

12-25-22 Message
JOSEPH WAS A JUST MAN

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just [man], and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

Matthew 1:20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

Matthew 1:21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus: for he shall save his people from their sins.

Matthew 1:22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying,

Matthew 1:23 Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us.

Matthew 1:24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

Matthew 1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

LESSONS FROM THE JOSEPH & THE CHRISTMAS STORY
JOSEPH WAS A JUST MAN

Just yesterday someone asked me about Joseph and what we could know about Joseph in the Bible. We do not know a lot about Joseph but probably the greatest insight we can get is from this verse:

Matthew 1:19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just [man], and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily.

We read that Joseph was a just man..

dikaios, dik'-ah-yos; from 1349; equitable (in character or act); by impl. innocent, holy (absol. or rel.): -just, meet, right (-eous).

----- Dictionary Trace -----

dike, dee'-kay; prob. from 1166; right (as self-evident), i.e. justice (the principle, a decision, or its execution): -judgment, punish, vengeance.

The word just implies he was Holy righteous and a man of proper discernment.

This verse tells us more about Joseph than any other verse in the Bible...

The Christmas story is the story of how Jesus the Christ.. came into this world.. He was born of a virgin.. conceived not by a human father.. but of the Holy Ghost..

We can only surmise.. how this news come to Joseph..

I would assume it was told to him by Mary.. and she would have told how that the angel appeared to her and told her about the supernatural event..

The Scripture says..

Matthew 1:18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

SHE WAS FOUND TO BE WITH CHILD OF THE HOLY GHOST..

How was she found... he was told.. and I would assume he was told by her..

Luke 1:26 And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth,

Luke 1:27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name [was] Mary.

Luke 1:28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, [thou that art] highly favoured, the Lord [is] with thee: blessed [art] thou among women.

Luke 1:29 And when she saw [him], she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be.

Luke 1:30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God.

Luke 1:31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

Luke 1:32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David:

Luke 1:33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Luke 1:34 Then said Mary unto the angel, **How shall this be**, seeing I know not a man?

Luke 1:35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

Luke 1:36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren.

Luke 1:37 For with God nothing shall be impossible.

Luke 1:38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

NOTE HER REACTION

HOW SHALL THIS BE????

Luke 1:34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man?

Now Joseph would say the same thing..

HOW CAN THIS BE??? He must have asked the same question and concluded there had to be another man..

Mary comes and says.. I am with child but not through a man.. but of God..

According to the Bible.. the way Joseph dealt with Mary earned him the title of being a Just.. man.. So it is today the way we deal with matters in this present life.. could earn us the title of being just people. We want it said of us.. that we are a just

**ARE YOU A JUST MAN
ARE YOU A JUST WOMAN
ARE YOU A JUST PERSON..**

I. NOW THE BIBLE SAYS THAT JOSEPH WAS A JUST MAN ..

1. JOSEPH WAS CALLED A JUST MAN BECAUSE OF HOW HE HANDLED THE NEWS OF MARY'S PREGNENCY AND HOW HE PLANNED TO DEAL WITH IT..

Now in Joseph's mind.. he believed Mary was guilty of fornication .. She had been unfaithful to him.. he had two options..

In his mind he had two options only

**A. Have her punished and make a public example of her..
She would have been stoned to death ..**

B. Or he could put her away privately and let it go..

NOW THE BIBLE SAYS THAT BECAUSE HE WAS A JUST MAN .. HE CHOOSE TO NOT MAKE A PUBLIC EXAMPLE OF HER.. HE DECIDED HE WOULD PUT HER AWAY PRIVATLEY

This was the loving thing to do..

I Peter 4:8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves: for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

Note..

When we think of justice we think of punishing those who do wrong.. Justice and mercy must be properly balanced..

His justice and mercy were balanced..

How is it that the Bible attributes to Joseph the term ..
A JUST MAN..

I would think it would say.. a Merciful man..

A just man would have demanded Justice.. don't you think

He could have said.. what kind of example would this be to other women ..
People need to learn this is not the right way to act..

NOTE.. at this point.. he had decided to put her away and keep this matter private..

Proverbs 10:12 Hatred stirreth up strifes: but love covereth all sins.

Proverbs 17:9 He that covereth a transgression seeketh love; but he that repeateth a matter separateth [very] friends.

NOW I WOULD THINK IT WOULD SAY JOSEPH WAS A LOVING MAN..

HE ONLY HAD TWO OPTIONS AS FAR AS HE WAS CONCERNED..

THE WORD JUST MEANS .. TO DO WHAT IS RIGHT.. OR TO DO
RIGHTEOUSNESS..

In other words a just man is a man that is righteous and like God..

Do you realize that if God were to deal with everyone who does and did wrong.. then
there would be a lot more disasters.. and destruction in this world..

The fact is that when it comes to disasters and trials this world receives far less than it
deserves.

Lamentations 3:22 [It is of] the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed,
because his compassions fail not.

Lamentations 3:23 [They are] new every morning: great [is] thy faithfulness.

Lamentations 3:39 Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the
punishment of his sins?

I am amazed that God is and has been so merciful to our nation...

However God is just and he does not just ignore man's sin and transgressions.

Exodus 34:6 And the LORD passed by before him, and proclaimed, The LORD, The LORD God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,

Exodus 34:7 Keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, and that will by no means clear [the guilty]; visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, and upon the children's children, unto the third and to the fourth [generation].

Yet the more merciful he is .. it seems the more wicked we get..
So when God's judgment does come no one can argue that it is deserved..

So God's mercy love and forgiveness is perfectly balanced out with his justice (He will in no means clear the guilty). Joseph was not going to just let the matter go with Mary if she was guilty.

God's justice.. is tempered with his mercy..

Mercy is extended.. and then justice.. prevails.. because those who do not deserve mercy despise God's mercy and then it becomes evident to all that God is just when he condemns the guilty..

To be just we need to handle things like God in the area of forgiveness..
Then we will be called a just person..

2. He was a Just man because he was not willing to make her a public example..

He did not demand his rights.. nor seek to make her a public example

Since it was his choice as to what to do..

In his mind, making a public example of her would only serve his vengeance on her and he cared more for her than what good it would do to have her punished publicly.. To make her a public example would have been to bring her before the leaders and have her stoned to death. He could have demanded that!

Just.. men act like God..

Our God's justice does not operate apart from love and mercy and long suffering and his kindness.. . Those who do not deserve his mercy will despise it and they will bring condemnation to themselves which will be open and evident to all. We can guess and surmise a person's heart and guilt, but in time their actions reveal it..

Luke 8:17 For nothing is secret, that shall not be made manifest; neither [any thing] hid, that shall not be known and come abroad.

Romans 2:4 Or despisest thou the riches of his goodness and forbearance and longsuffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to repentance?

Romans 2:5 But after thy hardness and impenitent heart treasurest up unto thyself wrath against the day of wrath and revelation of the righteous judgment of God;

Romans 2:6 Who will render to every man according to his deeds:

When a person is shown mercy... and doesn't deserve mercy..
It become evident to all.. what they are..

But when we demand judgment.. and punishment.. for a transgression..
It would never be known what might have been if mercy was shown..
But worst of all .. it would never have been known whether a person would have repented under mercy....

God ultimately is seeking men everywhere to repent..

So just as God was longsuffering and merciful, Joseph was longsuffering and merciful and choose to do the loving thing.

3. JOSEPH WAS A JUST MAN BECAUSE HE WAS ACTING LIKE GOD. IN THIS CASE, HE IS THERFORE CALLED A JUST MAN..

His decision to put her away privately and not make her a public example is the reason he is called a just man..

He made the right decision in this case..
Assuming she was with Child because of infidelity..

The Bible commends his decision .. of not demanding she be put to death..

By saying he was a just man and deciding to keep this matter private Joseph was commended of God for this decision. God knew Joseph was a just man and knew this would be how he would react.

So God made it known to Joseph that Mary did nothing wrong.

II. JOSEPH WAS ALSO A JUST MAN AND HANDLED HIMSLEF PROPERLY AFTER HE WAS CONVINCED MARY WAS WITH CHILD OF THE HOLY GHOST

GOD INTERVIEND..JOSEPH WAS TOLD THAT MARY WAS NOT UNFAITHFUL..
SHE WAS WITH CHILD OF THE HOLY GHOST..

Now after the Angel appeared to Joseph.. and he was convinced that the story was true.....

She was with child of the Holy Ghost..
After this.. he made another proper decision ..

HE TOOK HER TO BE HIS WIFE.. AND AGAIN HE WAS VERY QUIET ABOUT EVERYTHING..

He was a just man and he married her privately
He did that which was proper..

Love does not behave itself unseemly..

Somethings are better not made public because wicked men have wicked minds.. I believe he did not have a public wedding ceremony..

He did not need one, he was already married to Mary, he just took her to be his wife and did the proper thing and kept everything private.

I grew up as a Roman Catholic, my whole family was Roman Catholic. I got saved and was baptized in a Baptist church and learned Biblical doctrine and understood the concept of Biblical separation. This is a doctrine that is not taught any more. The doctrine of Biblical separation is that as a believer you are commanded to not be like the world.

I Peter 4:3 For the time past of [our] life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries:

I Peter 4:4 Wherein they think it strange that ye run not with [them] to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of [you]:

I believe the Bible teaches there are certain things that a believer should not be involved in. We should not do some of the things the world does. Notice it says we should not be involved in being given to excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, .. etc..

After I got saved I was taught that true believers should separate from alcoholic beverages..

Proverbs 20:1 Wine [is] a mocker, strong drink [is] raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.

Habakkuk 2:15 Woe unto him that giveth his neighbour drink, that putteth thy bottle to [him], and makest [him] drunken also, that thou mayest look on their nakedness!

Now my parents owned a bar, and they were all Roman Catholic, and would not understand my stand on drinking, and in my family weddings included drinking and lots of it. So if my wife and I had a public wedding it would have brought attention to the fact that I was against my parents business and would have made a public spectacle of it. So the best thing to do was to forgo the big shindig. Love does not behave itself unseemly. I did not want our wedding to be an occasion to cause my parents business to be a point of contention between the Catholic faith and the Baptist faith. Between my new conviction of Biblical separation, and my family's desire to make our wedding an occasion to get drunk and have an excess of banqueting and reveling and drunkenness. So even if we had a wedding without the liquor, I am sure my family would have brought it in coolers, or after the meal they all would have gone down to my parents bar and had their own reception and laughed at the fact that we had a dry wedding.

So I did not let our marriage be an occasion for evil behavior, and I avoided the whole matter and had a private wedding. My wife and I went to the church, and had a private wedding, and when we came back from the honeymoon my friend Ronnie Butko had a small party at his house.

This was the just thing to do in our situation. I know a lot of people that make a wedding a point of contention and they start out their marriage with contention and strife between families, and traditions, and other things.

Joseph did not expect people to understand that Mary was pregnant from the Holy Spirit, He did not make her pregnancy a spectacle, or point of theological contention. Something that needed to be scrutinized by the rabbi's and questioned by evil men's thoughts. He took her to be his wife privately.

A just man does not demand his rights. He does the best thing knowing the wicked world we live in, and understanding what is best for all concerned.

He did not expect others to believe what he had a hard time believing..

He did the right thing with taking Mary to be his wife privately and forgoing the public ceremony. After all what kind of ceremony did Adam and Eve have? How about Rebekah and Issac? Two people could be married and forgo all the traditions of men as long as they make it legal under God's law and man's law.

Now I personally do not understand people who have been divorced have multiple children from multiple marriages, and then want to get remarried, and then think they have to have a big elaborate wedding acting like they are virgins, and getting married for the first time. What are they going to do invite their previous in-laws, and previous spouses. I personally think they should keep the matter private. Love does not behave itself unseemly. I counsel people in these situations to go get a marriage license have a private ceremony and tell people they got married, and let their friends decide if they want to throw a party for them.

I don't understand people who are living together for years, not getting married, because they cannot afford a big wedding. Doesn't make any Biblical sense. It does cost hardly anything to get married. Go get the license find a JP or someone who can legally marry you, and get married. Make it right under God and don't worry about having this big wedding.

In the day that Joseph lived, marriage was a civil and religious contract between a man and a woman. Anytime that the man felt ready he could come and get his bride. He usually did so when he could afford to do so. He was settled financially, and had a home he could take his bride to etc.. So he made preparation, got a home, and then when all things were ready he called his friends and announced a day when he would come and get his bride. That was the wedding ceremony. It was expected that the woman would be faithful to her husband during this betrothal period. If she was not then the husband could write out a bill of divorcement and her unfaithfulness was grounds for divorce. This is what Jesus meant when he said,

Mark 10:2 And the Pharisees came to him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away [his] wife? tempting him.

Mark 10:3 And he answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you?

Mark 10:4 And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put [her] away.

Mark 10:5 And Jesus answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept.

Mark 10:6 But from the beginning of the creation God made them male and female.

Mark 10:7 For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife;

Mark 10:8 And they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh.

Mark 10:9 What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

Mark 10:10 And in the house his disciples asked him again of the same [matter].

Mark 10:11 And he saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his wife, and marry another, committeth adultery against her.

Mark 10:12 And if a woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

Matthew 19:7 They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

Matthew 19:8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

Matthew 19:9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except [it be] for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

Matthew 19:10 His disciples say unto him, If the case of the man be so with [his] wife, it is not good to marry.

Matthew 19:11 But he said unto them, All [men] cannot receive this saying, save [they] to whom it is given.

Matthew 19:12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from [their] mother's womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the kingdom of heaven's sake. He that is able to receive [it], let him receive [it].

This bill of divorcement was what Joseph was thinking he needed to do with Mary. Notice, he thought she committed fornication during the espousal period. The disciples understood what Jesus taught, and thought it so strict that in their mind they thought it would be better for a person not to marry at all. Jesus latter clarified this and said, that not all men have the ability to live a single life. In one place Jesus actually said that when a man divorces his wife he causes her to commit adultery.

Matthew 5:32 But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

My question is how does he cause her to commit adultery. Jesus assumed that a divorced woman back in that day had no other option but to remarry and that remarriage was a sin against her first marriage and he called that adultery. I don't think it is a continual state of adultery as some teach. I think it was a one time act and then that second marriage is sanctified under the eyes of God through mercy and grace. Just like David committed adultery with Bathsheba and the first child could not be heir to the throne because he was a child through adultery. But afterwards David married Bathsheba and grace kicked in, and David had another child who was Solomon, and Jesus came through his line.

A woman back then could not go out and get a job, so she was forced to marry and Jesus assumed that when a man put away his wife, he put her in a situation where she had to remarry. That remarriage was a sin against the first marriage but grace kicks in and that sin can be forgiven by the grace of God. If that were not the case, then the church could not accept any divorced people into membership because they would be in a perpetual state of living in adultery. Some churches actually teach this. I do not believe it to be the case any more than it be that any person who has had a sexual relationship with a person is automatically married. There is a difference between fornication and adultery. Fornication is sexual activity outside of marriage. Adultery is sexual activity with another person when you are married.

Now remember this. Marriage is a sacred picture of our divine relationship with God. There is sexual adultery, and there is spiritual adultery. The one is a picture of the other. The worse sin is spiritual adultery. You are first of all united with God and the reason you out to be careful about how you live and cohabit with is because the sexual union is supposed to be a physical picture of our spiritual union with Christ.

I Corinthians 6:15 Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ? shall I then take the members of Christ, and make [them] the members of an harlot? God forbid.

I Corinthians 6:16 What? know ye not that he which is joined to an harlot is one body? for two, saith he, shall be one flesh.

I Corinthians 6:17 But he that is joined unto the Lord is one spirit.

I Corinthians 6:19 What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost [which is] in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?

I Corinthians 6:20 For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

Now the tradition of a wedding ceremony, has nothing to do with whether a couple is married or not. A man could take a bride and forgo all that.

Joseph wisely choose to forgo the public ceremony. We ought to keep some things private, and not make a spectacle of them.

Joseph chose to take Mary to be his wife privately, not to draw attention to the fact that she was with child. I personally think a couple that have been divorced should make their second marriage a private matter to not draw attention to the previous break up.

Did Mary do anything wrong.. NO.. Did Joseph do anything wrong.. NO.. but he did not expect people to understand and it was none of their business. And why make a public spectacle of the situation.

So in this matter of for going the public ceremony, Joseph was a just man.

III. He was a just man and he did not take her as his full wife till after Jesus was born.. He respected that which was sacred.. Mary was a vessel that was used of God for his purposes.. and she was not there for his ... God comes first.. in all matters

TIMING.. IS SACRED TO GOD.. Joseph was willing to wait to consummate the marriage with Mary as his wife until She fulfilled her role as being a vessel to bring forth Jesus into this world. She was God's vessel first! She belongs to God first!

One of the most important attribute of Godliness is the willingness.. to wait on the Lord.. Marriage.. is one of the greatest endeavors of our lives.. and sometimes.. God calls us to wait for his will concerning this step in our lives.. Would we be willing to wait no matter what?!!

Isaiah 40:29 He giveth power to the faint; and to [them that have] no might he increaseth strength.

Isaiah 40:30 Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall:

Isaiah 40:31 But they that wait upon the LORD shall renew [their] strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; [and] they shall walk, and not faint.

Timing.,. Joseph took on the responsibility of being a father without the privileges of fatherhood.. He took on the responsibilities of being a husband without the privileges of being a husband..

The biggest fault of young people.. is that they cannot wait.. on the Lord..

People are all about putting themselves first..

Today there is no sense of sacrifice for God..

Matthew 1:25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son: and he called his name Jesus.

Joseph was probably only in his twenties..

Mary was probably only a young teenager..

Today could you imagine two young people being this devoted to God..

God choose Joseph to be the earthly step father of Jesus because he knew what kind of man that Joseph was. He knew he was a just man a good man, a man who would believe Him. Not just any man could be entrusted with this sacred responsibility of having the Christ child come through his family and earthly home. He was a man that respected Holy things.

He was not a base man....

He was not a man who demanded his rights..

He was not a man wanted what was his..

He was a loving man who knew how to apply love to this unusual situation that only a person of faith could believe and understand.

He knew how to take on the responsibility of being Mary's husband and yet she was a vessel being used of God first. She was with child of the Holy Ghost. Can you wrap your mind around this. God used her as a vessel to bring into this world the Messiah Child. Most men would say.. wait this is my wife ..

He could have been bitter over this....

He could have said, she should only bear my children and none other.

No a just man understands, that we are not our own, we all belong to God.

You are not your own.. you belong first to God..
Your wife is not your wife first, she belongs to God first.
Your children are not your children, they are God's children first..

And sometimes people don't understand this. Someday God may take that wife that husband that child.. They do not belong to you they belong to God first.

Men you should not expect your wife to put you first.. God comes first

Ladies, you should not expect your husband to put you first.. God is first.

Parents, you should teach your children that God comes first..

Joseph understood this.

So someone asked me.. why is it that we do not know a lot about Joseph? Well we do know a lot about Joseph. We know he was a just man. That says a lot. We actually do not need to know anything more. He was a man used of God to step in and fulfill a role in those silent years when we don't know much about the life of Jesus. Joseph provided a home, a place for the Messiah to be raised and grow up in. He was a just man, and probably passed away before our Lord's public ministry. That is why we do not read about him. And the truth is when we do read about Christ's childhood we do find Joseph there. He was at his temple dedication, he was there when Jesus was 12 years old. Between the ages of 12-30 we do not know anything about the life of Jesus, and so we should not be surprised that we know nothing about Joseph during those years. I do think he did not cease to be a just man. This we can know and that suffices. Concerning Jesus we know he became known as a carpenter and the son of a carpenter.

Mark 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

Apparently like all just men, he was a goof father and taught his son his trade. Imagine back in the day owning furniture made by Jesus!

CONCLUSION

HOW DO WE COMPARE TO JOSPEH..
CAN IT BE SAID OF YOU THAT YOUR A JUST MAN OR WOMAN..

Joseph was a great example to us all in this area of being a just person!