

2008 ADVENT JOSEPH-- THE LOVE OF A MAN FOR A WOMAN

Matthew 1:18-25

Today we're talking about the word LOVE
 And the love between a man and a woman.
 Did you ever notice that
 Woman has Man in it;
 Mrs. has Mr. in it;
 Female has Male in it;
 She has He in it;
 Madam has Adam in it;
 See you never looked at it this way before
 It makes sense now, doesn't it.

That was until someone pointed out to me that
 All of women's problems start with MEN
 MEN tal illness
 MEN strual cramps
 MEN tal breakdown
 MEN opause
 GUY necologist
 AND ..
 When we have REAL trouble, it's a
 HIS terectomy .. (Hys)
 This was no place to begin to argue about spelling.

But marriage is difficult.
 It takes a lot of work.

One evening a man and his wife called another couple to see what they were doing.
 The Other said: "Oh, we're just drinking coffee and talking." As she hung up the phone,
 she demanded, "Why don't we ever do that? They're just drinking coffee and talking."
 Her husband said: "So make a pot of coffee." They sat with their freshly brewed coffee,
 just staring at each other in silence.
 Her husband said: "Well, call them back and find out what they're talking about."

We ask, where is all the romance today?
 Where is the common respect for one another?
 "Putting the other first" over one's own need and desires?

We find it refreshingly so in two Jewish youth.
 Mary and Joseph.
 A young couple who found each other
 Fell in love and were pledged to be married.
 But this wasn't to be a normal relationship.
 But one with many twists and turns to it.
 First there is the
I. THE MARRIAGE PLEDGE.

¹⁸This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, Matthew 1:18

PLEDGE is a word that means a *contract*, or *betrothal*,
 They were engaged.
 There is nothing unusual about engagements.
 A ring has been given.
 A date has been set.
 The invitations have been sent out.
 The community gossip lines had gotten it right and run their course.
 Couples were mutually bound to one another.
 Fidelity in this relationship was primary
 So the woman remained at home in her father's house
 And a sexual relationship was never a thought until the
 marriage was consummated on the wedding night a year later.
 This was the custom for all Jewish couples

This pledge to one another was considered legal and binding on both sides;
 Any break in this contract was considered as a case of adultery,
 and punished exactly in the same way.
 See Deuteronomy 22:25,28.
 In addition this contract, even though there was no cohabitation,
 Could not be broken by a regular divorce.
 It was a far cry from what is going on today in the confusion and pain of
 Our marriages.

Whenever I have a wedding in our church.
 I usually go over the ceremony and the various traditions,
 Such as lighting the unity candle.
 Couple light the center candle and then blow out the two candles as a sign of becoming
 one. However some are now leaving their individual candles lit to signify independence
 and personal freedom. That was when one groom suggested :
 "How about if we leave mine lit and blow hers out?"

I know that marriage is not easy.

(WAAF and WBCN)of Boston radio stations
 have begun airing commercials
 for an online dating service aimed at married people
 who are looking for "thrills" and "discreet relationships."
 The dating website's motto? "Life is short. Have an affair."
 As classic wedding music is played the announcer
 Promises "an affair to remember."
 This month the adds are pointed at Television.
 Imagine children hearing and seeing such ads
 which make a joke out of the sanctity of marriage.

So what a refreshing change to read

His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, Matthew 1:18

That short lines contains all the excitement and dreams
 Of a young couple who hope to spend their lives together.
 The year would pass quickly with the preparation for the house, and
 The many essentials needed to start a new home.
 Then

II. THE UNEXPECTED SITUATION

That shock of reality
That Life is not always what we expect.

She was found to be with child.

PREGNANT

Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. Matthew 1:18

Joseph now faced a most distressing and humiliating situation.
This was something that blindsided him.
He never dreamed about this.
His beloved Mary with someone else.
He hadn't heard about the involvement of the Holy Spirit.
God didn't tell him before it had happened.
He waited until after it has happened.
After she was showing.
After the community was knowing.

Poor Joseph had just run into the first four D's of marriage.
Discouragement, despair, drink, and divorce.
He hadn't yet heard about Divine Intervention.

Joseph's situation was most distressing and humiliating
His reputation, his honor,
What conversation passed between Mary and Joseph,
we are not informed;
but the issue proves that it was not satisfactory to Joseph
he could not resolve it,
nor could he consider her as his wife,
And all the twisted rush of feeling
Spun inside him,
Betrayal, broken promises, anger, humiliation.
Cold facts.

Comedian Allan King said:

"Marriage is nature's way of keeping people from fighting with strangers.

Joseph knew the law of Deuteronomy.

If there is a girl who is a virgin engaged to a man, and another man finds her in the city and lies with her, then you shall bring them both out to the gate of that city and you shall stone them to death; the girl, because she did not cry out in the city, and the man, because he has violated his neighbor's wife. Thus you shall purge the evil from among you. Deuteronomy 22:23-24

Now Joseph in this twisted state of devotion, disappointment
Love/ hate,
Wanted to punish, but not to kill.
He wanted the law's revenge, but not death, because
Joseph loved Mary.
His action showed how deep his love was.
His whole conduct, on this occasion,

was exceedingly benevolent and humane.
 He might at once have taken the advantage of the law,
 But he was a righteous man,

¹⁹Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. Matthew 1:19

And righteousness is ever directed by mercy.
 And mercy always forgives the offense against oneself.
 And as the offence was against himself,
 he had a right to pass it by if he chose.
 He chose to put her away or divorce her privately.
 What woman here today would not cherish a friendship like that?

A British publication once offered a prize for the best definition of a friend. Among the thousands of answers received the winning definition read:
 "A friend is the one who comes in when the whole world has gone out."
 So we now have

III. LOVE'S CONCLUSION

²⁰But 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. Matthew 1: 20

I'm sure Joseph must have thought:
 "It would have been nice if the angel could have come a couple of week earlier."
 But God didn't do it that way because he wanted the world
 To scrutinize Mary,
 Even to bring the law against her.
 To get it in record that she was pregnant.
 That she was young woman,
 the virgin about whom the prophet wrote.

Behold a VIRGIN shall conceive and give birth to a son. Isaiah 7:14

²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,^{E3} because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:20-21

If Joseph had been informed earlier
 No one would have known the truth
 About the wonder of a virgin birth.
 The Angel Gabriel 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. Matthew 1:20

In every relationship we don't know how God uses the other
 Person to help us become all that God wants us to be.
 Maybe today in your relationship
 When things get tough,
 When problem arise that look like there is no answer.
 In the midst of that God is saying:
 "have patience, the full truth will be revealed."
 And God uses the trial to strengthen us,
 To deepen us and
 To even help someone else in the midst of their struggle.

We don't know how many divorces we have prevented
by being faithful in our marriage?

One for sure.

But who knows how many others were helped

Who were given hope to return

Hope to rethink

Encouragement to stay.

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." Matthew 1:21

If we believe we are the light of the world.

If we believe that we are the salt in the world,

Then can we not believe that God uses us

To bring hope and peace and a sense of deliverance

Did Mary and Joseph know that what they were

Going through would save a world from their sins?

The child would be called Jesus.

Because he will save his people from their sins Matthew 1:21

The Savior, the true Christ or messiah.

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet:

²³"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" --which means, "God with us." Matthew 1:22-23

It's one thing to know the truth about someone.

Especially your beloved.

It is another to act upon it.

And do the right thing.

Joseph is not only a romantic.

But he is a loving realist.

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.

Maybe today you have had some twists in your life.

Some things that have come unexpectedly and

Thrown a wrench in the wheels of your health, or marriage.

Wake up men.

Follow Joseph's example.

Do what is right with your wife.

Do what is right with your children.

Don't give up,

Don't give in to the world's solutions.

Don't give in to the world's pleasure principles.

Give in to God and he will give you

A new way to feel.

A new way to live.

A new way to love