

# CHRISTMAS THROUGH THE EYES OF JOSEPH



## MATTHEW 1:18

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### **INTRODUCTION**

**IF YOU WERE GOING TO MAKE A LIST OF THE GREAT LOVING COUPLES OF HISTORY, WHO WOULD BE ON YOUR LIST?**

- 1. ROMEO & JULIET?**
- 2. ANTHONY & CLEOPATRA?**
- 3. NAPOLEON & JOSEPHINE?**

**PROBABLY MARY & JOSEPH WOULD NOT BE ON YOUR LIST, BECAUSE WHEN WE THINK OF THEM, WE DON'T NORMALLY THINK OF THEM IN THAT WAY BECAUSE THEY'RE USUALLY ON THE SIDELINES, AND THE SPOTLIGHT IS ON JESUS, WHERE IT SHOULD BE.**

**BUT I THINK THAT IF WE EXAMINE THE LOVE OF MARY AND JOSEPH, WE WOULD REALIZE IT WAS A LOVE THAT WOULD STAND THE TEST OF TIME.**

**THE LOVE THEY HAD FOR EACH OTHER, COUPLED WITH THE LOVE THEY HAD FOR GOD, CULMINATES IN ONE OF THE GREATEST LOVE STORIES EVER TOLD - THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS.**

**SO THIS MORNING, I INVITE YOU TO LOOK AT CHRISTMAS THROUGH THE EYES OF JOSEPH, AND HEAR JOSEPH'S CHRISTMAS STORY.**

**YOU'LL FIND IT IN THE FIRST CHAPTER OF THE GOSPEL OF MATTHEW, BEGINNING IN VS. 18.**

**THERE ARE 4 PARTS TO THE STORY, AND IN EACH OF THESE PARTS, YOU WILL SEE HOW MUCH JOSEPH LOVED MARY.**

**I. THE FIRST PART OF JOSEPH'S STORY IS ONE OF HAPPY EXPECTATIONS.**

**[VS. 18] BEGINS WITH THESE WORDS, "NOW THE BIRTH OF JESUS CHRIST WAS ON THIS WISE: WHEN AS HIS MOTHER MARY WAS ESPOUSED TO JOSEPH." IN OTHER WORDS, "HIS MOTHER MARY WAS PLEDGED TO BE MARRIED TO JOSEPH "**

- A. NOW, WE NEED TO UNDERSTAND THAT THE JEWISH MARRIAGE CONSISTED OF (3) STAGES.**
- 1. THE FIRST STAGE IS THE ENGAGEMENT. USUALLY THAT WAS SET UP BY THEIR PARENTS.**
- a. THE TWO SETS OF PARENTS WOULD GET TOGETHER AND TALK THINGS OVER.**
  - b. ONE WOULD SAY TO THE OTHER, "WE WOULD LIKE TO HAVE YOUR DAUGHTER MARRY OUR SON." HER PARENTS WOULD REPLY, "THAT SOUNDS LIKE A GOOD IDEA. LET'S DISCUSS IT."**
  - c. AND THESE TWO SETS OF PARENTS WOULD ARRANGE THE ENGAGEMENT WITHOUT THE YOUNG PEOPLE EVEN BEING INVOLVED.**

**ILLUSTRATION**

**ONE EXAMPLE OF THAT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT WAS WHEN ABRAHAM SENT HIS SERVANT TO HIS HOME COUNTRY TO FIND A WIFE FOR HIS SON, ISAAC. THE SERVANT FOUND REBEKAH AND BROUGHT HER BACK. ISAAC HAD NEVER SEEN HER BEFORE. THEN SHE BECAME HIS WIFE.**

## ILLUSTRATION

**MOST PREACHERS SEE A STREAM OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN LOVE, WANTING TO GET MARRIED, WITH MOONBEAMS IN THEIR EYES. THEY'RE CAUGHT UP IN THE EMOTIONS OF ROMANCE, MAKING DECISIONS THAT WILL AFFECT THEM ALL THE REST OF THEIR LIVES.**

- d. **THE JEWS FELT THAT YOUNG PEOPLE DID NOT POSSESS THE WISDOM TO MAKE THAT KIND OF A DECISION, SO THE PARENTS MADE THE DECISION FOR THEM.**
- 2. THE SECOND STAGE OF A JEWISH MARRIAGE WAS CALLED "BETROTHAL."**
- a. **DURING THIS TIME, THE YOUNG COUPLE AGREED TO THE MARRIAGE, SIGNED A LEGAL DOCUMENT, AND WERE CONSIDERED "HUSBAND & WIFE." BUT THEY DIDN'T LIVE TOGETHER YET.**
  - b. **IT WAS A TIME OF BUILDING A RELATIONSHIP, OF COMING TO KNOW ONE ANOTHER.**
  - c. **IT WAS A TIME OF PLANNING AND DREAMING AND HAPPY EXPECTATIONS. AND THIS TIME OF BETROTHAL USUALLY LASTED ABOUT A YEAR.**

## EXPOSITION

**NOW NOTICE THAT MATTHEW SAYS, "BEFORE THEY CAME TOGETHER." THERE WERE NO SEXUAL RELATIONS DURING THIS TIME. JOSEPH LOVED MARY SO MUCH THAT HE DID NOT TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HER.**

## **APPLICATION**

**NOW LET ME SAY THIS TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE HERE. IF SOMEONE IS PRESSURING YOU, SAYING, "IF YOU REALLY LOVE ME, PROVE IT BY GIVING YOURSELF TO ME,"**

**THEN YOU SAY, "IF YOU REALLY LOVE ME, YOU'LL WAIT, BECAUSE I'M GOING TO SAVE MYSELF FOR THE ONE I MARRY. IF YOU'RE NOT WILLING TO WAIT, THEN YOU'RE NOT THE ONE."**

**NOW SOME MAY SAY THAT IS UNREALISTIC, BUT I DON'T AGREE. MARRIAGES BUILT UPON LUST ARE INSECURE, BECAUSE IF YOU CAN LUST AFTER ONE PERSON, YOU CAN LUST AFTER ANOTHER. BUT MARRIAGES BUILT UPON LOVE EXHIBIT TRUST AND COMMITMENT AND FAITHFULNESS.**

## **ILLUSTRATION**

**PAUL HARVEY TELLS ABOUT A AIRLINE STEWARDESS WHO WAS BEING HARASSED BY A SLIGHTLY INEBRIATED MAN UP IN THE FIRST CLASS SECTION WHO WAS MAKING PASSES AT HER AND TRYING TO GET HER TO AGREE TO MEET HIM IN HIS HOTEL SUITE THAT NIGHT.**

**WITH SOME DIFFICULTY SHE GOT AWAY FROM HIM, ONLY TO ENCOUNTER ANOTHER MAN AT THE REAR OF THE PLANE ACTING THE SAME WAY, TRYING TO FIND OUT WHERE SHE WAS STAYING, AND MAKING SUGGESTIVE PROPOSALS TO HER ABOUT THAT NIGHT.**

**AT LAST, THE PILOT ANNOUNCED THAT THEY WERE MAKING THEIR FINAL APPROACH FOR LANDING. ONCE AGAIN THE GUY IN FRONT OFFERED HER A KEY TO HIS HOTEL SUITE AND BEGGED HER TO MEET HIM THERE.**

**TO HIS OBVIOUS DELIGHT, SHE SMILED AT HIM AND ACCEPTED HIS KEY, PLACING IT SECURELY IN THE POCKET OF HER APRON. THEN**

**SHE WORKED HER WAY BACK TOWARDS THE REAR OF THE PLANE. WHEN SHE GOT THERE SHE TOOK THE KEY OUT OF HER POCKET AND WITH A BIG SMILE HANDED IT TO THE OTHER GUY AND SAID, "NOW DON'T BE LATE."**

**THERE ARE ALL KINDS OF WAYS TO SAY "NO," AREN'T THERE? AND YOU NEED TO LEARN HOW TO SAY "NO."**

**THE BIBLE TELLS US THAT MARY AND JOSEPH SAVED THEMSELVES FOR ONE ANOTHER UNTIL THEY WERE MARRIED. AND AT THIS STAGE IN JOSEPH'S STORY THEY WERE CONSIDERED HUSBAND AND WIFE, BUT THEY WEREN'T MARRIED YET, THEY WERE BETROTHED.**

## **II. THE SECOND PART OF JOSEPH'S STORY IS ONE OF TERRIBLE DISAPPOINTMENT**

- A. FOR VS. 18 GOES ON TO SAY, "BUT BEFORE THEY CAME TOGETHER, SHE WAS FOUND TO BE WITH CHILD..."**
- 1. HERE IS THE TIME OF SHOCK AND DISAPPOINTMENT.**
  - 2. THE BIBLE DOESN'T TELL US WHEN JOSEPH WAS TOLD, OR WHO TOLD HIM. MAYBE MARY TOLD HIM.**
  - 3. MAYBE SHE SAID SOMETHING LIKE,**
    - a. "JOSEPH, I HAVE THE MOST WONDERFUL NEWS. I'M GOING TO HAVE A BABY, AND NOT JUST ANY BABY. THIS IS THE MESSIAH, THE ONE OUR PEOPLE HAVE BEEN WAITING FOR SO MANY YEARS. AN ANGEL TOLD ME THIS."**
    - b. "I ASKED THE ANGEL, 'HOW CAN THIS POSSIBLY BE, BECAUSE I HAVE NEVER**

**SLEPT WITH A MAN?’**

- c. THE ANGEL SAID, ‘THAT WHICH IS CONCEIVED IN YOU IS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.’ IT’S A MIRACLE, JOSEPH. ISN’T IT WONDERFUL? AREN’T YOU HAPPY?”**
- d. BUT JOSEPH WASN’T HAPPY. HOW COULD HE BELIEVE SUCH A STORY? AND JOSEPH MUST HAVE FELT THAT MARY HAD BETRAYED HIM.**

### **ILLUSTRATION**

**COUNTRY WESTERN SINGERS HAVE MADE A FORTUNE OFF OF JILTED LOVERS. EDDIE ARNOLD’S BIGGEST HIT WAS, "MAKE THE WORLD GO AWAY." HE SANG, "TAKE THE WORLD OFF MY SHOULDERS. MAKE THE WORLD GO AWAY." THAT WAS A SONG OF A JILTED LOVER.**

**EDDIE ARNOLD HAD ANOTHER SONG THAT NEVER MADE THE BIG-TIME, BUT IT WAS PRETTY GOOD. HE SANG, "MY PAIN COMES & GOES. IT COMES IN THE MORNING AND IT GOES ALL NIGHT LONG."**

**IT’S NOT A LAUGHING MATTER. JILTED LOVERS DO EXPERIENCE DEEP HURT.**

#### **B. JOSEPH FELT HIMSELF TO BE A JILTED LOVER.**

- 1. HE FELT THAT THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE HAD BEEN TOTALLY UNFAITHFUL TO HIM.**
- 2. BUT NOTICE, EVEN IN THIS STAGE OF HIS DISAPPOINTMENT, JOSEPH STILL LOVED MARY.**
  - a. [VS. 19] SAYS, "*HE WAS A RIGHTEOUS MAN AND DID NOT WANT TO EXPOSE HER TO PUBLIC DISGRACE.*" SO "*HE HAD IN MIND TO DIVORCE HER QUIETLY.*"**

3. **THE LAW SAID THAT JOSEPH COULD HAVE TAKEN HER TO THE CITY GATE AND THE PEOPLE THERE WOULD HAVE TAKEN ROCKS AND STONED HER TO DEATH THEN JOSEPH'S NAME WOULD HAVE BEEN CLEANSED AND HIS REPUTATION RESTORED.**
4. **BUT JOSEPH DECIDED NOT TO DO THAT.**
5. **HE DECIDED NOT TO DISGRACE HER, OR HURT HER ANY FURTHER. BUT RATHER TO DIVORCE HER QUIETLY SO THAT SHE COULD START HER LIFE OVER AGAIN. AND HE COULD START HIS LIFE OVER AGAIN AS WELL.**

### **APPLICATION**

**I WONDER? HOW DO YOU RESPOND TO EACH OTHER IN YOUR MARRIAGE? ARE YOU EVER DISAPPOINTED? DO YOU RESPOND WITH VERBAL OR PHYSICAL ABUSE? UNFORTUNATELY, THAT HAPPENS OFTEN TODAY, AND IT IS INEXCUSABLE.**

**OR DO YOU RESPOND BY SULKING, DECIDING TO DEPRIVE THE OTHER PERSON OF YOUR ATTENTION? THAT'S CHILDISH.**

**IT TAKES A REAL LOVE TO OVERLOOK SOME FAULTS, TO FORGIVE AND TO FORGET, AND TO KEEP THE MARRIAGE STRONG.**

**I THINK THAT JOSEPH DEMONSTRATED A GREAT LOVE FOR MARY BY BEING WILLING TO PUT HER AWAY QUIETLY.**

### **ILLUSTRATION**

**SOMEONE SAID THAT "LOVE IS BLIND, AND MARRIAGE IS AN INSTITUTION. THEREFORE, MARRIAGE IS AN INSTITUTION FOR THE BLIND." THERE'S A LOT OF TRUTH IN THAT.**

**IN FACT, PAUL KIND OF SAID THAT IN [CORINTHIANS 13]. HE SAID, "LOVE IS PATIENT, AND LOVE IS KIND. LOVE DOES NOT ENVY, IT DOES NOT BOAST, IT IS NOT PROUD, IT IS NOT RUDE. IT IS NOT SELFSEEKING, IT IS NOT EASILY ANGERED. IT KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS. LOVE DOES NOT DELIGHT IN EVIL, BUT IT REJOICES IN THE TRUTH. IT ALWAYS PROTECTS. IT ALWAYS TRUSTS. IT ALWAYS HOPES. AND IT ALWAYS PERSEVERES."**

**SO AS WE LOOK AT JOSEPH'S STORY, WE SEE HAPPY EXPECTATIONS, AND WE SEE TERRIBLE DISAPPOINTMENT.**

**III. BUT AS YOU KNOW, THE STORY DOESN'T END WITH THE DIVORCE OF JOSEPH AND MARY, FOR FOLLOWING JOSEPH'S TERRIBLE DISAPPOINTMENT WAS A TIME OF JOYFUL REALIZATION.**

**A. LISTEN AS I BEGIN READING AT [VS. 20],**

***"BUT WHILE HE THOUGHT ON THESE THINGS, BEHOLD, THE ANGEL OF THE LORD APPEARED UNTO HIM IN A DREAM, SAYING, JOSEPH, THOU SON OF DAVID, FEAR NOT TO TAKE UNTO THEE MARY THY WIFE; FOR THAT WHICH IS CONCEIVED IN HER IS OF THE HOLY GHOST." SHE SHALL BRING FORTH A SON AND THOU SHALL CALL HIS NAME JESUS AND HE SHALL SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS. ALL THIS TOOK PLACE TO FULFILL WHAT THE LORD HAD SAID THROUGH THE PROPHET: 'THE VIRGIN WILL BE WITH CHILD AND WILL GIVE BIRTH TO A SON, AND THEY WILL CALL HIM IMMANUEL' WHICH MEANS, 'GOD WITH US.'"***

- 1. WHAT A THRILL THAT MUST HAVE BEEN TO JOSEPH!**
- 2. AN ANGEL OF GOD, A HEAVENLY MESSENGER, SUDDENLY APPEARS AND TELLS HIM, "MARY IS**

**NOT LYING TO YOU.**

- 3. SHE HAS BEEN ABSOLUTELY TRUTHFUL TO YOU.**
- 4. SHE HAS NOT BEEN UNFAITHFUL.**
- 5. IN FACT, THAT WHICH HAS HAPPENED IN HER IS THE FULFILLMENT OF GOD'S PROMISE TO SAVE HIS PEOPLE FROM THEIR SINS."**

**(B). FOR OVER 1,000 YEARS THE JEWS HAD BEEN WAITING FOR THE MESSIAH TO COME.**

- 1. OVER 300 TIMES GOD HAD DIRECTED THE PROPHETS TO PROPHECY CONCERNING HIM.**
- 2. AND THE RESULT WAS THAT THE O.T. PROPHETS HAD PREDICTED ALMOST EVERY STAGE OF THE LIFE OF JESUS HUNDREDS OF YEARS BEFORE IT HAPPENED.**
- 3. THEY PREDICTED THAT HE WOULD BE BORN OF A VIRGIN, THAT HE WOULD BE BORN IN BETHLEHEM AND COME OUT OF EGYPT,**
- 4. THAT HE WOULD GROW UP IN NAZARETH,**
- 5. THAT HE WOULD BE BETRAYED FOR 30 PIECES OF SILVER,**
- 6. THAT HE WOULD BE CRUCIFIED,**
- 7. THAT HE WOULD BE BURIED IN A BORROWED TOMB,**
- 8. AND THAT HE WOULD ARISE FROM THE DEAD.**

**TO HAVE MORE THAN 300 PROPHECIES FULFILLED SO LITERALLY CANNOT BE MERE COINCIDENCE.**

**THEY WERE FULFILLED BECAUSE THEY ARE THE PROPHECIES OF GOD, AND GOD'S PROPHECIES ARE ALWAYS TRUE.**

**SO WHEN THE ANGEL APPEARED TO JOSEPH, AND SAID, "DON'T BE AFRAID, BECAUSE ALL OF THIS IS TRUE," HIS DISAPPOINTMENT TURNED TO JOY, BECAUSE HE LOVED MARY VERY MUCH.**

#### **IV. FINALLY, THE LAST PART OF JOSEPH'S STORY IS A STORY OF HIS OBEDIENCE TO GOD.**

**LISTEN TO [VS 24 & 25],**

***"WHEN JOSEPH WOKE UP, HE DID WHAT THE ANGEL OF THE LORD HAD COMMANDED HIM AND TOOK MARY HOME AS HIS WIFE. BUT HE HAD NO UNION WITH HER UNTIL SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A SON. AND HE GAVE HIM THE NAME JESUS."***

**NOW THEY WERE HUSBAND AND WIFE, LIVING TOGETHER, SHARING THE HOME THAT JOSEPH HAD PREPARED FOR THEM. JOSEPH'S DOUBTS HAD ALL BEEN SWEEP AWAY, AND HE LOOKED FORWARD WITH ANTICIPATION TO THE BIRTH OF JESUS, MARY'S SON, AND THE LONG-AWAITED MESSIAH.**

**A. BUT IT WASN'T LONG UNTIL HE DISCOVERED THAT THERE ARE HARDSHIPS AND SACRIFICES THAT CAME ABOUT BECAUSE OF THEIR MARRIAGE.**

**1. THE FIRST WAS THEIR EMBARRASSMENT.**

**a. MARY AND JOSEPH WERE LIVING IN THE LITTLE TOWN OF NAZARETH, WITH LOTS OF BUSYBODIES STANDING ON THE**

**STREET CORNERS, WATCHING THEM AS THEY WALK BY.**

- b. MARY IS 7 MONTHS PREGNANT, AND THEY'VE ONLY BEEN MARRIED FOR 2 OR 3 MONTHS.**
  - c. THINK OF THE EMBARRASSMENT.**
  - d. MAYBE AT FIRST JOSEPH TRIED TO EXPLAIN, "THE BABY IS OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. AN ANGEL TOLD ME." "SURE, JOSEPH. WE KNOW ALL ABOUT THOSE THINGS. WE BELIEVE EVERY WORD OF WHAT YOU'RE TELLING US."**
  - e. MAYBE AFTER A WHILE, JOSEPH EVEN STOPS TRYING TO EXPLAIN. AND AFTER THEY WENT TO BETHLEHEM, AND THEN EGYPT, PROBABLY JOSEPH DIDN'T EVEN WANT TO GO BACK TO NAZARETH.**
  - f. BUT GOD LED HIM BACK TO THAT TOWN OF INNUENDOES AND GOSSIP. "WHOSE SON IS THIS? WHO IS HIS FATHER, REALLY?"**
  - g. GOSSIP EMBARRASSMENT - THAT WAS A PART OF THE PRICE THAT THEY PAID FOR THEIR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER & FOR THEIR GOD.**
- 2. A SECOND HARDSHIP MUST HAVE BEEN A SENSE OF FRUSTRATION ON JOSEPH'S PART,**
- a. FOR THE BIBLE SAYS THAT HE HAD NO UNION WITH HER UNTIL SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A SON.**
  - b. HERE IS THIS BEAUTIFUL WOMAN WHO IS HIS WIFE, AND THERE IS NO SEXUAL**

**RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THEM.**

- c. HE LOVES HER, AND HE WAITS FOR THE SON TO BE BORN.**

**3. THINK ALSO ABOUT THE INCONVENIENCES.**

- a. EVERY WOMAN WHO HAS GONE THROUGH PREGNANCY KNOWS THAT PREGNANCY IS NOT AN EASY TIME.**
- b. IT IS A TIME OF DISCOMFORT, OF TESTING AND TRIAL.**
- c. IT MUST HAVE BEEN THAT WAY FOR JOSEPH AND MARY, TOO, AS THEY WENT THROUGH ALL THE EXPERIENCES OF PREGNANCY TOGETHER.**

**4. IT WAS ALSO A TIME OF PHYSICAL STRESS FOR THEM.**

- a. THEY HAD TO TRAVEL FROM NAZARETH TO BETHLEHEM FOR THE CENSUS - A DISTANCE OF 80 MILES.**
- b. THEY DIDN'T TRAVEL IN AN AIR-CONDITIONED BUS BACK THEN. THEY WALKED.**
- c. AND WHEN THEY DIDN'T WALK THEY PROBABLY RODE ON A DONKEY.**
- d. I DON'T KNOW IF YOU HAVE EVER TRIED THAT OR NOT, BUT THAT'S NOT COMFORTABLE EVEN IF YOU'RE NOT PREGNANT. AND MARY WAS 9 MONTHS PREGNANT, ABOUT READY TO DELIVER HER CHILD.**
- e. FINALLY, THEY ARRIVE AT BETHLEHEM, TO CROWDED STREETS, AND HUSTLERS ON THE CORNERS TRYING TO TAKE THEIR MONEY.**

- f. **AND WHEN THEY FINALLY COME TO THE INN, THEY HEAR THE NEWS, "THERE IS NO ROOM IN THE INN.**

### **ILLUSTRATION**

**A GRADE SCHOOL CLASS THAT WAS PUTTING ON A CHRISTMAS PLAY WHICH INCLUDED THE STORY OF MARY AND JOSEPH COMING TO THE INN.**

**IN THAT CLASS WAS ONE LITTLE BOY WHO WANTED SO VERY MUCH TO BE JOSEPH. BUT WHEN THE PARTS WERE HANDED OUT, HIS BIGGEST RIVAL WAS GIVEN THAT PART, AND HE WAS ASSIGNED TO BE THE INN KEEPER INSTEAD. HE WAS REALLY BITTER ABOUT THIS.**

**SO DURING ALL THE REHEARSALS, HE KEPT PLOTTING IN HIS MIND WHAT HE MIGHT DO THE NIGHT OF PERFORMANCE TO GET EVEN WITH HIS RIVAL WHO WAS JOSEPH.**

**FINALLY, THE NIGHT OF THE PERFORMANCE, MARY AND JOSEPH CAME WALKING ACROSS THE STAGE. THEY KNOCKED ON THE DOOR OF THE INN, AND THE INN-KEEPER OPENED THE DOOR AND ASKED THEM WHAT THEY WANTED.**

**JOSEPH ANSWERED, "WE'D LIKE TO HAVE A ROOM FOR THE NIGHT." SUDDENLY THE INN-KEEPER THREW THE DOOR OPEN WIDE AND SAID, "GREAT, COME ON IN AND I'LL GIVE YOU THE BEST ROOM IN THE HOUSE."**

**FOR A FEW SECONDS, POOR LITTLE JOSEPH DIDN'T KNOW WHAT TO DO, AND A LONG SILENCE ENSUED.**

**FINALLY THOUGH, THINKING QUICKLY ON HIS FEET, JOSEPH LOOKED IN TO THE LEFT AND TO THE RIGHT PAST THE INN-KEEPER AND SAID, "NO WIFE OF MINE IS GOING TO STAY IN DUMP LIKE THIS. COME ON, MARY, LET'S GO TO THE BARN." AND ONCE AGAIN THE PLAY WAS BACK ON COURSE.**

**B. I'M CONVINCED THAT JOSEPH CARED FOR MARY VERY DEEPLY. YET, ON THAT NIGHT LONG AGO, THERE WAS MUCH THAT HE WAS UNABLE TO GIVE HER. SO THEY ENDED UP IN A STABLE.**

- 1. IF YOU'VE EVER SPENT TIME IN A BARN YOU KNOW A LITTLE BIT OF THE CIRCUMSTANCES THEY FACED THAT NIGHT WHEN THE BABY JESUS WAS BORN.**
- 2. THEY EXPERIENCED THE CRIES OF LABOR PAINS, AND THERE IS NO ONE THERE TO HELP BUT JOSEPH.**
- 3. HE'S NOT SURE WHAT TO DO NEXT. HE MOPS HER BROW AND TRIES TO SPEAK WORDS OF COMFORT.**
- 4. HE HADN'T TAKEN THE LATEST COURSE ON HOW TO COACH YOUR WIFE THROUGH PREGNANCY AND DELIVERY. BUT HE TRIES TO HELP HER ANY WAY HE CAN.**

**C. FINALLY, THE LITTLE BABY IS BORN.**

- 1. HE CUTS THE UMBILICAL CORD, AND WRAPS THE BABY IN SWADDLING CLOTHES, AND LAYS HIM IN A MANGER.**
- 2. HE GOES OVER AND SPEAKS WORDS OF LOVE TO HIS WIFE.**
- 3. HE'S TIRED AND WEARY, AS IS MARY, BECAUSE THEY HAVE TRAVELED ALL THIS LONG DISTANCE.**
- 4. THEIR MUSCLES ARE SORE. THEIR MINDS ARE TIRED.**
- 5. BUT AT LAST THEY CAN REST, AND HE LEANS BACK ON THE STRAW.**

- D. BUT THERE ARE STRANGE SOUNDS OUTSIDE.**
- 1. PEOPLE ARE COMING. ARE THEY ENEMIES?  
JOSEPH MUST HAVE LOOKED FOR A WEAPON.**
  - 2. HE OPENS THE DOOR AND THEY ARE  
SHEPHERDS, FRIENDLY.**
  - 3. THEY HAVE COME TO WORSHIP.**
  - 4. THE ANGELS TOLD THEM, THE STORY IS TRUE.  
THE SAVIOR IS BORN.**
  - 5. THANK GOD, THE STORY IS TRUE.**

### **CONCLUSION**

**JOSEPH TELLS US HIS STORY THIS MORNING, THAT WE MIGHT KNOW A LITTLE BIT OF WHAT HE WENT THROUGH, AND THE LOVE HE HAD FOR MARY, AND HOW THEIR LOVE TELLS THE GREATEST LOVE STORY OF ALL, THE STORY OF CHRISTMAS.**

**THIS MORNING, IF YOU'RE NOT A CHRISTIAN, WE WANT YOU TO KNOW THAT INTO THIS COLD AND DARK WORLD, JESUS CAME AS A BABY.**

- 1. HE CAME TO TOUCH OUR LIVES AND TO  
CHANGE US FOREVER.**
- 2. HE CAME TO REACH DOWN AND SAVE US FROM  
OUR SINS AND RESCUE US FROM THE PIT OF  
DARKNESS.**
- 3. HE CAME TO LOVE US AND SHOW US A BETTER  
WAY TO LIVE.**
- 4. THAT IS WHAT CHRISTMAS IS ALL ABOUT.**

- 5. IT IS SO MUCH MORE THAN JUST LIGHTS AND PRESENTS AND PARTIES.**
- 6. IT IS DIVINE LOVE VISITING OUR EARTH, REACHING OUT TO EACH OF US, TRYING TO WOO US AND WIN US TO THE LOVE OF GOD.**
- 7. IF YOU ARE HERE THIS MORNING AND JESUS CHRIST IS NOT YOUR SAVIOR, WE INVITE YOU TO COME TO HIM NOW AS WE STAND AND AS WE SING.**
- 8. HE CAME AND WENT TO CALVARY AND DIED FOR YOU AND ME.**
- 9. THEY BURIED HIM IN A BORROWED TOMB,**
- 10. BUT EARLY SUNDAY MORNING, HE ROSE WITH ALL POWER IN HIS HANDS.**
- 11. WILL YOU COME TO HIM TODAY?**