# Gods way is not easy

READ - Matthew 1:18-25

Can you remember those days of your engagement? You had fallen in love with the dream of your life. And what was even better, THEY HAD FALLEN IN LOVE WITH YOU TOO! Men, There came that time when you made up your mind to ask her to marry you. AND SHE AGREED!

This morning, I want to speak about the marriage of Joseph and Mary:

WHEN GOD MESSES WITH YOUR PLANS!

Engagements were handled differently in those days than they are now. Marriages were pre-arranged by the parents, often when the kids were only infants. But, there had to come a point, when the couple became aware of the engagement, and began to make their plans!

I imagine young Joseph. The wedding date is approaching, and he is making preparations.

I can see Mary. The date every young lady lives for is just about here. She is so excited as she and her parents make the wedding plans. She and Joseph have such dreams for their lives together. But then,

GOD MESSED WITH THEIR PLANS!

It was not ever in their goals for Mary to become pregnant before their wedding night.

And certainly, the idea of becoming pregnant miraculously and giving birth to the Lord Jesus Christ was not the foremost of their thinking. Mary's reaction to the news was one of

perplexity. She asks in Luke 1:34;

LK 1:34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

Joseph's reaction was a little different. He has a decision to make. Should he believe that Mary has been faithful to him and that she had miraculously become pregnant with the Son of God? Or should he decide to break off the engagement? Of course, you know the rest of the story. They did get married, did give birth to the Messiah, and the rest is history!

Let me make three observations based upon this Biblical scene:

**I. GOD DIDN'T ASK JOSEPH AND MARY-HE TOLD THEM!**

I do not note any passage where the angel announcing God's plan, asks Mary or Joseph

if this is acceptable with them! God simply told them His plan and will for their lives!

"How many of you are doing what you planned on doing when say, you were about to leave school?"

(Most of us aren't doing what we thought we would be doing when we graduated from School!) I have found that the majority of the plans I had as a young person are radically different than what has really come to pass.

\*\*\*\*Some of the plans have changed because I have changed my decisions and desires.

\*\*\*\*But other plans were changed because of circumstances beyond my control: God!

And God has never asked me when He has chosen to put those circumstances into my life!

Listen, God has a plan for your life. He made that plan before He created the world And He has no intention of asking your permission to proceed with His plan! Now, you can choose not to obey His will, But you cannot change His will for your life!

I note secondly,

**II. GOD'S PLAN FOR MARY AND JOSEPH WAS NOT AN EASY ONE.**

Sometimes we think that if we are in the will of God, everything will be a bed of roses and life will be without trial or difficulty. That was not the case for Joseph and Mary.

Consider the following:

1. Why didn't God work it out so the Tax was collected either before Joseph and Mary were married, or after the Baby was born? He could have done that couldn't He? I mean, having a woman who was so pregnant that she just barely got to Bethlehem before she had

the baby travel by foot, camel, or donkey, WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN EASY! Surely God could have worked things out better than that!

2. The baby was born in a manger because there was no room in the Inn. Again, I can see the young couple's frustration as, after travelling that far, Mary is exhausted and ready to deliver, AND THEY CAN NOT FIND ANY PLACE COMFORTABLE EVEN TO TAKE HER!

Now, God is a sovereign God. He is able to do anything He wills. He obviously has willed that there is no room in the Inn! He isn't making it easy for them, even though they are obeying the will of God for their lives.

3. Why were they forced to flee Bethlehem to Egypt because of the threat of King Herod. Again, we can see the hand of God at work because He warned them of the danger so they could flee. Why didn't he just make the King's heart soften so they would have to flee

at all? Especially since all the babies 2 years old and younger were killed by Herod's men after Mary and Joseph were gone. The Baby was about 2 year's old when they went to Egypt. And that would not have been an easy trip to make!

4. Then, after all of this, somewhere between when Joseph took his family back to Nazareth and when Jesus became 30 years old, Joseph died. Jesus had to become the head of the home, taking care of his mother and his half brothers and sisters. We make a terrible

error in our concept of Christianity when we believe that God makes life easy when we are in is will and that the easy way is God's way. Take for instance Jesus' message about the two roads:

---The broad and easy way that almost everyone takes is the way that leads to destruction.

---The straight, narrow, and more difficult way, is the way that leads to eternal life.

When we choose the way that looks the easiest, we aren't necessarily choosing the way that is the will of God! Christ chose a path that led to the cross. Paul chose a path that led to imprisonment and execution. But both chose paths that were in the plan of God for them! God does not promise us an easy trip. He promises to be with

us as we take it!

Need a verse? Isa 43:2

***ISA 43:2 When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze.***

Observation Three:

**III. THOUGH THINGS WERE DIFFICULT, GOD DID BLESS.**

I see it in two thoughts:

1. They wondered at the child as he grew.

Look at these verses in Luke 2:52

***And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.***

Luke 2:49-51

***LK 2:49-51 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my ather's house?" 50 But they did not understand what he was saying to them. Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.***

Luke 2:40

***And the child grew and became strong; he was filled with wisdom, and the grace of God was upon him.***

Luke 2:33

***The child's father and mother marveled at what was said about him.***

It must have been a joy beyond belief to raise Christ as he grew up! Just that blessing would have been worth it!

2. Ultimately, Jesus grew up to be a blessing to the whole world! Any parent is blessed when their child grows up to be a person of influence and importance in the world. More parents are blessed if their kid grows up to do something good for mankind. I realize

Joseph was gone by this time, But can you imagine the blessing Mary must have experienced when her firstborn son, Jesus Christ, rose victorious over death and the grave? Can you imagine what she must have felt like as she watched Him ascend visibly, bodily, and gradually into heaven! Can you imagine the excitement in her soul

when she realized in a tangible way,

THAT HER SON HAD OPENED THE DOOR TO HEAVEN FOR ALL WHO WOULD

ACCEPT HIM AND RECEIVE HIM AS SAVIOUR?

God's plan for our lives isn't always an easy one. But it is a plan that will lead to our being a blessing to many. Even if His plan is an early death. He is going to use that in some way ultimately to bring more people to a saving knowledge of the truth. God's

plan for Fanny Crosby was that a doctor would give her the wrong medicine when she was a baby, resulting in her blindness. Rather than growing bitter, Fanny Crosby used her condition to make her more spiritually sensitive; She wrote some of the most

beautiful hymns we sing.

God used the death of H.G. Spafford's children to inspire him to write one of our favourite hymns. Spafford's wife and kids were one a ship to England, and he was going to join them there in a short time. However, the ship with his family on board sank. His wife

was saved, but his kids all died. Back home, Spafford awaited news as to the fate of his family, and when it finally came, it was a telegram from his wife simply saying, "Saved, Alone." Spafford, while mourning their deaths wrote these words,

***"When peace like a river attendeth my way.***

***when sorrow like sea billows role.***

***Whatever my lot thou has taught me to say,***

***it is well it is well with my sole!"***

God didn't ask Spafford if it was ok to make that part of his plan for him. And I am sure Spafford didn't plan it for himself. But as difficult as God's plan was, it has resulted in something that has blessed countless numbers of suffering souls since it was written!

And, while you and I may not think our lot is nearly that tragic. nor our influence nearly that broad. The truth of it is

IF WE WILL AGREE TO FOLLOW GOD'S PLAN, NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT,

ETERNITY WILL RECORD A FAR REACHING IMPACT FOR GOOD BECAUSE OF IT!