

**Matthew 1:1-17**

An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah,  
the son of **David, (Woohoo!)**

the son of **Abraham. (Yay)**

<sup>2</sup> Abraham was the father of **Isaac, (Yay!)**

and Isaac the father of **Jacob, (Yay!)**

and Jacob the father of **Judah (Yay!)** and his brothers,

<sup>3</sup> and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar,

and Perez the father of **Hezron, (Yay!)**

and Hezron the father of **Aram, (Who?)**

<sup>4</sup> and Aram the father of **Aminadab, (Who?)**

and Aminadab the father of **Nahshon, (Yay!)**

and Nahshon the father of **Salmon, (Yay!)**

<sup>5</sup> and Salmon the father of Boaz **by Rahab, (Yay!)**

and Boaz the father of Obed by **Ruth, (Woohoo!)**

and Obed the father of **Jesse, (Yay!)**

<sup>6</sup> and Jesse the father of **King David. (Woohoo!)**

And David was the father of **Solomon (Yay!)** by the wife of Uriah,

<sup>7</sup> and Solomon the father of **Rehoboam, (Boo!)**

and Rehoboam the father of **Abijah, (Yay!)**

and Abijah the father of **Asaph, (Yay!)**

<sup>8</sup> and Asaph the father **of Jehoshaphat, (Yay!)**

and Jehoshaphat the father of **Joram, (Boo!)**

and Joram the father **of Uzziah, (Yay!)**

<sup>9</sup> and Uzziah the father of **Jotham, (Yay!)**

and Jotham the father **of Ahaz, (Boo!)**

and Ahaz the father **of Hezekiah, (Woohoo!)**

<sup>10</sup> and Hezekiah the father of **Manasseh, (Boo!)**

and Manasseh the father of **Amos, (Boo!)**

and Amos the father of **Josiah, (Woohoo!)**

<sup>11</sup> and Josiah the father of **Jechoniah (Yay!)** and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

<sup>12</sup> And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of **Salathiel, (Yay!)**

and Salathiel the father of **Zerubbabel, (Woohoo!)**

<sup>13</sup> and Zerubbabel the father of **Abiud, (Who?)**

and Abiud the father of **Eliakim, (Who?)**

and Eliakim the father of **Azor, (Who?)**  
<sup>14</sup> and Azor the father of **Zadok, (Who?)**  
and Zadok the father of **Achim, (Who?)**  
and Achim the father of **Eliud, (Who?)**  
<sup>15</sup> and Eliud the father of **Eleazar, (Who?)**  
and Eleazar the father of **Matthan, (Who?)**  
and Matthan the father of **Jacob, (Yay?)**  
<sup>16</sup> and Jacob the father of **Joseph (Yay!)** the husband of Mary,  
of whom Jesus was born, who is called the **Messiah. (Woohoo!)**  
<sup>17</sup> So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations;  
and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations;  
and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah, fourteen generations.

### **Matthew 1:18-25**

1:18 Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

1:19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly.

1:20 But just when he had resolved to do 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 as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

1:21 She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

1:22 All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet (Isaiah):

1:23 "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel," which means, "God is with us."

1:24 When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took Mary as his wife,

1:25 but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son; and he named him Jesus.

### **Proclamation of the Word**

Matthew tells us the Christmas story in eight verses.

There are no Shepherds, no annunciations to Simeon and Mary, no traveling to Bethlehem for a census, no manger and stable.

Just eight verses and the Baby Jesus is birthed.

The genealogy of Jesus has one, very big problem.

He is to be the son of Joseph, from the House and lineage of David.

Mary has conceived outside of the normal means of getting pregnant.

For Joseph, this is beyond a normal challenge, it is a huge dilemma.

If we saw the scene played out on stage, the spotlight focuses us on Joseph, an encounter with the angel, and the naming of Jesus, which means God saves.

The lead actor here is Joseph.

Joseph is a righteous man, Matthew wants us to know.

### **Redirected Righteousness- the Holy Spirit is working**

This is a case of Redirected Righteousness and the work of the Holy Spirit.

Specifically, just when Joseph had made up his mind, the angel of God speaks.

Joseph struggled with what to do.

Pacing around his carpenter shop all day, fretting upon the stage of life's strange dilemmas, he could not think that day.

He had hammered his own thumb twice.

He was distracted and distraught.

This Mary whom he loved and was legally bound had totally messed up, in his mind.

She was pregnant with what appeared to be another man's child.

He knew what the law required for adultery, but he was not willing to have Mary humiliated.

So Joseph, being a just man, was willing to conspire against the law of the day,  
to do the truly right thing by Mary.

He would send her away quietly divorcing her and resolve to move on.

He decided not to stigmatize her (*digmatize, deigmatizo* in Greek).

It is at this moment of resolution that God intervenes.

Just when Joseph has a plan, the Holy Spirit leads in a different direction.

The Holy Spirit redirects.

Sometimes just when we have made up our minds,

a messenger of God or an angel may also try to break through to us.

God, through the power of the Holy Spirit, is still speaking.

We might have things all figured out and then the Holy Spirit goes to work.

Have you had your mind made up and something tells you to change course, even if it does not make sense according to convention? Perhaps, that is a Holy Spirit redirect.

God sends an angel to Joseph.

The angel doesn't come during Joseph's morning prayer time nor at the synagogue during worship.

The angel comes to Joseph through a dream.

Distressed by his life plan gone awry, his reputation on the line, and the hurt and betrayal, for Joseph, sleep was interrupted by strange dreams.

The angel basically said, "Joseph, this is not how you planned things and not at all what you expected, but it is going to be okay, okay?"

God is doing something daring and wonderful, despite the fact, that according to custom and law, you are in a socially unacceptable situation.

God dreams, too, of a time where all his children will know and trust Him.

And you are going to be a part of that dream, now, Joseph.

My people are destined for greatness and they will know me through my Son.

Mary is pregnant by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The Son will save my people from their sins."

I wonder if you have had a Holy Spirit redirect through a dream. Maybe the angel spoke through a dream because sleep is a time when we surrender all power and control. It is then that we can hear God most clearly.

Joseph thought his life plan was done for.

He could see no way forward that looked good.

But the angel spoke in his dreams, and Joseph woke up to start over.

Living out God's dreams require our daring trust.

Sometimes we lay down our ideas about how things should be and trade them for how God is working out things in a way we never imagined.

Sometimes life gets messy and complicated, and the only tether we have is to trust God in the mess, to lead us forward. Trust is a great word for faith. You let go of what you have known or understood, trusting God to guide and direct the path ahead, even if you are unsure how. I wonder if this has ever happened in your life?

Sometimes only the divine power of God can bring a righteous way out of difficult situations. We can learn from Joseph. Joseph listens to the angel, God's messenger. Throughout the Bible when people are met by an angel, the first words the angels proclaim is "Fear not, be not afraid." Joseph has plenty to fear.

In taking the pregnant Mary as his wife, he joins her in her stigma.

He takes the risk to do what is truly righteous, just, and God's will.

Joseph has plenty to fear.

In fact, we who know the story of the birth of Jesus, know that later Jesus is under threat of murder by King Herod.

His birth caused a political stir that would drive Mary and Joseph into hiding in Egypt.

Joseph not only redefines righteousness and justice,

he shows incredible courage and trust.

He goes against the Law and tradition of the land.

He listens to the angel of the Lord.  
And real transformation comes, when he begins to walk in trust.  
That is how God brings salvation and redeems a terrible situation.

The name Jesus has the same meaning as Joshua= God saves.  
A baby literally named "God Saves" is born through two fearful people.  
Two people who can only have trust and courage through faith in a trustworthy God.  
Jesus came to show in human vulnerability, the way, the truth and the life.  
In this nursing, crying, diaper wet baby, the Kingship of God is revealed.

Joseph saw an injustice and tried to make it right.  
I, for one am grateful that Joseph resolved to do the only righteous thing...  
to adopt as his own son, God's baby boy.

Joseph was the one God chose to wipe the nose of the baby named "Saves."  
He was the one who went to his bed when Jesus had bad dreams or listened to him talk about  
when other kids made fun of him.  
It was Joseph who mentored the boy as a young man of faith.  
It was Joseph who had the privilege to teach him to use a saw and a plane to build a sturdy  
table and a comfortable chair.  
It was Joseph who had the joy of being the guardian of God's boy while he grew in wisdom and  
stature.

Joseph adopted Jesus as his own child and took full responsibility for God's boy.  
Like him, we are called to protect and shepherd the young, those who are vulnerable or in need- to do  
the truly righteous thing.

But it would never have happened if not for the intervention of the Holy Spirit or the trust of Mary and  
Joseph who listened to God's messengers.  
God reminds us that Joseph and Mary were never alone.  
"God with us," *Emmanuel* is a sign of God's abiding Spirit.  
In the same way that Matthew's gospel begins with God with Us in today's lesson,  
Jesus ends with "I am with you always even to the end of the age so...go share the good news and  
make disciples, baptizing in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."  
We are called to be God's messengers, too.

Joseph came from a long line of those who carried the message of God forward,  
and as we read his lineage, his chart on Ancestry.com, we see that not all were perfect, but faithful  
through the righteousness of God.

Jesus' family tree is filled with some characters, sinners, and saints- a mixed bag, people full of paradox.

There were odd family arrangements. People from different tribes and ethnicities.

Women are key contributors in a time when women had little agency.

Even King David, fathers a son with the woman whose husband he had killed.

Yet, they all played their part in God's daring plan.

If God can use their mixed-up family, scandalous circumstances, and imperfect people, maybe God can use you and me.

Now it is our turn.

We hear the angel's message.

We are the messengers of that good news of new life,

that yes, God can take a horrible situation, a no-win situation, and bring light, life, and love.

And maybe it begins by taking Jesus as our own as Joseph did,

by knitting our lives together with his,

allowing him to be born in us, through us, for the sake of the world that God loves.

Tell others that his name is Jesus: God saves, and Emmanuel: God is with us.

I cannot imagine a more comforting message,

one I need to hear today, and perhaps you do, too.

Prayer: Shepherd of Israel,

may Jesus, Emmanuel and son of Mary and Joseph,

be more than just a dream in our hearts.

With the apostles, prophets, and saints,

save us, restore us,

and lead us in the way of grace and peace,

that we may bear your promise into the world. Amen.