



Christmas Through the Heart of Joseph

December 2017 - By Tamara Roberts

“She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” - Matthew 1:22

The words stabbed my heart. I couldn't speak. Tears welled in my eyes. Hurt. Dishonored.

Not only had Mary been unfaithful, she was either a liar or crazy. But she'd always been steady, pure, and honest. How long had our marriage been arranged? Since childhood?

I loved her and thought she loved me. This couldn't be. But it was.

I'd worked so hard to prepare our home. All she had to do was save herself. Everyone in Nazareth turned out for our engagement. How could she bring this shame upon our families? On me? Her father thought I had taken her before the wedding.

“Me? I'm a man of honor.”

His look of confusion at my wrath spoke volumes.

“Oh, Mary. What have you done?”

A tear rolled down her flushed cheek. Crushed. The look on her face was heartbreak. She saw my anger. How could she not? It felt like fire shot from my eyes. Then she grabbed her stomach and crumpled to the ground. Her sobs shredded my heart!



What did they expect? Did they think I'd just accept this crazy talk?

I tore my clothes and stormed to the house. Our house. It was almost ready. With every nail, I'd dreamed of our life together with my sweet, pure wife.

“Jehovah, what must I do?” Images of the whole town stoning Mary struck as if I'd been hit myself. And the shame. I prostrated myself on the floor. Alone before God, the tears I'd held back poured. Wails escaped my lips.

“Mary's not that kind of girl. Maybe someone attacked her, took advantage of her innocence. Could she have lost her mind? Should I send her away and divorce her privately?” A cloud of agony engulfed me until sleep relieved my anguish.

As I slept, the angel of the Lord appeared to me 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. She will bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21-22 (NKJV)

I arose and splashed water on my face. Shaking the cloud out of my head, I circled the room. Hard to believe, but too clear not to. Mary! My love! I ran to her house still in my torn clothes. Her father met me at the entryway. He pushed me back into the yard. “Joseph, don’t have her stoned. Have mercy. I beg you.”

I grabbed both of his arms and danced him around the yard. “An angel! The angel of the Lord appeared to me. Mary is telling the truth. We can be wed.” His eyes widened. Relief spread across his face.

I let go of him and ran toward the entry. “Where is she? Mary! Mary!”

Mary stepped into the morning light. The rays of the dawning sun crowned her hair like a queen. She glowed.

“Mary, the angel said it’s all true, and we can be married.” I knelt and took her hand. “Forgive me for not trusting you. I will take care of our son.”

Then, it hit me.

Our son, but not my son. Mary’s son. God’s Son.

I stood. “I’m supposed to be the step-father to the Son of Almighty God? Me?” Blood drained from my face. I staggered backward, legs buckling. Mary’s father caught me, laughing.

“Jehovah chose you.” He slapped me on the back. “He could have chosen anyone, but He chose you two.” He took Mary’s hand and placed it in mine. As he held them together he said, “God picked you to do this great thing. Know He has a plan.”

I wanted to pull Mary close and kiss her, but stopped. Not yet. Oh, this is going to be difficult. No impossible. I wasn’t to know her until after the baby was born. Yahweh asked a lot. But, still. The marriage could take place and Mary would be mine.

As the weeks passed, Mary began to show, and tongues wagged. Then, Caesar Augustus decreed a census requiring us to go to Bethlehem. I welcomed the opportunity to get away.

Being great with child, the trip was difficult on Mary, but she never complained.

“No room! Stable?”

Jehovah, I thought You had a plan.

Between winces, Mary said it was good to have the privacy of the stable. I swept it clean, made a bed of fresh hay, and hung blankets for warmth and privacy. Bethlehem’s midwife escorted me out of the stable when the time came, saying men weren’t allowed during a birth.

Pacing. Pacing. Hours passed. Then, a baby’s cry.

Our son—God’s Son was born. The midwife stuck her head around my makeshift blanket door and motioned that I could return.

When I entered the stable, Mary smiled, her hair soaked with perspiration. She swaddled the baby in a soft cloth and laid Him in the manger.

She’d never looked so beautiful. And the baby. He looked like any other baby, tiny and helpless.

We named Him Jesus, like the angel said. When I reached for Him, His hand wrapped around my finger. With one finger, I held the tiny hand of the One who measures the sea with the span of His hand. With that sobering thought, fear threatened. Then, I remembered Jehovah has a plan. I can trust Him. “Almighty, Lord of Hosts, I’m going to need a lot of help. All I can do is rely on You.”



Prayer:

Gracious Father, Thank You for sending Jesus to save us. Thank You for choosing faithful servants to carry out Your plans. May we say, “Yes” when You ask us to fulfill Your plans, for Your honor and glory. Amen.

Pray for our Church Family

NRHBC Hospital Board & Prayer Sheet as of November 29, 2017: Carolyn Dorsey, Carolyn Rodgers, Jeannene Evans, Kerri Scott (Sharon Willeford's step-daughter), Phyllis Hedgcoth, Family of Jerry McCluer, Maxine Moore (Sue Martin's sister), Jane Faulkner, Danielle Lovette, Crystal Stewart, Jill Roberts, Christina Norton, Family of Joann Boyett, Family of Lyle (Jackie Mapston's brother), Becky Shroyer (Stacey McWilliams mom), Margaret Atwell, sherry Christensen, Pat Clark, Ruth Leeth and Doris Snider.

Pray for these with continuing needs: Alice Abbott, Linda Andruss, Barbara Atwell, Darlene Blackburn, Judy Blevins, Claudia Bone, Maxine Calvert, Al Cardenas, Delbert Cason, Ed Chapman, Judy Cherne, Mike Cobb, Karen Coker, Anne Coleman, Rick Collins, Janie Corbett, Jim Corley, Betty Crumpler, Terry Denson, Ryan Donaghue, Ron Donahue, Brent Doyle, Jean Doyle, Doretta Brown, Lucy Eisenmann, Sharon Elliot, Valinda Elrod, Kathy Engeling, Bob Englemann, Martha English, Jan Farr, Clint Frisby, Judy Gangwere, Shirley Gangwere, Barbara Gant, Elijah & CiCi Garcia, Ignacio Garcia, Lupe Garcia, Nick Garton, Jan Giles, Mike Gooch, Larry & Anita Griffey, Tom & Hue Leita Harvey, John Heath, Virginia Hitchcock, Marie Holt, Karen & Kemp Hoop, Brian Hostin, Vaughn Kankey, Mary Frances Kelley, Lee Kibbe, Ed & Minerva Kimbell, Helen Kingston, Bob Korb, Becky Langston, Kee Law, Doug Leming, Isaiah Lucas, Virgilia Martin, Doris Pait Mayfield, Evelyn McIntosh, Frieda Merrell, Janell Miller, Bob Miner, Ralph & Imogene Mochizuki, Joyce Moody, Jenny Moore, Bill Norman, Ruth Osborne, Jean Pulliam, Dean Radke, Dell Richardson, Kristine Rines, Amanda Roach, Nelda Roik, Jody Rushing, Sutton Savage, Don Shaver, Linda Shepherd, Brenda & Steve Slaughter, Bea Smith, Gerald Smith, Rosa Lee Smith, Charlsie Smith, David Spradley, Joyce Stafford, Matha Sterling, Crystal Stewart, Marilyn Strother, Ladena Sullivan, Sutherland Springs, Karolyn Taylor, Hubert Thedford, Mike Thomas, John Tucker, Evelyn Vaughn, Bob Votaw, Homer Wallace, Clayton Wayne Eddie White, Jim Willeford, Justin Williams, Lorene Williams, Helen Wilson, Calvin Winters, Mandi Womack, and Glenn Wright. Pray for NRHBC Staff and their families.

Pray for Ministries of NRHBC & Cross Church

Scott Maze, Senior Pastor requests prayer for:

☞ Friends, family & co-workers who are lost. Pray for people by name.

Danny Roberts, Executive Pastor requests prayer for:

- ☞ Wisdom in determining future Cross Church staff needs.
- ☞ Speedy cooperation from City of Ft. Worth on Cross Church construction permits.
- ☞ Preparations for Tailgate Sunday. That it will be used as an effective tool for evangelism and fellowship.
- ☞ Finishing the year well in finances and attendance.

Jeremy Winters, Cross Church Campus Pastor and Global Missions requests prayer for:

- ✝ Generous giving toward "Grow Together" building fund. We look forward to having our own building.
- 🌐 Effective strategy and leaders for community engagement.
- 🌐 God's direction in Missions & helping those in need.
- 🌐 Our search for a Cross Church Worship Pastor.

Music & Worship Ministry requests prayer for:

- 🎧 Christmas music preparations.

Jody Hayes, Wellness & Senior Adult Ministry requests prayer for:

- 🕊 Opportunities to share Christ with those who use the Wellness Center each week.
- 🕊 Vitality among senior adults as they serve Christ.
- 🕊 Each NRHBC widow to feel loved and experience ministry here.

MS, HS, & College Ministries requests prayer for:

- 📖 Students to be remember the reason for the season.

D'Ann Laywell, Women's Ministry requests prayer for:

- 👄 Women's as we carol to our shut-ins.

D'Ann Laywell-Children's Ministry & Caren Crow-Preschool Ministry & Sandra Zwerg-KID Worship Ministry requests prayer for:

- 🚲 Church families as they are traveling over the Christmas holidays.
- 🚲 ESL; an opportunity to minister to our community.
- 🚲 More volunteers needed at 9:30 and 11:00 so parents can attend Worship and BFGs.

Stuart Pendell, Couples Ministry requests prayer for:

- 🕊 Stronger, healthier, and happier marriages.
- 🕊 Those planning to attend the next "Re-Engage" class in January.

Daniel Stafford, GPS (Singles) Ministry requests prayer for:

- ☺ God's direction in the GPS (Singles) Ministry.

Joshua Jones, Director of Communications requests prayer for:

- 🕊 Courtney and I as we are about to start fostering. Prayer support to help raise these children to ultimately know and love Jesus.
- 🕊 More volunteers are needed for Media Ministry.

Bus Ministry requests prayer for:

- 🚍 Adult riders (18 yrs +) to assist each week or every other week; Sunday mornings and/or Wednesday evenings.

Numbers to call for Prayer Concerns:

International Mission Board
Prayer Line 1-800-395-PRAY (7729)
North American Mission Board Prayer
Line 1-800-554-PRAY (7729)
International Mission News
<http://www.imb.org>
North American Mission News
<http://www.namb.net>
General Prayer Requests
diane@nrhbc.org

North Richland Hills
Baptist Church
6955 Blvd. 26
North Richland Hills, TX 76180

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Let us pray for the special activities of our church

Dec 2—Women’s Ministry Caroling to Shut-Ins & Homebound Christmas Adoption
Dec 3—Deacon’s Meeting
Dec 3-10—Christmas Family Adoptions
Dec 6—Divorce Care “Surviving the Holidays”
Dec 8—WOW (Widows of Worth) Christmas Party
Dec 9 & 10—”Let There Be Light” Christmas Program, 6 p.m in Worship Ctr.
Dec 10—Baptism Sunday, Budget vote, Breakfast in Bethlehem@Cross Church
Dec 11—Mom to Mom
Dec 12—NRHBC Worship Ministry performance at NRH City Hall, 7 p.m.
Dec 13—Parents wrap Christmas Adoption presents in Fellowship Hall
Dec 15—Kids Night Out Friday Childcare & GPS (Singles) Christmas Party
Dec 17—Breakfast in Bethlehem for NRHBC Original Campus & Cross Church PM
Christmas Event.
Dec 24—Christmas Eve AM Service at 9:30 only, No Bible Fellowship Groups,
Childcare for Birth-4 years only & two evening services at 4 & 6.
Dec 25—Christmas Day!
Dec 31—New Years Eve AM Svc at 9:30 only, No Bible Fellowship Groups, &
Childcare for Birth-4 years only
Tuesday Morn Sr Bible Study & Tuesday Ministry Choir sings at various facilities
Homebound Ministry KID Worship Kids Beach Clubs
Ladies Prayer Group Library Ministry Media Ministry
Men’s Bible Study Men’s Ministry Music Ministry
NRHBC FineArtsAcademy New Members Ministry Pastor’s Prayer Team
Preschool Ministry Senior Adult Ministry Upward Basketball
Wednesday Night WILD Wellness Ctr Ministry Women’s Ministry
Young Singles 20s Thursday Night Bible Study Youth Ministry

Academy Home School Choir
Adopt-A-School Mentoring
Angel Land Preschool
Apartment Ministry
BSF Groups
Bus Ministry
Child Care Ministry
Children’s Choir
Children’s Ministry
College/Young Adults Ministry
Connect Classes
Couples Ministry
Cross Church Campus
Divorce Care
Divorce Care for Kids
ESL Program
Financial Peace University
Food Pantry
G.A.L.s Drama Group
Global Focus Ministry
Good News Club
GPS (Singles) Ministry
GPS (Singles) Book Club
GriefShare Ministry
Hispanic Ministry
Homebound Ministry