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Joseph, the Husband of Mary

The Better Blessings of Obedience

Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25

Sermon Series: *Matthew*

Topic: Virgin Birth, Virgin Conception, Joseph

Matthew 1:18-25 (ESV)

¹⁸ Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

²³ "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel"

(which means, God with us). ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Introduction

We all had or have hopes, dreams, and expectations about what we imagine married life will be like. We dream about who we will marry, where we will live, what we will do, when and how many children we will have, and all the great things we'll do with our lives. I think it's safe to say that life very often does not turn out exactly as we expect. There's no doubt that Joseph and Mary had those same hopes, dreams, and expectations. However, almost certainly their lives turned out in ways they never could have imagined.

As we continue reading the Gospel of Matthew, we pick up where we left off last week. We immediately notice that Matthew directs our attention to Jesus.

Matthew 1:18 (ESV) Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

I'm quite sure *that* was not expected! By either Mary or Joseph. The word translated here as 'birth,' is a word we've seen before. The Greek word is 'genesis' (γένεσις), which we saw last week in verse 1. The repetition of the word clues us in that Matthew is continuing to tell us the story of the 'genesis of' or 'the beginning of Jesus.'

Matthew opened his gospel by tracing the providential hand of God from Abraham down through thousands of years of generations of Abraham's descendants, through king David, through the deportation and exile, all the way down to a man named ... *Joseph, the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called Christ* (Matthew 1:16). This sentence is written in such a way as to clearly communicate that Joseph is *not* the biological father of Jesus, but Mary is his biological mother. Matthew presents this as fact. This fact is true and certain, but it is unexpected and unusual. Thus, it needs to be explained. This is what Matthew does in the next section.

You will recall from what we learned last week that Matthew is primarily concerned with tracing the lineage of Jesus according to the legal right of royal authority. We know this since from David he follows the line of descendants who reigned as king on the throne of David down to the deportation, or would have reigned after the decoration, all the way down to Joseph.

Matthew has introduced us to Joseph (v.16) and now he continues telling the story of Jesus' beginning from the perspective of Joseph. Matthew gives us more information on Joseph than does any other gospel writer. When Luke writes his account of the gospel, he does so from the perspective of Mary. Matthew pulls back the curtain on how these events affected Joseph. We will move through this passage in five stages; betrothal (v.18), betrayal (v.18), bewilderment (v.19-21), fulfillment (v.22-23), and obedience (v.24-25).

Betrothal (v.18)

Let's read the rest of v.18 and consider the betrothal.

Matthew 1:18 (ESV) Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

The Jewish betrothal period was similar to but also quite different from what we know as an engagement period. According to Jewish custom and law, the betrothal period was the formal

beginning of the marriage process. The betrothal began as the parents of the bride and groom made marriage arrangements and contracts were exchanged between them. The bride and groom also gave formal promises of faithfulness and they exchanged rings. Entering into betrothal was entering into a legally binding¹ contract. The bride and groom were referred to as 'husband' (see v.19) and 'wife.' The betrothal could only be ended by death or by formal divorce² proceedings (see v.19).

During the betrothal period, the couple lived apart. The bride continued living in her father's home for the period of about a year. The purpose of this waiting period was twofold. First, it gave time for the bride to prove her sexual fidelity by demonstrating that she was not pregnant. Second, the waiting period gave the groom time to set up the new house for them. After the waiting period was over and all was ready then the formal wedding ceremony would take place and the groom would come with his procession to the house of his bride, the ceremony and celebration would take place, and then afterwards he would take her home to their new house³ where they would begin their new life together.

The word 'betrothal' derives from an Old English word. The prefix 'be' means 'thoroughly or all around,' as in to bespatter the paint, which means to thoroughly spatter paint all around. The word 'troth' means 'truth, fidelity (i.e. faithfulness), loyalty.' Thus, the betrothal period was the first step toward marriage when the promise of all-around fidelity and truthfulness was given and then proved until the wedding day.

As the story begins Joseph and Mary they have already entered into the betrothal period. The phrase "*before they came together...*" means both that they were not yet living together and that they had not yet had sexual intercourse.⁴ During the engagement period Mary and Joseph had kept themselves sexually pure.

Betrayal (v.18-19)

However, despite Joseph's sexual purity and faithfulness to Mary, he receives devastating news that reveals that Mary had betrayed her promise to Joseph.

Matthew 1:18-19 (ESV) ...before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

¹ R. T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 1, Tyndale New Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1985), 82.

² France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, 82.

³ This is recounted in The Parable of the Ten Virgins found in Matthew 25:1-13.

⁴ D. A. Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin, vol. 8 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984), 74.

During the waiting period of the betrothal, while they are living apart, Mary is "*found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.*" Matthew is now explaining how it was that Mary came to be pregnant. She became pregnant as a result of the secret and holy work of the Holy Spirit. All that the Holy Spirit does is holy and thus how this happened involved nothing sinful whatsoever.

From the Holy Spirit

There is no indication here or anywhere else in Scripture that this resulted from any kind of physical, sexual union between God and Mary. Nothing in the Bible even hints at this. Christianity does not teach this and this fact needs to be made clear since many Muslims mistakenly believe that Christianity teaches that God had sex with Mary. God did not and we do not believe that He did. God is Spirit⁵ and Mary was flesh and those two are fundamentally different. The Holy Spirit is the very manifestation of the life of God and thus He miraculously caused Mary to be pregnant. In much the same way that God first created human life in the Garden of Eden so God created the life of Jesus in the womb of Mary, completely apart from any physical or human agency. The Holy Spirit miraculously caused Mary "*to be found with child.*"

Found with Child

It may also be worth noting that Mary "*was found to be with child.*" Mary was not found to be "*with a clump of cells,*" nor was she found to be "*with a mass of tissue,*" nor was she found to be "*with fetus.*" Mary was found to be *with child*. The use of terms such as clump of cells, mass of tissue, and fetus, which being technically correct, are intended to create emotional distance from the truth that every one knows, which is that when a woman is pregnant she is pregnant with a child. That which is in the womb is very small, unborn human baby. Thus it ought to break our hearts and make us appalled that anyone would think it just or right to attack and kill a little human child who is quietly growing within the safety of mother's womb.

Joseph Unaware of the Holy Spirit

Joseph received the news that Mary was pregnant. Mary had not been unfaithful to Joseph, but he did not know that. At this point, Mary had not yet told Joseph what had transpired with her. Luke's gospel tells us that immediately after the angel Gabriel informed Mary that she was about to become pregnant with the Holy Son of God through the miraculous work of the Holy Spirit, that she "*went with haste*"⁶ to the home of her relative Elizabeth, who also had recently experienced a miraculous pregnancy. Mary stayed with her "*about three months and then returned to her home.*"⁷ Thus, it could be that Mary was in her third month of pregnancy when

⁵ John 4:24.

⁶ Luke 1:39.

⁷ Luke 1:56.

this was discovered after she returned to her hometown of Nazareth.⁸ Perhaps she didn't tell Joseph because she may have doubted that he would have believed her, which we can all certainly understand. From Joseph's perspective, while he was getting the house ready for them and waiting faithfully to be married to her, as far as he knew, Mary was not waiting faithfully for him.

Matthew takes us into the heart of Joseph as he received the news of Mary's pregnancy.

Matthew 1:19 (ESV) And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly.

A Just Man: Hates Sin

Joseph was "a just man" or another of saying this is "a law abiding man."⁹ A just man loves righteous and upholds the law. A just man loves righteousness and hates sin.¹⁰ What Mary had done was unjust and unlawful. She had broken the laws of the betrothal and she had broken the law of God. She had broken her own vows. She had promised to be faithful to Joseph and she had broken that promise.

God's law commanded sexual purity until marriage. According to the law of God as He gave it to Moses, sexual infidelity during the betrothal was equivalent to adultery and thus punishable by death (Deut. 22:23-24). In fact, *all sexual activity before marriage was punishable by stoning* (Dt. 22:13-21). This is so far from our thinking, but it reveals how sacred God views sexual intimacy. God views the violation of the marriage bed as a crime worthy of the death penalty. Oh how incomprehensible to us sinners is the holiness of God. Oh Father God pour out your Holy Spirit upon us so that we begin to learn to love holiness and hate sin. God be merciful to us sinners.

The Betrothal Must End

Under the dominion of the Romans the Jews could not on their own enforce the death penalty, thus, in such cases of adultery, divorce had mostly become the norm.¹¹ Joseph was a law abiding and faithful man and Mary had broken the law and been unfaithful to him, thus he could not marry her. The marriage was over. He could not in good conscience continue with the betrothal period. Mary was not trustworthy! Her vows has been broken and thus the deal was off.

Furthermore, he could not continue with the betrothal for to do so would implicate his own integrity. Surely if he did continue with the betrothal, then everyone would assume that he and Mary had slept together, and both of them had violated their vows. To go on would be tacit

⁸ Luke 1:26.

⁹ France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, 82.

¹⁰ Psalm 45:7; Heb. 1:9.

¹¹ Ibid.

admission of his own sin. Thus, to continue with the relationship would certainly bring shame on himself for it would reveal his own sinful disobedience to God's law and lack of self-control. It was beyond question, the betrothal had to end.

Public Shame or Private Divorce

The question that remained was how should the betrothal end? Two options were open to Joseph; *public shaming* or *private divorce*. This required thoughtful *consideration* (v.20). One can only imagine that Joseph was upset by this news. How would you feel if you discovered your fiancé had been unfaithful to you while you were working hard to set up house and now all of your dreams and expectations had been shattered? It is not unlikely that Joseph was a little angry about this turn of events and we get a hint of this in the text.

The word translated 'considered,' in v.20 gives us a clue that indeed he was angry. The Greek word *enthymeomai* (ἐνθυμέομαι) means "to process information by giving consideration to various aspects—'to think about, to consider.'"¹² However, the word has a second meaning¹³ that is evident from the root word, which is *thymos*, that means, "anger, wrath, or indignation." The Theological Dictionary of the New Testament summarizes the basic meaning is as "to be in a passionate mood; to take to heart; to ponder"¹⁴ deeply. Matthew uses this word again in 2:16 to describe Herod's response to the discovery that the Wise men had tricked him by going home a different way and in that verse the word is translated as 'furious.' Thus, we have a clue that Joseph's heart was in turmoil over the discovery that Mary was pregnant and he struggled against the anger he understandably felt.

Resolved to Private Divorce

However, Joseph's love for Mary governed his pain and anger. Joseph's primary disposition was one of compassion more than legalism. He "*resolved to divorce her quietly*" (v.19). He was just in that he could not marry her, but he was also compassionate in that he would not publicly shame her. He chose not to respond by seeking personal revenge through public shaming, but instead to call two witnesses¹⁵ and end the betrothal with a private divorce settlement.

Joseph evidently loved Mary and cared for her deeply. Even though her apparent sin deserved public shaming, he refused to drag her through this. She had betrayed him and this hurt deeply. He could not marry her, but he love her and thus would not publicly shame her. He

¹² Johannes P. Louw and Eugene Albert Nida, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains* (New York: United Bible Societies, 1996), 348–349

¹³ Kenneth E. Bailey, *Jesus through Middle Eastern Eyes: Cultural Studies in the Gospels* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2008), 45 referencing Henry G. Liddell and R. Scott, *A Greek-English Lexicon*, rev. H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1966), p. 567.

¹⁴ Friedrich Büchsel, "Θυμός, Ἐπιθυμία, Ἐπιθυμέω, Ἐπιθυμητής, Ἐνθυμέομαι, Ἐνθύμησις," ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 172, see footnote 7.

¹⁵ Carson, "Matthew," in *The Expositor's Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, 75.

chose the quiet divorce option. He made up his mind. He was **resolved**. He was determined. This is what he would do.

A Sleepless Night Pondering Betrayal?

Imagine what that night might have been like for Joseph. His life had fallen apart. All his romantic dreams of a happy marriage were now crushed. His plans destroyed. The work on the house a waste of time. He was alone with his thoughts for who could speak of such sinful betrayal. I wonder if he cried himself asleep that night, alone and depressed?

Bewilderment (v.19-21)

At this point, God bewildered Joseph with a heavenly visitor who brought amazing news. God sent an angel to intervene into Joseph's plans. God needed to keep his plans on track and his plans did not involve Joseph and Mary getting a divorce. If this angel is the same angel as he who visited Mary¹⁶, then this angel is none other than Gabriel.

Matthew 1:20-21 (ESV) ²⁰ But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins."

It's not often that one receives an angelic visit. This was a dream that Joseph never forgot. He told it to Matthew. Matthew wrote it down for us. I can only imagine that this was a bewildering experience. Having a personal interview with an angel always inspires awe within the heart of the human, but even more than the presence of this mighty being, was the contact of his words.

This angel knew Joseph's name and his heritage. He said, "**Joseph, son of David...**" This mighty angel was aware of Joseph's personal name as well as his family background. This angel knew that Joseph was a descendant of David. Matthew's genealogical record is correct. It was affirmed by a holy angel who does not lie. Joseph was a legal descendant of David who stood in the line of royal succession to the throne of David. This message was also personal. This reveals that God was well aware of Joseph's desperate situation. God was not too busy to pay attention to the sad circumstances of the life of Joseph, son of David.

Do Not Fear

In almost every angelic encounter in the Bible, "Do not fear," are typically the first words spoken by an angel because the wonderful and amazing sight of their glory and power engenders terror in the heart of the human. This angel too speaks these words, but it is not alleviate fear at the sight of himself, but rather the alleviate Joseph's hesitancy to take Mary as

¹⁶ Luke 1:26.

his wife. Joseph went to sleep that night too fearful to take Mary as his wife. Perhaps he was afraid that he would never be able to trust her again. Or perhaps he was afraid of the scorn of the people who would certainly believe that the child was the result of sin. Or perhaps there was a combination of many such fears, but however many there may have been, Joseph was afraid to take Mary as his wife and this angel now instructs him not to fear taking her.

The reason not to fear was because, *“that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit”* (v.20). Joseph was not to fear because all that was happening here was holy! How happy would this news have made Joseph!? Mary had *not* been unfaithful to him. She *had* kept her vows. Mary was faithful. She was true. He was honest and she had been trustworthy! The bewildering truth is that the Holy Spirit had worked a miracle within her and that was the reason Mary was pregnant. Mary was innocent! This child was the result of holiness rather than the result of sin! Thus, there is no need to fear. This is mind-blowingly bewildering! And this was not all!

The angel went on. *“She will bear a son...”* Joseph was not to fear for God knew the future and was announcing it before hand. This angel knows that the child will be a boy. Obviously God was mightily at work. Who needs ultrasound when you have Gabriel around? God was here revealing to Joseph what he was about to do¹⁷ so that when it came true, Joseph would have no doubt that this was the work of God.¹⁸ Do not fear Joseph, God knows what’s is coming because He is in control of the future and He causes to come about that which He will to be!

Additionally, this angel was commanding Joseph to *“call his name Jesus.”* This was essentially a command to claim this child as his own. If Joseph was to name this boy, then he would be claiming authority over this boy and publicly declaring him to be his own child. In effect, the angel was commanding Joseph *not to be afraid to adopt this baby*, with the full legal rights and authority that pertained thereto. If Joseph adopts this boy, then he becomes Joseph’s legal heir, which meant he inherited the legal right to the throne of David, Joseph’s father! If Joseph was son of David and he adopts this child as his own firstborn son, then he too is a son of David!

The instructions include a particular name. Joseph was to *“call his name Jesus.”* Joseph did not have freedom to call him Joe Jr., rather he was told to name him Jesus, *“for he will save his people from their sins”* (v.21).

“Jesus” (*lēsous*) is the Greek form of “Joshua” (cf. Greek of Acts 7:45; Heb 4:8), which, whether in the long form *yēhōšua* (“Yahweh is salvation,” Exod 24:13) or in one of the

¹⁷ See Amos 3:7.

¹⁸ John 13:19; 14:29.

short forms, e.g., *yēšûa* (“Yahweh saves,” Neh 7:7), identifies Mary’s Son as the one who brings Yahweh’s promised eschatological salvation.¹⁹

Here we have our first hint that the primary purpose of the life of Jesus, which will be to save people from their sins. His primary purpose will not be nationalistic, but we might say it will be holy-istic. Jesus and Jesus alone is the hope for holiness. Jesus will be God’s gracious provision for salvation from the penalty, power, and punishment of sin. Through this baby boy freedom from sin will be found. The angel was saying Joseph, “Do not fear to claim this baby boy for he will be your salvation.”

One can only imagine how bewildering this would have been for Joseph. What a dream! What a message! What good news! Joseph’s hopes and dreams for a happy family have been preserved and now added to this gracious good news is this amazing promise of salvation from sin! I think if Joseph had been wearing a smart watch the heart rate indicator would likely have automatically called 911!

Fulfillment (v.22-23)

Matthew now clues us in on why all of this was happening this way. Why was this child created within the womb of Mary without the help of a human father? Because God was fulfilling an ancient promise.

Matthew 1:22-23 (ESV) ²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: ²³ “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us).

Verse 23 is a quote of Isaiah 7:14. Isaiah spoke this prophecy about 700 years before Matthew wrote his gospel. As we noted earlier, only God announces what he will do before he does it and then fulfills it as he promised. Long ago, through Isaiah, God announced that a virgin would give birth and bear a son and this son would bring God’s presence in among God’s people.

There are endless debates about the Hebrew word *alma*, which Isaiah used its relation to the Greek word *parthenos*, used here by Matthew. You may go and study that on your own if you are interested. What is interesting here is the Matthew, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit²⁰, sees, in this miraculous conception of a baby boy in the womb of a virgin named Mary who was betrothed to Joseph, the divine fulfillment of a promise that God gave to Israel some 700 years earlier. In the arrival of Jesus, God was on the move. In Jesus God was powerfully

¹⁹ Carson, “Matthew,” in *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke*, 76.

²⁰ 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21.

active among his people. He was displaying his power and fulfilling his promises in the genesis of Jesus and Matthew was excited about this and I am excited about this.

Immanuel, God With Us?

Do not stumble of the name Immanuel and the fact that Jesus was named Jesus rather than actually having borne the name Immanuel. The name Immanuel means "God with us." The truthfulness of this "name" will be borne out as we continue through the gospel. However, the meaning is that through the life and person of Jesus of Nazareth God will manifestly demonstrate his presence among his people.

This will be seen in such ways as when Jesus raised a dead man back to life and the crowds responded by saying, "**God has visited his people!**" (Lk. 7:16). Or when Jesus was visited by Nicodemus at night and he confessed, "*Rabbi, we know that you are teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless **God is with him***" (John 3:2). Or when Jesus instructs his disciples to heal the sick and cast out demons for "*the kingdom of God has come near to you*" (Lk. 10:9, 11; 11:20). And it reaches its highpoint at the very end of the gospel when Jesus says to his disciples, "**Behold, I am with you always, even to the end of the age**" (Mt. 28:20). This fulfillment theme will be seen repeatedly throughout this gospel, so pay attention and take note of the these instances, especially if you're using the Scripture Journal.

Obedience (v.24-25)

Finally, we conclude by noting Joseph's response to this amazing dream and this angelic visit.

Matthew 1:24-25 (ESV) ²⁴ When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, ²⁵ but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Joseph obeyed. He woke up and obeyed. He was confronted with the will of God and the word of God and simply but quickly obeyed. His life was definitely not turning out like he had imagined, however he would humbly submit to God's will for his life.

He took Mary as his wife, just as he was told. He married her despite whatever fears he may have had. He married Mary. He embraced this unusual circumstance of her pregnancy with faith rather than fear. He was willing to endure whatever claims would be circulated about the timing of their marriage and the birth of the baby and such accusations did persist.²¹

He also obeyed and "**he called the boy's name Jesus.**" Luke tells us that eight days after the birth of Jesus, when it was time for him to be circumcised, at that ceremony, *Joseph named him Jesus* (Lk. 2:21). Joseph named the baby boy, Jesus. He obeyed the instructions he had been given. In doing so, he publicly claimed and adopted Jesus as his own child. He publicly

²¹ See John 8:41 where the Jews accuse Jesus of being "born of sexual immorality."

identified him as his first born and rightful heir of all he owned (including his claim and authority to the throne of David).

Joseph also refrained from sex with Mary until after Jesus was born. This is what is meant by "*he knew her not until she had given birth to a son.*" The virgin conception of Jesus remains beyond question in the eyes of the biblical authors. This is a fundamental tenet of the Christian faith. Just as God miraculously created life on earth, so his Holy Spirit created Jesus within Mary's womb. The structure of the language here makes it clear that normal marital intimacy began after the birth of Jesus.²² There is no textual evidence in the Bible that teaches that Mary remained a partial virgin. In fact, the biblical evidence states the exact opposite, for we are told that she had four other sons and at least three daughters.

Matthew 13:55-56 (ESV) ⁵⁵ Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶ And are not all his sisters with us?

Conclusion

Life certainly turned out very differently than Joseph and Mary might have expected. But God was powerfully at work in their unexpected lives. God was doing a Holy work. Mary became pregnant by the powerful holy work of the Holy Spirit. Therefore the son whom she bore was called the Son of God. Jesus was born free from the inherited sinful nature that Adam had passed down to every one of his descendants. Neither Joseph nor Mary were sinless, but rather Jesus and Jesus alone was. Thus, he and he alone can "save his people from their sins."

Joseph was the legal son of David who inherited from his father the right to reign. Jesus was adopted by Joseph and thus being adopted as his first born, Jesus too was a son of David and inherited from his father the legal right to reign on the throne of David.

This unusual conception was spoken beforehand by God through Isaiah. God told us in advance that he would one day do something very unusual. He did it through Jesus. God began to fulfill His promises through the virgin conception of Jesus.

Joseph is a model of obedience for us. When he was confronted with God's word and will for his life, he simply obeyed. He woke up and he obeyed. Perhaps some of us need to do the same. We need to wake up from the deception that God is ok with us continuing in sin. We need to wake up and turn away from our sin. Some of us need to wake up to the fact that we cannot save ourselves. We need to admit without Jesus we are helpless. We need to confess with our mouths that Jesus alone can save us from our sins and put our faith completely in Him.

²² R.T. France, *Matthew: An Introduction and Commentary*, 85.