

Introduction:

Have you ever considered what Joseph risked when he took Mary as his wife after she was found to be pregnant? You can find the sermon notes [here](#)¹ or listen to the sermon by clicking [here](#).²



Scripture:

Please turn to [Matthew 1:18-25](#) or [click here](#).

So What?

How much are you willing to spend on Christmas? What if Christmas cost you your reputation, standing in the community, business prospects and hope for career advancement and left you the subject of rumor and innuendo? That is what it cost Joseph to celebrate the first Christmas. Now, the law of Moses said that if a man's wife was caught in adultery she could be stoned.³ But the Bible says that when Joseph found out that his bride-to-be, Mary, was 3-4 months pregnant, he decided to divorce⁴ her “quietly.” At this point, an angel appeared to Joseph to calm his fears (1:20-23). Mary had not been unfaithful to him. Rather, God was performing a great miracle by fulfilling the promise of Isaiah 7:14 through Mary. God was himself was coming to earth. He was sending the Messiah to save the world from its sins. Being the righteous man he was, Joseph wasted no time in obeying God's instructions (1:24-25). He immediately took Mary as his wife and named the new baby, Jesus. Joseph chose commitment to God over the opinions of other people. Righteousness was more important than reputation. The story of Joseph reveals the high cost of Christmas. Embracing Christmas may cost everything we hold dear. Like Joseph, we should be willing to sacrifice our status, careers, possessions, convenience, reputation, and freedoms for Jesus.

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What Now?

1. Matthew 1:19 says “And being a righteous man and not willing to publicly disgrace her, Joseph planned to divorce her quietly.”⁵ It is important to see here that Joseph was indeed righteous, meaning that he was careful about following God's law, and that this is not in conflict with his desire to prevent Mary's public disgrace. It was because Joseph was righteous that he both dealt with the (perceived) sin while also showing mercy. Compare this with the actions of Jesus in [John 8:1–11](#). If we are righteous we will also be merciful, because our God is merciful.
2. Joseph did not hesitate, but immediately did what the angel told him to do. Faith and trust go hand-in-hand. When we know what God wishes us to do, let us not hesitate to do it, even if it seems foolish in the eyes of the world.
3. Immanuel means “God with us.” This was no ordinary baby, he was God. And yet he came as a human, being both fully God and fully man. To deny Jesus' deity is to deny God himself. We must always stand behind this truth, that Jesus was God who came in the flesh.

¹ <https://wheelsms.wordpress.com/2015/12/06/how-much-are-you-willing-to-spend-on-christmas/>

² <http://firstcentralbaptist.com/sermons/christmas.html>

³ Deuteronomy 22:20-21

⁴ Being engaged in the early Jewish culture was essentially being married without consummation. To call off the engagement one would have to divorce his betrothed.

⁵ Translated by Jack Gilbert