

**Matthew 1:18-25** Joseph's Obedience

Joseph's obedience changed everything. Obedience isn't glamorous. It doesn't come with a standing ovation, and sometimes it isn't even recognized. But it is essential in a walk with God.

**Matthew 1:20a: "But as he considered these things...."**

- **Grammatical Usage:** "**considered**" or in the Greek, "enthymēthentos" meaning, "fervent reflection".
- **Literal Interpretation:** But while he was fervently turning the matter over in his heart and mind....
- **Contextual/Comparison:** God keeps His Word: God continually uses His Word.

A. Understanding **Matthew 1:20**

- "**After he had considered this...**" Joseph wasn't an impulsive man. He had to make a huge decision. **Matthew 1:19** tells us Joseph was planning to divorce Mary quietly to spare her public disgrace. He was a good man trying to do the right thing in an impossible situation.
- "**...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream...**" God spoke to Joseph through dreams multiple times throughout the nativity story. That's how God chose to communicate with him. God doesn't always communicate the same way with everyone. He speaks with us in ways we can understand, and He meets us where we are. For Joseph, it was through dreams. For you, it might be through Scripture, through wise friends, through a strong sense of peace, or through the conviction of the Holy Spirit or a combination.
- "**Joseph son of David, do not be afraid...**" The angel addresses Joseph by his lineage – "**son of David.**" This was significant because Joseph was a descendant of King David, which meant Jesus would legally inherit David's royal line through Joseph, even though Jesus wasn't biologically Joseph's son. The angel said, "**Do not be afraid.**" Taking Mary as his wife meant facing judgment, gossip, and misunderstanding from everyone around them. It meant stepping into a situation that didn't make sense by human standards, and it was natural to be fearful. But courage isn't the absence of fear: it's obedience in spite of that fear. Joseph was being called to trust God more than his reputation, more than his comfort, more than the family's standing, more than public opinion.
- "**...take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.**" The angel tells Joseph that Mary's pregnancy is supernatural – Joseph had to accept something he couldn't fully understand or explain. This is what faith looks like sometimes. It's trusting God when the situation doesn't make logical sense. It's obeying even when you don't have all the answers. It's believing that God's plan is better than your understanding. Joseph believed it. **Matthew 1:24** says, "**When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.**"

## B. Faith in action

So what does Joseph's story mean for you today? Here's how to apply it:

- **Obey even when it's hard.** Joseph didn't choose the easy path. The easy path would have been walking away, protecting his reputation and avoiding the scandal. But he chose obedience instead.
- **Trust God's plan over your logic.** Joseph had to accept something that didn't make sense by human standards – a virgin pregnancy. He couldn't prove it. He couldn't explain it to his skeptical neighbors. But he trusted God anyway. Sometimes God asks us to trust Him without having all the details figured out.
- **Don't let fear make your decisions.** The angel told Joseph, “**Do not be afraid.**” Fear was real, but Joseph didn't let that fear control him. God doesn't promise that obedience will be easy or comfortable. But He does promise to be with you every step of the way.
- **Your obedience impacts others.** Joseph's obedience wasn't just about him. It protected Mary from public disgrace. It ensured Jesus would have an earthly father to raise and teach Him. It kept God's redemptive plan moving forward. Your obedience matters too – not just for you, but for the people around you. When you follow God faithfully, it impacts your family, your friends, and your community. You never know who's watching, who's encouraged, who's blessed by your faithfulness...the witness God is using beyond the immediate circumstance.
- **Respond quickly.** Joseph didn't wait around. When he woke up, he did what the angel commanded. He trusted God and moved. The longer you delay, the greater the chance that doubt, distractions, or even disobedience can creep in and pull you away from what God wants you to do. Joseph models a powerful conviction of quick obedience. When God asks something of us, we may not always understand the “why” behind it. But it is not always about why; more importantly, it is about trusting the “who.” Joseph did not understand the entire process, but he trusted the God who was leading him. Rarely in life will God ever give us the complete picture, at least not immediately. However, once you know it's God leading you, then it is time to move and not put it off. There is a blessing in obeying without delay, following God's lead, and trusting He knows best, even when the request seems challenging or overwhelming. When you obey without delay, like Joseph did, that is when you will see how God's plan unfolds powerfully in your life.
- **Sometimes obedience requires sudden changes (Matthew 2:13-14).** God's call doesn't just require immediate obedience. Sometimes sudden and radical changes accompany it. Obedience may mean shifting your plans and embracing the unknown, all because you trust God sees what you cannot. Joseph teaches us to respond to God's voice, even if it requires sudden, hard moves. Your confidence lies in the fact that when God calls, He equips, He provides, and in every step, He is right there with you. You are NOT walking alone.
- **Great obedience requires great faith.** There is something unique about obedience. The more you obey, the more your faith grows. Each moment of obedience is an opportunity for God to prove Himself faithful and that's why when you walk in obedience it helps your faith to grow, your work blessed, your witness effective.

➤ **Conclusion:** To what God is obediently calling me to be and do...will I?