

**28 November 2021**

### **Matthew 1:18-25 – Following God: a teenage example**

*Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.*

*<sup>20</sup> But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup> She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”*

*<sup>22</sup> All this took place to fulfil what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: <sup>23</sup> “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).*

*<sup>24</sup> When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup> but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.*

### **Opening discussion – How we approach dilemmas**

*Question 1:* Think of any moral / serious dilemmas you’ve faced. What determined how you responded to the situation(s)? How do you reflect now when you look back?

#### **Joseph’s dilemma (v18-19)**

***Joseph is faced with a major life-changing dilemma.***

*Question 2:* Why was Joseph’s predicament so serious in view of the culture and norms of his day?

*Question 3:* Joseph is described in v19 as ‘dikaios’ in the original Greek meaning ‘just, upright, blameless, or righteous’ and this then drives his actions. What do you think is meant by this word in practice (see also Colossians 1:10)?

*Question 4:* What difference might there be between how the world views being righteous and how the Bible understands it? And do you think there is any difference in terms of how the Old Testament and New Testament present and understand righteousness?

#### **How God speaks (v20-21)**

***God speaks to Joseph in a dream through an angel and tells him that Mary has conceived through the Holy Spirit, he is to take Mary as his wife, and name the baby Jesus.***

*Question 5:* Do you think God speaks through angels today and to what extent do you believe that God is speaking to us? How do you feel / respond, for example, when someone says: “I’ve had this revelation from the Lord”?

*Question 6:* When and in what ways has God spoken to you? To what extent do you feel that you would hear God more if you listened more / sought his guidance more?

*Question 7:* How do you discern if it is God speaking to you (e.g. if you have a dream, how would you discern if it is from God or not?)

#### **How we respond (v24-25)**

***Joseph responds obediently to his dream without seeming hesitation. He takes Mary as his wife, waited till they were legally married before consummating the marriage, and names the baby ‘Jesus’. Joseph also obeys the next three dreams of his which Matthew records.***

*Question 8:* To what extent do you follow God’s promptings? Give examples where you have and haven’t and why. What motivates you to be obedient to God?

*Question 9:* Joseph is given the honour of naming the Messiah. To what extent do you feel that God in some way honours our obedience to him and why do you say that (give example)?