

Matthew 1:18-20
Trinity Baptist Church

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AM Services

An Encouraging Word From Dr. Tim Watson
Series- The Characters of Christmas: Joseph

Dealing With Disappointment

I want you to think back to a time when you experienced disappointment in your life. You had something planned that didn't work out. You had a dream of doing something, and that dream was not fulfilled. You placed a lot of trust in a person, and that person said something or did something that disappointed you. Some disappointments are small and easy to forget. Others can be deep and painful and may require some outside help to get over.

All of us face disappointments in life. For example, in 1978, a young man who was a sophomore in high school, tried out for the varsity basketball team. This young man was a sophomore at Laney High School in Wilmington, North Carolina. This sophomore was beat out for the only sophomore spot on the varsity squad. The only sophomore the varsity team carried that year in 1978 was a 10th grader named Leroy Smith. The other sophomore who was beaten out by Leroy Smith played on the Junior Varsity basketball team, and he made the decision not to whine, complain, or quit because he didn't make the varsity squad. This young man decided to take his disappointment and turn it into something positive. The young sophomore worked hard and improved his game while on the JV. **The next year this young man did make the varsity team and went on to play college basketball at North Carolina and pro basketball with the Chicago Bulls. This player, who won six NBA championships while playing for the Chicago Bulls, is Michael Jordan.** The point is: **All of us face disappointments in life.** (Clifton "Pop" Herrington was Coach; as sophomores, Smith was 6'7"; Jordan was 5'10".)

Look in your Bible to Matthew 1:18-20. The message is titled "Dealing With Disappointment."

Before Jesus was even born, someone who would be closely involved in Jesus' life faced unbelievable disappointment. The person I'm referring to is Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus. We usually hear a lot about Joseph during Christmas time. But the rich lessons we can learn from his life can be applied to our lives year 'round.

Matthew 1:18-20 (NIV)

This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit.

19 Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

20 But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

Dealing With Disappointment

The Bible tells us through different New Testament writers that Joseph was a carpenter by trade. For example, in Matthew 13:55 and Mark 6:3 when people were astonished at the teachings of Jesus in the synagogue they remarked, "Where did this man (Jesus) get this wisdom and these miraculous powers? Isn't he the carpenter's son? Isn't his mother Mary, and his brothers called, James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas?" (Matthew 13:54b and Matthew 13:55).

Different Bible commentators have speculated that Joseph possibly not only worked with wood and lumber but the word carpenter could also imply someone who worked with stones and metal. It's possible, that in addition to carpentry skills, Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus may also have been skilled as a stone mason or even someone who worked with metals such as a blacksmith. But the word "carpenter" primarily means "one who works with wood." As was the custom of that day Joseph passed along this trade, vocation and skill to his son Jesus.

Even though the Bible does not tell us a lot about Joseph, it tells us a little bit about his character in our text in Matthew 1:19. The Bible says Joseph was a “righteous, holy, and just” man.” In other words, God did not choose just any old guy off the streets of Nazareth to be the earthly father of Jesus. God chose a righteous, godly young man to raise the Son of God.

Verse 18 tells us Joseph was, “pledged, betrothed, engaged” to a young woman named Mary.”

During New Testament times, when a couple was pledged to one another, when a couple was engaged, this was a serious matter. In our culture, engagements can be broken very easily. But in biblical times, engagements were serious matters. It was a sign that a couple had thought long and hard about their decision to get married. In the Jewish culture of New Testament times, engagement was as serious as marriage. The man and woman were called husband and wife even before their marriage. It took a divorce to end the engagement.

Then the news came. Imagine the emotions in Joseph’s heart when he heard that Mary, the girl he had pledged his life to, was pregnant. He knew he was not responsible, and in human terms, the facts seemed to confirm the conclusion that Mary must have been unfaithful. Remember, it took a divorce to end the engagement. How disappointed Joseph must have been to have to consider such action. He thought the woman he trusted had betrayed him. The future mother of his children seemed to be a moral failure.

While we know everything turned out right in the end, Joseph set a good example for us to follow in dealing with disappointment.

The question is:

How Do We Deal With Disappointment?

I. By Joseph's Example We Learn To Be Merciful When Disappointed.

Joseph had two options: He could divorce Mary publicly or privately. She had committed adultery. At least that's what he thought. According to the Law of Moses in *Deuteronomy* 22:23,24, Mary could have been stoned for adultery. But notice in *verse 19* how Joseph handled the situation. "**Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her (Mary) to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.**"

By Joseph's example, we learn to be merciful when disappointed. If Joseph had been a hot-tempered, rash, or self-centered individual, he could have loudly defended his own innocence at the expense of Mary's feelings. He could have "hung her out to dry." He could have let her reputation be ruined by making sure that everyone knew the circumstances. You can only imagine the gossip that would have been spread about Mary. We know how gossip spreads in a town the size of Mount Pleasant, and how it can ruin a person's reputation.

Many times, when you and I are disappointed, we lash out. If someone hurts us or disappoints us, we come down on that person pretty hard. We say, "You shouldn't have done that. You shouldn't have said that." Many times when we're disappointed, we lash out at that person. We find it extremely hard to be graceful and merciful. But as we look closely into Joseph's life, we see he that he was merciful when disappointed.

Let me ask you:

When a fellow employee, co-worker disappoints you, how do you react?
When your spouse, children, or grandchildren disappoint you, are you merciful and graceful, or are you dead set on getting revenge?

If you live on this earth for any amount of time, you will find that people will disappoint you. You may not always be able to control the actions of other people, but you can choose how to react to that disappointment. You can choose how to react to the people who disappoint you.

Example: **BRING UP PICTURE OF KEN MEDEMA CHRISTIAN MUSICIAN WHEN**

I START TALKING ABOUT HIM.

Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:7, "**Blessed are the merciful, for**

they will be shown mercy."

How do we deal with disappointment?

By Joseph's example, we learn to be merciful when disappointed.

II. By Joseph's Example, We Learn To Be Patient When Disappointed.

Joseph did not act hastily. *Verse 20* of our text begins, "***But when he had considered this.***" What that means is, as Joseph reflected on this situation with Mary being pregnant, he did not act in an irrational way. He didn't make any rash or hot-tempered decisions. He was patient. He thought through the situation. He didn't fly off the handle.

Now we have no way of knowing how long he considered, thought, reflected on his situation. But the implication is that he didn't make a quick, irrational decision regarding his situation with Mary. Joseph was patient in the midst of disappointment. There is a great truth here: God never gets in a hurry and neither should we when dealing with disappointment. Oftentimes, when we act hastily, we live to regret our decisions. Give God time to work out His will in your circumstances. Learn to be patient when disappointed.

EXAMPLE: Bring up picture of Pilot Chelsey Sullenburger

Bring up picture of Plane that landed on the Hudson River (Flight 1549)

Bring up New Slide of quote, "A Delay is Better Than A Disaster."

II. By Joseph's example, we learn to be patient when disappointed.

I. By Joseph's example, we learn to be merciful when disappointed.

III. By Joseph's Example We Learn To Be Sensitive To God's Will When Disappointed.

Matthew 1:20

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit."

What was taking place was not what Joseph had planned. As a husband-to-be, I'm sure he had plans to settle down in a cozy little home. He would work in his carpenter shop and Mary would manage their home. They would raise a normal little family in a normal little town. God had different plans. His plans were far greater. But God's plans would begin with Joseph's disappointment.

When God wants to do something important in our lives, a lot of times God is able to do a great work that comes out of disappointment. Maybe it's disappointment over a relationship. Maybe it involves being passed over for a promotion. Maybe it's a financial situation that didn't materialize as we had hoped.

If we maintain our sensitivity to God's will, disappointment can be a stepping-stone to something great for us. Instead of an end, it can be a new beginning. Joseph could have seen this situation with Mary as the most devastating event to take place in his life. But because he was open and sensitive to God's will, God took his disappointment and called Mary and Joseph to be the earthly parents of Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world.

By Joseph's example, we learn to be sensitive to God's will when disappointed.

Conclusion

All of us here this morning have experienced setbacks. We've experienced disappointing situations. And while you may be tempted to become bitter or perhaps throw up your hands and say, "I quit," the Lord is saying to you, "I have something better for you. Be sensitive. Be in tune. Be open to My will." If you will be open and sensitive to God's will when you've experienced a disappointment, you will be amazed at what God will do in your life.

