

Meadowbrook Baptist Church

102 North Park Drive

Anderson, SC

Morning Worship 9:00 AM

"Get Together Time Following"

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JOSEPH - THE GOOD MAN WE FORGET

Matt. 1:18-25

Of all the characters surrounding the cradle at Christmas, the one we forget the most is Joseph. The Bible never mentions any animals in the stable. They are the product, says Paul Harvey, of legend and logic. Yet the sheep and cattle get more press than Joseph. You will search the hymnal almost in vain for any reference to him.

The Bible calls him a righteous man. The term can mean one who is right with God, [forgiven] or one who lives a righteous life [faithful). We don't have to choose, said J.C. Ryle because "The truly righteous person has both." We see his goodness when he decided not to expose Mary publicly. After God explained Mary's condition to him we see his faithfulness, his willingness to sacrifice and his courage.

He believed God and he obeyed God. He took Mary for his wife because he loved her and because it was God's will. It cost him but he was willing to pay the price. In the eyes of his neighbors he was looked upon as either the immoral man who got Mary pregnant or the fool who married her after her immorality with someone else.

Herschel Hobbs says: "He identified himself with her condition. He bore her shame as his own. The neighbors would gossip. The stigma of fornication would fasten its stinging fangs in Mary's heart. But it would strike him also ... Under the lash of public scorn Mary's tender

flesh would quiver. But always between her and the lash stood Joseph." (*Matthew; Broadman Press, p. 19*)

From that day forward, for all we know, Joseph performed his duty as the husband of Mary and the father of Jesus and the six other children in that home (Matthew 13:55 mentions four brothers and at least two sisters). He showed courage as he escaped to Egypt with his wife and son and protected them on the dangerous journey. He showed commitment in being willing to live in Egypt if this was best for his family. Joseph's goodness reached the place most of us leave it behind - in his home. "Just As I Am"

"God loved the world so much that He sent His uniquely-begotten Son, so that whoever puts his faith in him will not perish but have everlasting life." - John 3:16

This week I saw where someone hated Jewish people so much that he **"firebombed the home of a holocaust survivor."** You can't get much lower or dirtier than that, and that is the world God loved and sent His Son to sacrifice himself for. (Eph. 5:1)

In Jesus' Parable [Lk. 15] when the prodigal left the hog pen and came home, his father ran to meet him and hugged him. He did not say "Son go wash the hog-smell off so daddy can hug you." That Father of course represents God running to welcome you and me when we come for salvation. Salvation means He forgives us, changes us into a person who wants to obey His commands and let us into heaven when we die, to live with His Son and those we love.

We can never go DEEP ENOUGH into sin or get dirty enough to make God stop loving us. Jesus forgave all those who had a part in nailing him to the cross. (Luke 23:34).

"God does not clean us up so He can love us. He loves us so He can clean us up."

[Adrian Rogers]