



ADVENT

— Hope. Love. Joy. Peace. —

Key points

Think back through the message.
What stuck out?

JOSEPH, THE UNSUNG HERO

Isaiah 7:10-16; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Romans 1:1-7; Matthew 1:18-25

A “hero” is a person that from a position of weakness displays courage

Isaiah 40:29 *“He gives power to the weak, and to those who have no might He increases strength”*

JOSEPH IS A MAN WITH A DESTINY

- Matthew 1:20 *“son of David”*
- John 1:11
- Matthew 1:19 a “faithful”, “just” or “righteous” man

God is the God of generations

- Hebrews 13:8
- Psalms 135:13
- Psalms 145:13a
- James 1:17

Joseph was a person that God could intrude on

- Matthew 1:19
- Amos 3:3

“God created this game of life and only when we play it His way can we find purpose and happiness” (Lane Adams)

“The hardness of God is kinder than the softness of men, and His compulsion is our liberation.” (C.S. Lewis)

Examining Joseph’s character

- Matthew 1:19 *“faithful”*
- 1 Corinthians 13:4-7

JOSEPH AND THE WILL OF GOD

- All of humanity’s redemption rests in the hands of one simple man
- Matthew 1:20 *“But after he had considered this...”*
- The moment Joseph accepts God’s will, he lays his integrity on the line

JOSEPH AND GOD’S PURPOSE

- Joseph considered God’s purpose to be holy
- Matthew 1:25
- Joseph understood that he was encountering a miracle
- Joseph greatness is found in his willingness to serve God
- Matthew 20:16
- Matthew 20:25-28
- 1 Corinthians 1:9

Seeing God’s Plan

Joseph had a very important part in the birth of Christ. Our salvation depends on Mary’s obedience to the will of God. It also depends on Joseph’s. Our own obedience is very important too. It all happened to fulfil what the prophets had foretold. God knows everything; plans everything. It is all for our good and we can accept it all in peace.

What do we know about Joseph? That he loved Mary so much that he suppressed his doubts about her chastity and allowed himself to be regarded as the father of her child, knowing that he wasn’t (when Jesus took the floor in the Nazareth synagogue [Luke 4,22], the begrudges remarked: “Is not this the son of Joseph?”); that he brought up that child as his own, despite great difficulties and dangers, particularly at the start; that he taught him his trade; that he loved him; and that Jesus’ virile health as an adult (physical stamina, courage, strength of purpose and attractiveness to women, men and children) is proof of good parenting by his foster-father. Joseph is the obvious patron of adoptive fathers.

Advent is seldom seen as a time of the Holy Spirit, but in the annunciation to Joseph, and to Mary earlier, the Spirit is alive and at work. In a mysterious, miraculous way, known only in faith, the Spirit’s action brings the gift to the world of the God-person, the human in the divine and the divine in the human in a totally physical and spiritual way. In the humanity of Mary, Jesus is growing, from embryo to child. In the faith of Joseph, the call first came to all of us to believe the mystery. In prayer we might picture Mary and Joseph talking together about all that has happened and picture the Holy Spirit in the air, in the love and in the atmosphere around them. Bring that presence of the Spirit into your day today.

The Spirit of God was seen as the source of all creation and of all human life. So, just as God created all that exists in the heavens and the earth, now, through the power of God’s Spirit, Jesus is conceived in Mary’s womb by a particular, concrete, and special case of God’s creativity.

The birth of any child brings with it a sense of awe and wonderment. Therefore, can we share a sense of awe and wonderment at the incredible fact that God becomes human in a baby boy?

