



Additional notes from sermon slides are available at <http://southhillschurch.org/our-ministries/sermon-online/>

“Christmas – The Power of God on Display”
Part 1 – “Joseph - The Strength to Obey”
Matthew 1:18-25
Dec. 2, 2018

How did Joseph display the strength to obey God?

1. He had a foundation of obedience. (Matt. 1:18-19)

2. He was “fearless.” (Matt. 1:20)

3. He had a clear focus on God’s Word. (Matt. 1:21-23)

4. He faced his challenges with God’s help. (Matt. 1:23-25; 2:13-15, 19-23)

Application:

1. Are you developing a pattern of obedience? What needs to change that would put your life in better alignment with God’s Word?

2. Ask God to give you courage to fully obey Him? What area brings the greatest fear?

3. Remember that Jesus is always present-“God with us.” How does this truth change your ability to obey Him?



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Life Group Bible Study / Discussion

Main Thought of the Study - Joseph had some very difficult challenges in his life, according to the Christmas Story, concerning the area of obedience. This week, we will learn how to obey God in our lives and to be Jesus Strong with our choices.

Introduction Discussion – With your first child, what was the most difficult thing you had to learn? What fears did you have about being a parent? What one thing would you say to a new parent?

Reflections from the Message

1. What do we know about the Spiritual life of Joseph before the angel appeared to him in a dream? (Matthew 1:19) What other choices did Joseph have concerning Mary? If Joseph was going to respond in the flesh, or with selfishness, what could he have said or done? In Matthew 1:20a it says that “he considered these things.” What wisdom is found in that kind of response? (Also James 1:19-20)
2. In Matthew 1:20, the angel tells Joseph to not be afraid. Discuss all the possible fears that Joseph might have had in that moment. Share as a group the type of fears that you are facing in your life right now. How does fear impact our faith? Read 2 Timothy 1:7 together and discuss God’s plan for our lives. Review the promise in Philippians 4:5.
3. Joseph believed in the truth of God’s Word. When the angel quotes Isaiah 7:14 it becomes the reinforcement that he needs. Share how reading or focusing on a promise from God’s Word helps you to obey. (Psalm 119:11) Share some promises or verses that have helped you in your walk with the Lord.
4. The baby would be called “Immanuel.” How does the presence of the Lord help us to obey? Share a time when you did a project with someone that knew what they were doing vs. doing something all alone. Agree or disagree with this statement – “Kids crave presence more than presents.”
5. Joseph has some ongoing opportunities to obey the Lord. Read Matthew 1:25; 2:13, 19, 22. Discuss the new elements of faith and fears that Joseph might have had in each situation that he faced. The strength to obey is not always the same. Share with one another the various tests you are facing and how they are different.

Application:

1. What area of your life right now do you need the strength to obey? What fears are filling your mind? When we obey in little things it helps us with the big steps of faith. What small steps of obedience can you do this week?
2. As a group memorize 2 Timothy 1:7 and keep the promise of God in the center of your sharing time. Repeat it often.
3. Is there something you can do as a group this Christmas that would stretch your faith? (Get out of your comfort zone?)