus

She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.'

Matthew 1:21



## Jesus

- Joshua (Hebrew) meaning 'salvation' or 'God saves' – "He will save his people from their sins"
- Jesus' mission is redemptive & spiritual not nationalistic

## A Ministry of Reconciliation

- Jesus comes to deal with our sins – reconcile us with God
- It is a ministry of love



He is born in Bethlehem in order that He may be born in us. He gives Himself to us as a child in order to share with us not only His infant smiles and caresses, but above all His very birth and infancy.



He is born Son of Man in order that we may be born sons and daughters of God, our souls being Bethlehems in which He is born "for us."

Thomas Merton



Going Forward

## Full Obedience

- Joseph is a model of faith
- He mirrors his Old Testament namesake, Joseph, who saves Israel from disaster



## Jesus, Who Saves Us

- He becomes God's expression of love
- Jesus will never leave us (Matthew 28:20)



## Our True Home

- Finding our rest in the arms of God - our ultimate longing is only satisfied in God
- "Our hearts are restless until we find our rest in God"  
(Augustine)

