



MARY AND JOSEPH
LUKE 1: 26-37; MATT. 1: 18-25

MARY

I. DON'T BE SURPRISED WHEN GOD SURPRISES YOU

IMAGINE MARY'S SURPRISE WHEN THE ANGEL TOLD HER THE NEWS ABOUT GOD'S ASSIGNMENT FOR HER TO BE JESUS' EARTHLY MOTHER! MARY'S RESUME WOULD PROBABLY NOT BE ACCEPTABLE TO MANY ON EARTH TODAY AS BEING QUALIFIED TO FULFILL SUCH AN HONOR AND RESPONSIBILITY, BUT OUR GOD IS A GOD OF SURPRISES. HE LOVES TO TAKE ORDINARY PEOPLE AND MAKE THEM EXTRAORDINARY. OUR CREATIVE GOD SELDOM DOES THE SAME THING, THE SAME WAY, TWICE IN A ROW. IF WE WERE GIVEN THE TASK OF WRITING THE CHRISTMAS STORY FOR THE COMING OF THE SAVIOR, WOULD WE HAVE DONE THE SAME THINGS GOD DID? I SERIOUSLY DOUBT IT.

ALL OF THIS MEANS THAT WE SHOULD KEEP OUR EYES OPEN FOR A FRESH NEW SURPRISE FROM OUR AWESOME GOD. HE LOVES TO THRILL HIS CHILDREN. WHEN HE LEADS US TO THE UNLIKELY AND WE FIND OURSELVES IN THE MIDST OF THE UNEXPECTED, THEN LOOK UP. SOMETHING BIG MAY BE JUST AROUND THE CORNER. DO WE TRUST GOD ENOUGH TO LET HIM SURPRISE US?

II. ABSOLUTELY NOTHING IS TOO DIFFICULT FOR GOD

MARY COULD HAVE SEEN HER SITUATION AS TOO BIG OF A PROBLEM AND JUST SIMPLY RUN AWAY, BUT RUNNING FROM PROBLEMS IS NEVER THE SOLUTION. INSTEAD OF SEEING IT AS A PROBLEM, SHE CHOSE TO SEE IT AS A PROMISE FILLED WITH ALL SORTS OF WONDERFUL POSSIBILITIES. THE ANGEL HAD ASSURED HER THAT NOTHING WAS TOO HARD FOR GOD.

WHAT SEEMS HARD FOR US, EVEN IMPOSSIBLE, IS NOTHING FOR THE LORD. OUR PROBLEMS, WHETHER MINUTE OR MONUMENTAL, ARE NOT PROBLEMS AT ALL TO GOD. THE SAME GOD WHO CREATED THE UNIVERSE PROVIDED THE SAVIOR FOR OUR SIN PROBLEM. THE NEXT TIME WE ARE TEMPTED TO BE DISCOURAGED BY THE ANXIETIES OF LIFE, REMEMBER THAT WE HAVE A HEAVENLY FATHER WHO SAYS, "NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE WITH ME."

III. GOD WILL STOP AT NOTHING TO ACCOMPLISH HIS WILL IN US

MARY DISCOVERED THAT GOD HAD A PLAN TAILOR-MADE JUST FOR HER. HIS PLAN FOR OUR LIVES IS NOT AUTOMATIC, BUT WHEN WE COOPERATE WITH HIS PLAN, HE CAN USE US BEYOND OUR GREATEST IMAGINATION. EVEN THOUGH THERE MAY BE ALL KINDS OF OBSTACLES IN OUR LIVES EACH DAY, GOD CAN AND WILL OVERCOME THEM TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PURPOSE IN US. WHATEVER IT TAKES TO MEET OUR DEEPEST NEED, OUR GOD WILL SURELY PROVIDE.



JOSEPH

I. WE CANNOT FULLY LOVE ONE ANOTHER UNTIL WE FULLY LOVE GOD

IT IS EASY TO LOSE SIGHT OF JOSEPH IN THE CHRISTMAS STORY, BUT ONE THING WHICH TRULY STANDS OUT ABOUT HIM IS HIS OVERWHELMING DESIRE TO PROTECT MARY FROM ANY KIND OF SUFFERING AND SHAME. THE WAY HE ACTED PROVED HE NOT ONLY LOVED MARY, BUT HE GREATLY LOVED GOD. MARY'S LOVE FOR HIM WOULD ONLY GROW AS SHE REMEMBERED THE PAIN AND SHAME THAT JOSEPH HAD TO ENDURE DURING HER PREGNANCY FROM THE VILLAGE GOSSIPS WHO DID NOT UNDERSTAND THE WHOLE STORY. JOSEPH DEMONSTRATED HIS GREAT LOVE FOR MARY AND FOR GOD AS HE STOOD BY HER SIDE DURING THOSE DIFFICULT DAYS. BECAUSE HE LOVED GOD SO MUCH, JOSEPH KNEW THE RICHEST KIND OF LOVE FOR MARY. WE WOULD DO WELL TO EMULATE THAT IN OUR LIFE.

II. GOD NEVER FORGETS THOSE WHO REMEMBER HIM

HAVE YOU EVER FELT FORGOTTEN? MANY PEOPLE HAVE AT ONE TIME OR ANOTHER. JOSEPH HAS OFTEN BEEN CALLED "THE FORGOTTEN MAN OF CHRISTIAN HISTORY", BUT HE WAS REMEMBERED BY THE GOD HE LOVED SO PASSIONATELY. OF ALL THE MEN ON EARTH, THE LORD CHOSE JOSEPH TO BE THE EARTHLY FATHER FOR HIS SON. JOSEPH'S WAS THE GUIDING HAND THAT WOULD SHAPE THE LIFE OF THE BOY JESUS. HIS FAITHFUL SERVICE FOR HIM WAS NOT FORGOTTEN IN THE MIND AND HEART OF GOD. YOU MAY FEEL LOST AND FORGOTTEN, BUT GOD WILL NEVER FORGET THOSE WHO REMEMBER HIM.

III. GOD IS ALWAYS AT WORK IN THE LIVES OF HIS CHILDREN

ONE OF THE AMAZING ASPECTS OF THE CHRISTMAS STORY IS THE NUMBER OF PROPHECIES THAT HAD TO BE FULFILLED. THE PROPHECIES WERE NOT GENERIC BUT VERY SPECIFIC; IN FACT, THEY DID EVERYTHING BUT GIVE THE NAMES OF THE PARENTS! DID JOSEPH AND MARY HAVE A CHOICE. I AM SURE THEY DID. EITHER OF THEM COULD HAVE SABOTAGED GOD'S PLAN, BUT NEITHER DID. THEY LOVED EACH OTHER, BUT THEY LOVED GOD MORE. THAT GREAT LOVE FOR GOD AND FOR EACH OTHER CARRIED THEM THROUGH SOME VERY DIFFICULT DAYS, BUT GOD WAS ALWAYS BEHIND THE SCENES WORKING THINGS OUT FOR THEM AND HIS MASTER PLAN OF SALVATION FOR THE WORLD.

DO NOT DESPAIR—GOD IS AT WORK IN YOUR LIFE. YOU MAY NOT SEE IT FOR A WHILE, BUT ONE DAY IT WILL BREAK FORTH LIKE THE SUN THROUGH THE CLOUDS.