



SERMON REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Sunday, December 17, 2023, 3rd Sunday in Advent

Series: "Home for Christmas"

Sermon Title: "Extreme Renovation – Christmas Edition"

Pastor: Rev. Bryan Eckelmann

Primary Text: Matthew 1:18-25

Theme/Concept:

Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, had a sense of being a godly person, and he came to understand that our Sovereign God has plans beyond the normal. Joseph had a renovation in his understanding of God's will and righteousness. The story of Joseph is one of more than just rules and regulations, as Jesus came to fulfill the Law for mankind.

Icebreaker (for groups):

Have you ever had a renovation project in your home or on some property? How did it go?

Reflections on the Sermon / Interview:

What points stood out for you in this week's sermon? Did you hear something new?

Scripture Passage:

Matthew 1:18-25 (NIV)

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about^[a]: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet^[b] 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. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^[c] because he will save his people from their sins."

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"^[d] (which means "God with us").

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Reviewing the Scripture:

1. After the genealogy of Jesus Christ, given in chapter 1, what do we find in verse 18 regarding the earthly family of Jesus?
2. In verse 19 what do we learn about the character of Joseph? What kind of man was he? (Feel free to refer to other translations.)
3. According to verse 20 what did Joseph experience and what instructions did he receive?
4. Summarize verse 21 in your own words. What does Jesus' name mean?
5. What Old Testament prophecy do we find in verses 22-23? (Refer also to Isaiah 7:14)
6. How did Joseph obey the commands of the Lord as found in verses 24 and 25, and how was Joseph affected by the Angel's "visit"?

Going Deeper:

1. Do you believe that Joseph was encouraged by the Angel's words, "do not be afraid"? In what ways?
2. What does it mean to be a godly and a righteous person today in our communities? How should people see our home-life?
3. In choosing Joseph as an earthly father for Jesus what qualities and behaviors do you think God recognized in Joseph? Tie this into the extreme renovation in Joseph's thinking and actions at the conclusion of the passage.
4. In your own words explain how the coming of Jesus into the world fulfills the Law and requirements for godly people, and for those who do not believe in the Lord Jesus. (See also Matthew 5:17-18.)

Personal Reflection Questions:

1. Where does God have complete control in your life? Is there an aspect or an area where you need an extreme renewal and renovation?
2. Do you personally have an understanding of daily righteousness beyond just rules and regulations? Ask the Lord to help you in this regard.
3. How might your small group become a light to our community through serving? The upcoming New Year is a great opportunity to express your faith together while serving others.

Prayer:

Our dear Lord and Savior,

Thank you for providing salvation for us. We worship and adore you. Help us to live our lives with grateful hearts, honoring you in all that we do, Lord. Show us where we need renovation and renewal in our lives. May we be godly examples to those around us who need encouragement and renewal in this Advent Season.

In Jesus' name,
Amen.