

**Life Group Notes**

**Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**Speaker:** Sean Green

**Title:** Joseph & Jesus

**Passage:** Matt 1:18-25

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Read **Matt 1v18-25**.

In Jewish culture of the first century, arranged marriages were the norm. Parents would agree matches, the couple would be introduced, be betrothed, then have a yearlong engagement. It was during this period that Mary becomes pregnant. This is a big issue, promiscuity in their culture was taboo, as was pregnancy outside marriage. Joseph was innocent, so understandably decides to divorce her. But quietly, trying to limit the shame that was coming inevitably coming Mary's way.

And then God steps in. As a descendant of David, he's caught in a much bigger story. His role in God's story was to be driven not by comfort but obedience & sacrifice; not in the conception but in the adoption. His obedience brings Jesus into the lineage of King David and prophetic expectation of that.

**#1 Incarnation.** The supreme miracle of Christianity is not the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, but the Incarnation. For Jews, God was the grounds for the universe existing, He was not part of it. God was infinitely transcendent above Creation, not to be found within it. The beginningless, all powerful, Creator of the universe took on a human nature without loss of deity, so that the son of Joseph was both fully divine and fully human 2 Cor 8v9 best explains both the 'fact' and the 'meaning' of the incarnation The incarnation is not simply a wonder of creation but a marvel of grace (He become poor so he could make us rich).

**#2 Encounter.** Joseph is in the middle of a 'family-honour' crisis, yet God breaks in powerfully. God does things like that. Powerful encounters come in different ways: sometimes in ways that seem dramatic, like dreams, or angelic visions. But most powerful encounters with God come in the small, every day, non-dramatic, yet no less powerful ways: Most of the change come from moments that are like a small amount of leaven being kneaded in a batch of dough.

**#3 Movement.** As a 1<sup>st</sup> century Jew, Joseph was well versed in the importance of avoiding sin; the importance of distancing yourself from those who sinned. If he married her, they would be second-class citizens forever. It required a visit from an angel to change his heart, give him courage to move towards messy. The example of Jesus, and that of Joseph, shows us that God wants us to move towards what we think is "messy".

**Questions:**

1. Where is the 'wow' in the incarnation for you?
2. When was your last powerful encounter with God? Share what happened.
3. Sin always creates mess but not all mess is sinful' – discuss.
  1. and on the authority of God's Word?