

Restoring Broken Trust, Joseph & Mary

by Michael Flowers

The sermon explores the theme of restoring broken trust through the story of Joseph and Mary, emphasizing God's redemptive plan amidst human struggles.

Duration: 22:13

Scripture: 2 Samuel 11, Matthew 1, Ephesians 1:17-18, Colossians 1:15-20, Hebrews 10:4

Topics: "Restoration"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker discusses the beginning of God's redemptive plan, which starts with a sex scandal involving Joseph and Mary. Joseph is troubled and disillusioned by Mary's pregnancy, but he decides to put her away quietly to avoid bringing shame upon her. The speaker emphasizes that God wants to give us dreams and visit us, even in the midst of our struggles. The birth of Jesus Christ is seen as the fulfillment of God's plan, as Jesus is the descendant of David and will reign forever.

Transcript

The first Sunday of Advent, we began taking a look at the end of the age, the first Sunday of Advent, the end of this present age in the consummation of Christ and his bride, the church. And I still remember that awesome sermon that Father Les gave about the marriage supper of the lamb and the preparations and all the Jewish typology that was in that gospel passage that we read for that first Sunday of Advent. And it is an odd way to begin, it's almost like one of those back to the future situations, you know, we began with the end of the world.

The first Sunday of Advent lets us know that we're not pretending that we're waiting on the birth of Christ. We're waiting on, as it were, another birth, another appearing. His final advent, his final appearing, the reconciliation of all things, all things disordered.

He's come to reconcile all things that are disordered by the reign of sin and death. Heaven and earth become reunited in the second advent of Jesus. So today we enter the climax of the advent season.

We celebrate what Israel has been waiting for, longing for that first advent of Messiah and how the coming of Christ revealed the universal, this is what they didn't know, the universal redemption of the whole world. First coming of Christ came in such paradoxical ways, few recognized him until after the resurrection, until the book of Acts begins after the day of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit comes and begins to open the eyes so that we could see that this Messiah is not only the Messiah for a little plot of land right in the

Middle East, all of creation is being made new. The reconciliation of all things is taking place.

So it's much bigger. It's much bigger than Israel had anticipated. Thank the Lord.

This Messiah is not merely the king of the Jews, but the Lord of the whole created order. And so today's gospel, we are in year a again today, we're going to look at Joseph more than we're going to look at Mary. Now, the birth of Jesus Christ took place.

In this way. We didn't read the context, but the first 17 verses is dealing with a lot of births. There's a lot of births in those first 17 verses, and there's a lot of drama.

There's a lot of sin in those first 17 verses. You've got Tamar, you've got incest in that story. For some reason, Matthew is trying to hook the disordered life of God's people.

This is all he has to work with. We're it. And this disordered life under the reign of sin and death, there was nothing perfect about it, but there was a plan set forth in the midst of the disorder after Adam and Eve disobeyed in the garden and set the trajectory towards sin and death.

That's what the people of God had to labor under, even though the promise was there, the promise was there, the promise that God would make all things new. And now that promise is coming to fulfillment in a very particular way. Matthew is not shy in pointing out the disorder and seeming flaws in Jesus' ancestry.

This is the ancestry of Jesus. We see children of incest, Perez of mixed races, Boaz and Ruth, which was against the law, right, a Moabitess and a Jew and of adultery. Solomon is in that and there's more.

And so in the ancestry of Jesus, we read of many births resulting from the broken condition of humanity. And this is really nothing new to our experience. It's not really new.

We say, yeah, we connect to this, but we find it may be odd connected to the ancestry of Jesus. But when you think about it, all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. Right.

And so the ancestry of Jesus is going to be in that same predicament. In this way, we enter the world. God enters our human history with all the dilemmas that most of us would be ashamed of.

Think about that. Your ancestry, you know, you may have some very colorful episodes in your own ancestry. I sure do.

Yeah. Just think about it where you came from. Paul asked that question to the Corinthians, right? He says, think about it.

Not many wise, not many noble, not many of high birth, but God has chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise. And that's showing up in the ancestry line of Jesus, even. Because all God can choose are the foolish things of the world.

In light of God, everything's kind of foolish in this broken condition that puts the light on God as being the loving, gracious one who has come to rescue us in some way. He's going like, I am coming to rescue my creation and coming to rescue them in a certain particular way. And I am not ashamed.

It says that Jesus in the book of Hebrews is not ashamed to call us brothers and sisters. Isn't that amazing? Advent is about resolving the reign of sin and death, bringing a resolution, bringing a rescue

plan. And so Matthew provides a unique contrast in God's plan.

Seventeen verses of just very shameful situations, especially David and Bathsheba, you know, Jesus is taking that lineage and he will reign forever and ever because of the seed of David out of the house of David, your seed will reign forever and ever. And Jesus is the the great fulfillment of that. And yet Bathsheba is in that line giving birth to Solomon.

Nothing is too difficult for God, it seems right. The birth of Jesus Christ then happened. In this way, not quite like the first 17 verses right in the beginning of the announcement and right in the beginning of the initiation of that plan, it seems like it's just more of the same.

We've got a guy who is very, very troubled and disillusioned because. The one in whom he is engaged to. Is pregnant.

And he knows something. There's one thing Joseph knows, I'm not the guy. Right.

Think about that. The restoration of the cosmos starts out with a sex scandal, supposedly, supposedly the climax of God's redemptive plan starts out with a broken hearted man, a disillusioned man. This is real stuff, right? It's not like the Hallmark greeting cards that we're going to send out to people, maybe, you know, where everything is nice and the manger is cozy.

And and Mary and Joseph just, you know, no problems in their lives whatsoever. Well, this is before all of that's happening. And they're having to deal with some marital conflict here, even though they're not fully married.

Some of the passages will say that they were married, they were betrothed, right? They were engaged. And there's a two stage marriage plan in the Jewish economy there. And so it was an arranged marriage.

And so they're right there in the middle of that engagement and coming together as husband and wife. And Joseph finds out right in the middle where we're finding out everything about our lives, right in the middle of all of this. Right.

The first advent and the second advent. Joseph is right there with this dilemma. He's presented with news that would require an uncommon trust.

Think about this, an uncommon trust in the midst of a broken heart. He's being challenged. He's being asked to do something in utter weakness already because he's his heart's broken, you know.

And he's not really making it about Mary. Or himself, he's he's trying in his sense of justice. Think the Lord that the Lord knew and chosen Joseph, that Joseph would be able to handle this dilemma.

And he's in turmoil. And it doesn't really say there's a lot of gaps in this gospel reading. And it doesn't really say how long that took place, how many nights that he couldn't sleep, you know, how many conversations with Mary.

Say it one more time. Say it one more time, Mary, that this is the Holy Spirit. And then he goes to the phone book and he says, now, is there a guy by the name of Holy Spirit here? I'm going to call him.

But that Holy Spirit's not in the phone book, you know. And so he's trying to get his head around this because this has never happened before. It's never happened before.

And so as he's thinking, he's devising a plan that's very, very proper and loving. He decides to put her away quietly. He doesn't want to bring shame on her.

And yet it's very hard in these village situations. Everybody knows already that they're probably engaged. Right.

And so how are you going to get yourself out of this? How are you going to explain this one? You know, we've had a lot of incidences in our lives where we go, how am I going to explain this? I think this tops it all. So he's called to grapple with all the inner turmoil that we all face. I mean, we face different kinds of inner turmoil, demands and letdowns and, you know, dashed hopes and expectations.

And so he searches his heart and he thinks of her best while grappling with his own heartache. And so I just think, again, you know, I have to underscore it in my own mind that God's climactic plan first introduces a struggle. You know, in Luke's gospel, it's really cool because the angel appears to Mary and sets her up, but she has to go back to Joseph.

Right. And so it'd been nice of the angel to go first before Mary arrived and told him the news. But that didn't happen.

And so here's the dilemma. God didn't send the angel like in the right timing. You get me.

Is God always on time for us? I mean, it seems like Advent is about waiting. And I know I've been waiting for certain things for a long, long, all of that, longer than that. I've been waiting for some things like my house to close and it still hasn't closed.

And I you know, it's just like poor me. You're buying a house and you're complaining. Yes, I'm sorry.

I've had to do a lot of repenting, you know, just because of the just all of the things that have been thrown into that closing. And I won't I'll spare you. But yeah, God doesn't seem to always be on time, but he's never late.

He's never late. He might be on my time, but he's never late. So shall the birth of Jesus Christ happen in this way where Joseph sat right there? When he's thought it through and he's got a plan to really divorce her and put her away quietly, he goes to sleep one night.

And apparently he was able to sleep because he had a dream and there is a calling in the dream to live the dream. He's being called to live this dream because of the content of this dream. It wouldn't be something that he dreamt and then it was over and he went on with his life.

It would be something that when he woke up and that's the phrase that's in Matthew, when he woke from the dream. He responded immediately, I mean, it was something that he realized, oh, I'm caught up in a drama now, I'm caught up in a story that I didn't realize that I was going to be brought into. You know, I didn't seek entryway into this chapter.

He's coming to faith, really, because the angel is showing up in the dream and he tells him some information that he has to believe or reject. Joseph, son of David, that's huge. Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

She will give birth to a son and you are to give him the name Jesus. You're going to name this child, Joseph, and by naming him, you're adopting him. That's what happens.

That's how he becomes his legal son when he names him. Because of the name Jesus, it says he will save his people from their sins, illustrated in the first 17 verses of the genealogy of Jesus Christ. That's some of the sins, the effect of the sin of the world, the whole sin issue that actually introduces death into our lives and we become mortal.

The wages of sin is death. That's what Jesus is coming to rescue us from. You're to give him the name Jesus because he will save his people from their sins.

Their sins does not put him off so that he refuses to save. It's their sins as the very reason that he's coming. He's coming into the muck and the mire of this present evil age.

As the king of glory. To be despised, to be rejected by his very own. That's how he saves us.

And all of this took place to fulfill what the Lord said through the prophet Isaiah, the virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and they will call him Emmanuel. Emmanuel, which means God. God is with us.

God is with us. OK, so that's the information. This son of Mary is conceived by the Holy Spirit.

You are to take him and name him Jesus, because this is what's prophesied in the scriptures in Isaiah seven, which we heard this morning. And they shall call him Emmanuel, God with us, God with us becoming one of us saves us. That's the way in which he saves us from our sins.

It's the only way he could do it. The blood of bulls and goats could not take away the sin. The blood of the Lamb of God could not take away the sin, but the precious blood of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is coming to be God with us.

And so when Joseph woke up and just read that figuratively with me, wouldn't that cause you to wake up in becoming Christians and coming into faith? We all have to wake up. And the only way we can wake up is by the Holy Spirit, by the spirit of wisdom and revelation opening our blind eyes. Right.

There's a veil over our eyes, it says, until the Lord removes the veil. The veil was removed in Joseph's life when the angel showed up and announced the gospel. See, the angel was preaching the gospel.

You're going to name him Jesus and he's going to be the savior of the world. He's going to save your people from their sins. That's gospel, right? That's part of it.

It's part of it. There's a lot more, but man, that's core. Everything gets bigger and bigger because of that.

He believes the gospel and responds to the gospel. That's the way we become Christians. That's the way Christ is incarnate in us.

That's the way his birth. That's the way he's conceived in us. It's the same way.

It's the same kind of conception. The Holy Spirit implants that living seed in us. And it's Jesus.

Jesus is that seed of Abraham. That puts us into that genealogy of restoration. And so when Joseph woke up.

Oh, God, let us wake up. He did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him. And took Mary home as his wife.

But he did not consummate that marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. That's the name above every name.

And every knee will bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord. Every day brings something to us that we have to struggle with. Sometimes some days we don't struggle, but there are many days that we are struggling.

And sometimes we find it difficult to trust in the midst of the struggle because the struggle wears us down or the struggle is like Groundhog Day. It's been there for a long time for some of us. Right.

And it never seems to go away. And yet God wants to give us dreams. He wants to give us dreams.

He wants to visit us and he wants to take that sense of. This is my life, you know, and this is the way it's always going to be. And he wants to take that inner self twisted talk.

Right. And he wants us to arise and wake up and say. God is with us in this struggle.

It doesn't always take the struggle away, but to know if God is for you and with you and in you, who can be against you. Right. And so I think the challenge for us, I know for me, is to believe that God is for me, in me and with me.

In the midst of the struggle, because sometimes I go, oh, this is here because he's not for me. He's angry, he's ticked off, you know, and it's kind of like your view of God is going to determine everything about the way you live. It's so important to have the right view of God because some of these things don't change.

But this is the one Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, today and forever. And he's come to pour his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit and he's given us. And so just ask yourself during this time of stress and trial, maybe increased pace in life and demands from family.

And I mean, it's a hard time for certain people. The holidays are a very, very hard time, a challenging time because we live in the genealogy of one through 17. Right.

We may be visiting broken homes and broken families and children from multiple situations. All of that's real. That's all what we live in.

Joseph and Mary knew about that and their lineage was the same way. And somehow in the midst of that, God wants to be with us by becoming one of us. I mean, he dares to become one of us.

One of us. Absolutely, one of us for the joy set before him, he endured the cross, despising its shame and sat down at the right hand of the majesty on high in the name of the father and the son and the.

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