



Part 1: Joseph – Do Not Run Away
Matthew 1:18-25



How did Joseph make it out of the Nativity scene?

Matthew 1:18 “pledged to be married” “betrothed”

Ceremony of Betrothal

- Contract drawn up by the groom
- Meeting of two families with witnesses and priest present
- Groom gave jewelry
- Groom declared his intention to observe the terms of the contract
- Sex before the wedding not permitted
- Payment “mohar” given by groom to bride’s father
- Status “practically” same as marriage – considered binding (broken by death or divorce)
- Wedding one year later for a virgin
- Divorce required to separate betrothed couple

Matthew 1:19 “righteous” – pious, rightly related to God, conditioned his life around God’s standards (not his own)

- He wanted to DO WHAT WAS BEST, most natural idea- to quietly divorce and not expose.

Matthew 1:19 “expose her to public disgrace”

- If the bride were to have sex outside marriage and the groom accused her publicly – she’d be stoned to death. Deuteronomy 22:23 (If she was raped in the city, she’d still be stoned to death for not yelling).

Matthew 1:20 “considered” – pondered... fumed (both are correctly translated)

- He was ‘deeply disturbed’ over this matter

“In his cameo appearance, Matthew presents Joseph as a human being of remarkable spiritual stature. He possessed the boldness, daring, courage and strength of character to stand up against his entire community and take Mary as his wife. He did so in spite of forces that no doubt wanted her stoned. His vision of justice stayed his hand. In short he was able to **reprocess his anger into grace.**” *Kenneth Bailey, “Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes”*

Matthew 1:20 DON’T HESITATE, DON’T BE AFRAID... **DO NOT RUN AWAY**

Matthew 1:24 HE DID AS THE ANGEL **COMMANDED**

- Brought Mary home to be his wife
 - He DID NOT DIVORCE HER
 - PROTECTED MARY – TOOK ON HER DISGRACE
 - TOOK ON HER ‘SIN’ AND SHAME – ‘stepped in front of the rocks’
- Joseph named him “Jesus” “the Lord Saves” “SAVIOR”

Q: What is God calling you to do?

That is, what is He calling you to NOT RUN AWAY FROM?

Matthew 22:36-40

“Greatest commandment?”

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”

- Specifically for you
 - Operating out of loving God and bringing Him glory and honor
 - Operating out of loving others as you’d want to be loved AND THAT IS NOT EASY

Opportunities to not run away

- Do the hard things
- Stay in a relationship
- Say the right thing
- Say the hard thing
- Walk away from a sin
- Do not give up
- Be tender towards someone
- Forgive
- Be honest with someone
- Stand in the gap
- Share what you have
- Tell the truth
- Swim upstream
- Be willing to stand alone
- Finish
- Start
- Stay in a difficult responsibility
- Share the Gospel

“But if you suffer for doing good and you endure it, this is commendable before God.” 1 Peter 2:20

Q: What must Joseph have suffered in making this decision to “not run away”?

Joseph: A role model of SIMPLE OBEDIENCE-
So today... TO WHOM DO YOU BELONG?
WHAT MIGHT YOU BE RUNNING AWAY FROM?