

Matthew 1:18-25

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[0 : 00] We're going to finish up the first chapter, which gets us to verse 25. So Matthew 1, verses 18 through 25 will be our text this morning. If you remember, the Gospel of Matthew, while probably not the first one written for us historically, that more than likely was the Gospel of Mark, it is prominent and first in our New Testaments intentionally.

I think the Lord really was intentional about His compiling of the Gospels, compiling of the Bible as we have it sitting before us, not only did He move the men by the Spirit of God to write the Word of God, I also believe historically He moved in the hearts and minds of men in what we call the canonization of Scripture, putting together the Bible.

And I don't think it was happenstance or accidental that we have it this way, because when we end the Old Testament, we are in the position of the nation of Israel with this expectation of a coming king.

We are looking for a redeemer, a king, someone to deliver us and set us free. And when we open up the Gospel of Matthew, which depending upon your Scripture is either a cover page, or maybe you have a midsection of information there of the Intertestament time, but we know that over 400 years transpire from the last prophet of Malachi until we get to the Gospel of Matthew. 400 plus years of silence is there. And we have this story picked right up, and Matthew introduces us to the King of kings and the Lord of lords. Matthew is the Gospel of Jesus the King.

[1 : 33] He is Jesus Christ the Messiah. Very Jewish in its interpretation, very Jewish in its intended audience, but a lot of application to all people throughout all ages.

So we open up the Gospel of Matthew, and we are overwhelmed by the reality of who Jesus is. Last week, as we opened up the Gospel of Matthew, we began to see the family of the Messiah. So we were introduced to this family, and we saw the genealogy which Matthew recorded for us. And even in this genealogy, there was some intentionality in that God was intentionally including people we might not include.

And we saw the faults and the failures and the mistakes of this family. And we saw the unlikely characters that are recorded for us in Scripture, especially by Matthew, who is writing to a Jewish audience.

And we are introduced to all these people, and we know that there's a purpose and a reason for them being there, showing us that even with all of our faults and our mistakes and our mess-ups, we too are welcome into the family of the Messiah.

[2 : 32] And we see that, and we recognize that, hey, we belong here, or at least there is a place for us here. And now as we continue on, we're now moving into the wonderful appearance of the king, or to put it very clearly, his birth.

But what you will notice in the Gospel of Matthew is Matthew does not speak very much of his birth. Luke does that. Really, Matthew emphasizes his conception. And then we transport a little bit of time.

We go from conception into Matthew chapter 2, and the child is a little bit older, probably around two years old by the time we get into Matthew chapter 2. And we have the visit from the wise men, or the Magi from the east.

And we have all this time. So he kind of skips over. I don't want to say he skips over. He left out the portion that Luke records for us. Luke is a physician, so don't let it surprise you that Luke records for you things that have a little bit more detail in them, right?

So Luke records that for us. Again, God moving by his Spirit to give us a full account. All of these things, because I want you to know before we read it together, okay?

[3 : 39] When you open up the Bible, you're reading one great story. You're not reading a number of books, even though there are 66 books in the Bible. You're not reading 66 different stories.

You're not reading 66 different accounts. You're reading one great story, told over and over again, through different facets, from different viewpoints, from different angles. And you get the full, what we have recorded for us in the book of Hebrews, the final word of God, the full revelation of God. When we open up the New Testament, we have Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the four Gospels. So many of them, three of them are what we call synoptics. That's Matthew, Mark, and Luke. And synoptics is really easy to remember.

Similar, right? They have a lot of things in common. And we may say, oh, the Bible's just repeating itself, or there may be even differences. And then we get to the Gospel of John, and it's so different. We're not reading four different accounts of Christ.

We're reading the full picture, some say a four-dimensional view, of the life of Christ. We have the fullness of these things. So when we come to each one in particular, we stand amazed at what it is, and who it is that God led to record this event for us.

[4 : 46] So now, in Matthew chapter 1, verses 18 through 25, I want you to see the wonderful appearance of the King. Matthew had been employed by the Roman Empire as a tax collector, also known as Levi, to set at the table to collect money from his own countrymen to give it to the emperor, who is Caesar of Rome, and lining his own pockets a little bit at the time, too.

Most times, tax collectors were pretty well off because they could charge wherever they wanted to as long as they gave allegiance to the king of that day, which was the Roman emperor. Now, this one, who has met the Lord, who has followed the Lord, who has seen the Lord, says, hey, there's a greater king, and I want to tell you of his appearance.

I want to tell you about this king, the king of kings and the Lord of lords. So if you are physically able and desire to do so, would you stand with me as we read together the word of God recorded for us in Matthew chapter 1, starting in verse 18, going to the end of the chapter, which gets us down to verse 25.

Now, the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When his mother, Mary, had been betrothed to Joseph before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.

And Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to deceive her, planned to send her away secretly. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

[6 : 14] She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet. Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which translated means God with us.

And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son, and he called his name Jesus.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you for this day. God, we thank you for this great opportunity which you have given us to come together to read the word of God, to hear the word of God. And Lord, we pray now that it would be your word that speaks to our hearts and minds.

We pray that there would be a greater revelation of who you are and all that you have done, not only in history, but in our lives as well. We pray, Lord, that we would not come just seeking to gain information, but Lord, that we would gain interaction with you, that Lord, our lives would be transformed and changed through what takes place in this place this morning.

We pray as your spirit is present, that you would give us wisdom and guidance through this passage, and may you be exalted through it. We ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. I want you to see this morning the wonderful appearance of the king.

[7 : 28] The wonderful appearance of the king. We know the family that he has chosen to come in because Matthew introduces us to that. And if you remember, Matthew introduces us to the lineage of Joseph, not to the lineage of Mary.

This is why, if you open up the Gospel of Luke, you have another lineage recorded for you in Luke chapter 3, and there is some variation and some differences. Luke is a Gentile, riding to Gentiles, and in Gentile society, women had a little bit more prominent of a position, and they were at least a little bit more accepted, and Luke determines to send a lineage through Mary because that is the blood lineage.

He is the seed of a woman, not the seed of a man. Jesus has none of the blood of Joseph, though historically we see this written for us because this gives him a legal right to the throne.

And in Jewish society, to have a legal right to the throne, you had to trace your lineage through your father, your earthly father, back to the son of David because of the Davidic covenant, and we see this. But we know the family that he has chosen to, and now we're going to see his appearance or how he comes, and it is such a wonderful way in which he comes.

One thing that you will find in the Gospel of Matthew that is a little bit unique to it is Matthew is consistently pointing back to Old Testament prophecies, and there is this phrase that is often repeated, this was to fulfill, this was to fulfill, this was to fulfill.

[8 : 46] As a matter of fact, when we get over into the next chapter, and we see when the Magi come, and Herod wants to kill all the male children two years and younger, and this is why we believe that Jesus was probably around two years old at that time because Herod does this determined upon the exact timing that the Magi told him that the star appeared, and then he goes to Egypt, and then Matthew says, this was to fulfill out of Egypt I called my son.

And there's all these prophecies in the Old Testament that Matthew is recording. Find their fulfillment, their ultimate fulfillment in Jesus Christ. This is intentional and important because it shows us not only the Jewish heritage, but it shows us the full fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies because there is quite often a dual fulfillment role in these Old Testament prophetic works in that they could point to one thing that would happen very soon, but they were ultimately pointing to something else that was going to happen in the future.

And we see here, by the way, always let the Bible be the best interpretation of the Bible as Matthew shows us the greater fulfillment of Old Testament events. But we're getting ahead of ourselves because the first thing we need to look at is this wonderful appearance.

The first thing we notice about the appearance of the king is that it is directly connected to divine intervention. It is directly connected to divine intervention.

It says, now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, now we know this and we hear this quite often, but it bears repeating.

[10 : 15] In Jewish culture, to be betrothed was to be engaged. And when you were engaged with an individual, that engagement could last one, possibly two years. But an engagement was just as binding as a marriage, okay?

So in order to break off an engagement, you literally had to have a certificate of divorce. Because if you were engaged, essentially, you were married in Jewish culture. And that could last up to a year or longer.

And the reason that it would take so long, this bears a little bit of weight for us too, because the Bible says that we are engaged and we have the ring or the seal of engagement, which is the Holy Spirit.

Now we've been engaged for some time to our bridegroom, who is Jesus Christ. And when we wonder why the delay, well we need to go look at history and see why the delay in Jewish culture. Because what would happen is a groom would come and say, well I'm going to take that lady, or they would be sometimes prearranged, right?

And this is going to be my bride. And there would be this formal engagement ceremony. And then he would look at her and say, okay, you stay in your mother and father's house and I'm going to go back to my parents' house and I'm going to make an addition to my parents' house.

[11 : 20] I'm going to add on to their house and then when it is ready, when the home is ready, I will come back and get you and bring you back. This shows us a lot about interpreting scripture, right? Remember the ten virgins that had the lance with oil and half of them ran out and half of them had oil and there was the delay of the bridegroom.

It's great, right? You've got to understand this. And there's this processional and there was this rejoicing and this celebrating of the groom. His best man would go before him walking, the groom would be going along going, I'm going to get my bride.

I'm going to get my bride. For those of you who may be parties with wedding, this was with the best man's job. The best man was to go ahead of the groom saying, the groom is coming. The groom is coming. The groom is coming. Just a side note, I've often wondered, I've had the opportunity and the privilege to officiate several weddings.

What if we did that in our wedding ceremonies, right? Most people would say that it was kind of crazy because the whole reason he would do that was so that the bride would know she needed to get ready. And I don't mean this offensively and I don't mean this disrespectfully.

Because in the Jewish culture, in the culture that day, it was all about the groom. It was all about the groom. Okay? It wasn't about the bride. It was about the groom.

[12:26] He is coming to get his bride. He had done all the preparation. He had done all the work. He had done all the effort. His house was in order. He had a place. He was going there. The best man would go before delivering.

The groom is coming. The groom is coming. The groom is coming. Tell her, pack your things. Get ready. He's coming. He's taking you back home. And then they would officially, you know, get married. There would be this marriage and the marriage feast would last seven days, 14 days, however long they wanted to do it.

Again, the reason why when Jesus went to the wedding feast and they ran out of wine, it was just a big party, right? It was going on. It's not like a party of excess. It was a celebration, right?

But there was this understanding. You're going to be faithful to me and I'm going to be faithful to you while you're waiting on me. And now, Matthew introduces us to kind of a problem, but he's introducing us to the divine intervention because when Joseph went to go get his bride or before he was ready, before things were ready, all of a sudden, Mary shows up pregnant.

Now, that's a problem. That's a major problem because the text tells us when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph before they came together.

[13:36] Joseph says, I know it's not me, right? Before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. So Matthew introduces us to something that from the world's point of view doesn't look feasible, but is very feasible through biblical viewpoint.

He tells us, this is not Joseph's child. He makes it very clear. It's before they came together, she was found to be with child and he tells us how she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. And he says, this is not a result of infidelity.

This is not a result of any kind of mishap. This is not a result of any kind of mistake. Now, we know if we put this together with the Gospel of Luke, we see Mary has this interaction with the angel Gabriel and he calls her highly favored one and tells her about these events.

And Joseph, he wasn't part of that, right? He wasn't in that conversation. He wasn't there. He just realizes that his bride-to-be is now pregnant and he's trying to figure things out. But Matthew tells us that the way it came about was through the agency of the Holy Spirit.

And Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man, not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly. He said, what is that all about? Well, in Jewish culture, if someone was unfaithful, then they were to be stoned to death.

[14:46] But the only way they could be stoned is an accusation that had to be made. And the only one who could make an accusation in this point or this place is Joseph. No accusation, no charge could ever be leveled unless Joseph was to cast the first stone.

I stop right here because I want you to understand this. God doesn't mess up when he chooses the people he's going to use. There's a reason why God chose Mary and there's a reason why God chose Mary who was betrothed to Joseph.

Because some men would have lost their cool. Some men would have said, no way. But the Bible tells us Joseph being a righteous man, that is not perfect, not sinless, but one who was in a right standing with God decided to send her away secretly.

Now what if he had made a split second decision, leveled an accusation and began to throw away and you say, well what if, the what if, what if. Well the what ifs are never there because God doesn't make mistakes. God knows who he's choosing for the purposes and the plans he has.

Now I tell you that because the Bible tells you before you were saved, God had planned and purposed things for you to do in Christ. And when he chose you, he knew what he was doing when he chose you to equip you and gift you to do what he has called you to do.

[16:05] So if you say, I'm not going to do it, you are telling God he is wrong. Now that is a weighty responsibility. The reality is, though you may feel inadequate, though you may feel ill-equipped, though you may feel unworthy, God doesn't mess up when he chooses the people he uses.

Joseph could have very easily said, hmm, this is beyond me. But God was not only intervening in history through the Holy Spirit conceiving in Mary, he's intervening in history in this Joseph, this individual who was righteous and had a heart of contentment and had a heart of peace and had a heart of ease and understanding.

And then it says in verse 20, but when he had considered this, we see the divine intervention here. When he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord. We don't know if this is Gabriel. We know that Gabriel appears to Mary.

We don't know who this is, but we know that it's an angel of the Lord who comes with a message. An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, now this has always amazed me in these things, okay, and really we get it in Luke.

When we get to Luke around Christmas and you see those things, I don't know if we're going there in Christmas, but when you read the Christmas passage, you know, the angels of the Lord are telling the shepherds on the hill, behold, the Lord Jesus Christ has been born.

[17:26] It's always amazed me. The ones who are declaring his birth are actually serving the one who was born. They're the angels of the Lord declaring that the Lord has come. I know that kind of when we wrap our mind around it, he created them and commissioned them and sent them to tell them he was coming.

And it's the same thing with Joseph here. He commissions him to go ease Joseph. You say, well, how can he do that? He is now an infant in the womb of Mary.

Yeah, I know. Well, how can he? Uh-huh. The answer to that is he can. Okay, that's all you need to know. He can. Well, it doesn't make sense to me.

Good. It doesn't make sense to me either. I'm glad I'm not the only one who struggles with those things, but he can and he does. And we see this. But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife for the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

Again, not only do we see the divine intervention in the life of Mary, she was with child by the Holy Spirit. We also see the divine intervention in the life of Joseph, calming his nerves, reassuring him when he is considering and thinking of these things.

[18:39] We know that God doesn't choose haphazardly or by happenstance, but he chooses those who will respond to what he declares to them.

Because Joseph is considering these things according to his relationship with the Lord, his God. And the first thing we notice about the appearance of the king is he comes directly connected to divine intervention because it says in verse 23, it says in verse 22, now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet.

That's Isaiah, right? Isaiah. Remember when we opened up Matthew by looking at the prophet Isaiah and how we said that Isaiah is the one who speaks of the coming king and we said that Isaiah is constantly pointing to the king over and over and over again.

It just resonates in Isaiah of this coming king even amidst all this turmoil and this struggle and this destruction and all this stuff. It's always about the king. It's about the king. He says, Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel which translates means God with us.

So he points to that Isaiah 714 prophecy, right? Now I told you this before we need to understand it, bears repeating. If you were to take the gospel of Matthew and you were to speak to a Jewish individual and you were to try to share the gospel with a Jewish individual of Jewish descent and Jewish ancestry and tell them that Isaiah 714 was fulfilled in the coming of Jesus Christ, he would tell you go back and read the rest of Isaiah because Isaiah 714 is fulfilled in just a couple of chapters after that.

[20:04] As a matter of fact, in Isaiah chapter 8 that child is born and it's not speaking of this, that individual would say it's not speaking of a coming Messiah, it's not speaking of that and he would also tell you that in the book of Isaiah that the word virgin in the book of Isaiah is a very generic word and it literally just means young lady.

It really has no clear pointing, it just means young lady and that Isaiah more than likely says that young lady over there because the king, Isaiah declared to the king these things are going to happen, the Assyrian empire is going to fall and he says, king command me to give you a sign and I'll tell you that these things will happen.

The king said, oh, I'm not going to ask God for a sign. Now, let's just stop right here. If God tells you to ask for a sign, don't in false humility say I'm not going to ask for a sign. Okay? God told him through Isaiah to ask for a sign and the king said, oh, I don't want a sign.

So Isaiah said, I will give you a sign. That young lady over there is going to have a son and before that son is old enough to eat curds and honey then this will happen. And he points to it.

Those things come about. Some people believe that he was maybe pointing to his own wife because he has a son. The wife's name is Prophetess. The Prophetess has a son in Isaiah chapter 8.

[21 : 12] Some people think maybe he's pointing just to some other young lady and these things bring their fulfillment and it's a sign. But what I'm telling you these things, okay, stop with me. In Isaiah, that word is very generic.

In Matthew, it's very specific. This is why I tell you that the best commentary on scripture is scripture. If God moved Matthew to tell us the ultimate fulfillment of the Isaiah 714 passage is the appearance of this Emmanuel, then that's what it is.

That settles it. Because Matthew doesn't use a generic word. When he says, behold, the virgin shall bear a son. He's not saying, behold, the young lady.

He's using a very specific word that says, a young lady who has never known a man intimately will bear a son and you shall call his name Emmanuel. What I'm saying, because there are many Bible scholars who seem to doubt the virgin birth of Christ.

This is a big rock issue. I tell you all the time, right? We have big rock issues, little rock issues. Little rock issues, we can differ on. Big rock issues, we put them in first. We've got to put them in our cup first.

[22 : 18] Big rock issues are big things I'm not going to change on theologically. I believe in the virgin birth of Christ because it fulfills all the scripture accordingly. Even in Genesis where it says, the seed of a woman, it was never the seed of a man.

I believe it. It is emphatically clear and I believe that Matthew here leaves no room for anything other than the interpretation of a literal virgin given birth to a son by the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit alone.

It is a result of divine intervention. Man had nothing to do with it. And that's comforting because the king comes because God wants him to.

Not because somebody had a baby. Number two, not only do we see the divine intervention, we see the declared purpose. The reason we have to spend so long on that one is because if it was God who commissioned and it's God in the flesh, right?

This is God himself being born and we'll have to flesh this out as we make our way to the gospel.

This is what you get when you get into gospels. You get deep theological truths you have to flesh out. And if it's coming, if the king's coming is a direct result of the activity of God and if his coming is a direct result of God himself taking on the flesh, then it is God alone who gets to declare why he's coming.

[23 : 36] Right? The creator is the only one who has the right to declare the purpose. If I create something and form something and fashion something, then I alone have the right to tell you what that thing is to be used for.

Now, you can use it for whatever you want to use it for, but if I tell you what it's used for, that is its intended purpose. And I get the opportunity to do that alone because I'm the one who made it, right?

I patented it. I designed it. I built it. It's mine. I can tell you what to use it for. I created it. No one else knows what was going on in my mind.

There's no doubt there, right? A lot of people don't know what's going on in my mind. No one else knew what I was thinking when I was putting it together. No one else knew what I had in mind. I alone had that and I alone could tell you why it exists.

Go to just about any farm in this country and you'll run upon some just obscure tool that you'll have to ask the farmer what is that for and he's going to tell you, well, I made that to do this. And while you might not ever see it again, you have to say, well, you know what?

[24 : 37] You're exactly right. That must be what that's for. And we see this here when we have the declared purpose. Why is she of the child by the Holy Spirit?

Look at verse 21. She will bear a son. So not only does God tell Joseph that the child comes through the Holy Spirit, he declares the gender to Joseph. She will bear a son and you shall call his name Jesus and he will save his people from their sins.

There's a declared purpose. It is a son. You shall call his name Jesus. Jesus is the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew Yeshua. Yeshua is the Old Testament equivalent. Joseph, it literally means Yahweh saves or the Lord saves.

Right? So we see this. Joseph's name was changed. If you remember in his interaction with all the things, it just means that Yeshua or Yahweh saves. And this is the same wording we have. His name to be called Jesus declares the name. Why? Because here's his purpose. For he will save his people from their sins. Now, in the original language, it reads like this. For he himself will save his people from their sins.

[25 : 41] That's very emphatic. For he himself will save his people from their sins. Not that he's going to be a part of the plan. Not that he's going to help with the plan.

Not that he's going to fill in the gaps of the plan. It is he himself who's going to do the saving. Right? He's not there to fill in the gaps. He's not there to be a part and portion of individuals' lives. He's not there just to help where they can't help themselves anymore.

It is he himself who comes to set his people free from their sins. Here's the declared purpose. Mary is with child by the Holy Spirit and the whole reason he is coming is to set his people free from their sins.

That is the whole reason. Right? The whole reason God intended to intersect man in history, to become man in the flesh, was to set his people free from their sins.

It wasn't just to come to show you what God looks like in the flesh. It wasn't just to come do a bunch of cool things and to walk on water and to feed a multitude and to multiply the fishes and the bread and to change the water into wine and to cast out the demons or to raise the dead and cause the blind to see, the mute to speak and the deaf to hear.

[26 : 48] He didn't just come to set the man who was bound by chains filled with this legion of demons who would break the chains to set him free and to kill the pigs when the demons went into the pigs. He didn't just come to do all those wonderful things.

He came for this purpose, to set his people free from their sins. All those things he did just declared the authority he has to do what he came to do, right?

All these signs and wonders, all these miraculous events, they are only there to validate the fact that he can do what he has declared he has come to do and that is set his people free from their sins because if he can say, son, or child, your sins are forgiven and everybody goes, oh, how easy it must be to say your sins are forgiven.

This man's paralytic. He's laying on a cot. They let him down through a roof. It's real easy to say your sins are forgiven and Jesus says, in order to show you that I have the right to forgive one of their sins, I say to you, young man, take up your bed and walk.

And the man stands up, picks up his bed and walks. All those things are just there to show us he has the right to do and the authority and the ability to do what God declares he's coming to do. He himself will set his people free from their sins.

[27 : 54] Now, the question is this, who are his people? Who are his people? Well, when we understand that he is the creator of all and the sustainer of all life, then that means all people are his people.

When he is the one who spoke it all into existence, he is the one who's formed and fashioned one. He is the one whose spirit and breath is in each and every living individual. He is the one that sustains us. The Bible says he created the world and he upholds the world by the power of himself. Then they're all his people. So why did he come? What's the declared purpose for the coming of this king? This king has come to set us free from our sins.

And if we try to use him for anything else, then we're not doing what God declared his purpose to be. If we want him just to make us feel good, if we want him to bless us and for everything to go easy for us, if we want him just to meet our needs and never be our Lord and Savior, if we're not doing exactly what God declared he was coming to do, if we're not saying, oh Lord Jesus set me free from the sins which entangle me, then we're not calling upon him to do what God declared he was coming to do.

This is the declared purpose. Third and finally, we'll end with here. We see the divine intervention and since it is God himself who intends him to come, he declares his purpose and now we are met with this thing because every time God intervenes in history and declares to man what he is doing, man is faced with a choice.

[29 : 30] Either he will disregard what God has said and he will count it as nothing and go on and live in his life like he has always lived his life or third point, he will live a life of determined obedience.

He will live a life of determined obedience because here's the reality. The reason we have these things recorded for us is not just so we can look at Joseph and say, oh, it must have been a hard time. Joseph was put in a tough spot.

Look at what he did. The reason we have these things recorded for us is because God intercepts each one of us at some point in time in history and God reveals to us what he is doing, often through his word.

Sometimes it's through someone declaring his word. Sometimes it's through someone coming and speaking to us. Sometimes it's through prayer. Sometimes it's through reading the word and meditating on the word of God. But God reveals to us what he is doing and he tells us why he is doing it.

And then we are met with the same options that Joseph is. Either we disregard what God is saying and say, well, that sounds crazy. I'm just going to go live my life how I want to live it and do what I've always been doing.

[30 : 35] Or we would determine to live in obedience. And look at what it says. And Joseph awoke. It literally means he got up. And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son and he called his name Jesus.

Seems pretty simple, right? Seems pretty simple. But we can read it like this. Joseph got up and did what God told him to do. Quite honestly, you know when the church looks different?

When the church gets up and does what God tells it to do. Just as a pastor, me being just plain honest with you. When the church awakens and says this is what God has said he wants to do with each one of us individually.

This is what God says he wants to do with us corporately. So let's get up and let's just do it. It seems pretty easy, right? It seems so simple. And so Joseph woke up and Joseph woke up and did everything God told him to do.

And it seems simple just like everything else we read in scripture. But think about this just for a moment. Joseph got up and took a pregnant lady as his wife on faith. We know that there are other people who knew of this.

[31 : 46] I mean, you have a hard time hiding pregnancies, right? We know that there are other people aware of this. So he was willing to take on the ridicule. He was willing to take on the name calling.

He was willing to take on all the uncertainty. He was willing to take on all these things. I mean, he's even willing to take on the fact that the child she's about to give birth to is Emmanuel. I mean, how insufficient of a dad must he have felt like?

And you know what? We don't read much of Joseph at all. All we read of Joseph is, so Joseph woke up and did all that the angel of the Lord commanded him to do.

That was it. That's the whole testimony of Joseph. Because in chapter 2, he falls asleep and the angel of the Lord warns him in his sleep. And Joseph woke up and did everything the angel of the Lord told him to do.

And then the angel tells him, okay, it's okay to go back. So Joseph got up and did what the angel of the Lord told him to do. The whole testimony of Joseph is this. Joseph just did whatever God told him to do. If it meant taking a pregnant lady and trusting the fact and living by faith that she is pregnant because the angel of the Lord has come upon her and she is conceived by the Holy Spirit and the child is in her, is God in the flesh?

[33 : 00] If it's that or if it's getting up in the middle of the night and taking my young child and my wife and fleeing and going to Egypt and living in Egypt for a while or if it's going back into Nazareth, not Bethlehem, but going on up to Nazareth, you know, a place where people would say nothing good comes out of Nazareth.

Joseph just did whatever it is God told him to do. Because Joseph made a decision at that moment of revelation to live a life of determined obedience.

obedience. The main question to all of this is, do we make that same decision? Because God is speaking today just as much as he spoke then, right?

God speaks throughout history. God is still speaking today to his people and God is still revealing to his people the things that he is doing. The question is, are we disregarding what he says and living our lives how we want to or are we waking up, getting up and determining to live a life of obedience for his glory and his alone?

Joseph got nothing out of this. Right? All the praise in history, all the adoration in history, even the misguided adoration and the misguided worship is directed to Mary.

[34 : 21] Joseph is just, well, okay, God says do it, I'm going to do it. Joseph had some other children, who didn't believe that their half brother Jesus was the Savior until after his death, burial, and resurrection.

They mocked him. Evidently, Joseph doesn't live very long because he's not at the cross. More than likely, he was quite a bit older.

All he said, I'm just going to do what God's commanded me to do. And we're confronted with the same thing. Will we live lives of determined obedience and that be enough?

That be enough. Needing nothing else. Longing for nothing else. Desiring nothing else. But for it just to be said, we got up and did what God told us to do.

Let's pray. Lord, we thank you. We thank you for this day. God, we thank you for your faithfulness, goodness, kindness, and mercy towards each one of us. Lord, we pray that you continue to lead us as your people for your glory.

[35 : 29] We pray, oh God, you would use us as you see fit in the work of the kingdom. Lord, in this place in history that you've put us. And we want to give you all the praise and the adoration for it.

And we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen.

Amen.