

CHRISTMAS FOR THE REST OF US

Week 1: Rejecting Regret
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS



RECAP

In the first sermon in this Christmas series, Josh looks at the Christmas story and helps us discover that the first Christmas wasn't peaceful and silent, where all was calm and all was bright. Instead, we discover that Joseph dealt with something that many of still deal with today: regret.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Josh introduced the concept of regret by having fun with tacky Christmas sweaters. In that same vein, what's an embarrassing hairstyle or fashion trend that you proudly displayed when you were a kid but now regret as an adult?
2. When it comes to regrets, we all have them. Big or small, if you could go back and have a do-over in life (whether it was a sports game, a job interview, a poor choice or a relationship), what would you go back and change?
3. Read Matthew 1:18-19. Guys, assume your girlfriend or wife is pregnant and you're not the father. Ladies, assume you're pregnant and have to go around telling everyone that the Holy Spirit is the father. How believable is that story? If you were Joseph, would you have reacted any differently? Have you ever tried to convince somebody of something that was the truth but they didn't believe you?
4. How has regret negatively influenced your emotions, your state of mind and your relationships with others? How has regret kept you from becoming the person God wants you to be?
5. Read Matthew 1:20-25. From the angel's message, Josh gave four steps to keep regret from ruining Christmas. Discuss these four steps together (located on the Message Notes page). Which one is the easiest? Which one seems the hardest?

NEXT STEP

Focus in on step two of rejecting regret: find the purpose behind your pain. As you feel comfortable, share stories of how God has redeemed your past mistakes and how He's helped you find purpose behind your pain. Help those in your group explore what the purpose might be behind their biggest regrets.

For more information (training and support) on how to start and lead a small group, contact steve.lizzio@cbcva.org



CENTREVILLE BAPTIST CHURCH
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 9, 2018
WEEK 1: REJECTING REGRET
MATTHEW 1:18-25

BIG Idea: _____ doesn't have to
_____ your Christmas.

4 STEPS TO KEEP REGRET FROM RUINING YOUR CHRISTMAS

1. Bring your regret out _____.
2. Find the _____ behind the _____.
3. Take the _____ forward.
4. _____.

Bonus Content

Sunday (This Handout) - 7 Questions Worksheet on Matthew 1:20-21 and Small Group Questions for this week
Monday (Blog) - The First Christmas Would Have Never Been Shown on the Hallmark Channel
Wednesday (Facebook Live) - 6 Regrets We Have at Christmas
Thursday (Blog) - 4 Steps to Keep Regret From Ruining Your Christmas

For bonus content and much more, visit: joshdaffern.com

MATTHEW 1:20-21

joshdaffern.com

But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, 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, because he will save his people from their sins." *Matthew 1:20-21*

1. WHAT DID IT MEAN TO THE ORIGINAL READERS?

If you start with today you're twenty centuries too late.

In 2 Samuel 7:12-13, God promises to David that an offspring of his will one day be established on a throne that would endure forever. 1000 years later, that prophecy was fulfilled through Jesus. Jesus had no earthly father (being conceived by the Holy Spirit), so it was necessary for Joseph to take Mary as his wife to establish Jesus' legal Davidic lineage, since Joseph was a descendant of David. Similarly, to name this child (Jesus) was to formally acknowledge Jesus as his son, again establishing him as a son of David.

But just because this was a fulfillment of prophecy doesn't mean it was a smooth or seamless experience. Joseph felt such hesitation at taking Mary home as his wife because of her unexpected pregnancy that he decided to divorce Mary before Jesus' birth. The word "considered" in the original language speaks to the deep emotional struggle Joseph went through to come to this decision, one that was neither quick nor easy. Joseph needed a supernatural visit from a heavenly messenger to point him in the right direction. In the dream the angel reveals the divine origin of his fiancé's child as well as the world-changing mission that this child would one day embark on, a mission that would save not just the people of Israel, but ultimately the entire world.

GREEK WORD OF THE WEEK

Ἰησοῦς (*lēsous*) is translated into the English word 'Jesus' and this name has a rich history in the Old Testament, most notably being the Greek version of the Hebrew name Joshua, the mighty conqueror of the Promised Land. Joshua's original name was Hoshea (Numbers 13:8), later seen again in the prophet Hosea. The name Jesus also has a close resemblance to the Hebrew priest Jeshua, who helped lead the Jews back to God after the exile (Nehemiah 12:24). Thus this powerful name Jesus has association with the offices of prophet, priest and king.

2. WHAT'S THE CONTEXT? *Scripture without context makes no sense.*

The context for Matthew 1:20-21 is the greater birth story of Jesus of Nazareth. Matthew goes into exceptional detail connecting the birth and various aspects of the life of Jesus with Old Testament prophecy. Matthew was himself a Jew and wrote his eyewitness account of Jesus' life with a primarily Jewish audience in mind. He wanted his (Jewish) readers to understand that Jesus was the fulfillment of the whole of Old Testament prophecy. Immediately following these verses Matthew quotes the prophecy of Isaiah 7:14 and declares that Jesus is the fulfillment of that ancient declaration. All in all Matthew connects and quotes four Old Testament prophecies with the birth story of Jesus in the first two chapters of his eyewitness account.

3. WHAT TIMELESS TRUTHS ARE THERE?

Since the Word doesn't change it still matters today.

- The spiritual world is very much real and although it is unseen its effects are felt in our everyday world.
- God utilizes angels on occasion as messengers to communicate His will to humans.
- Jesus' birth, life and death were the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies given to the people of Israel hundreds of years before his birth.

5. HOW DOES IT APPLY TODAY? *Information without application becomes stagnation.*

- God doesn't always ask us to do things that seem easy or make sense. Following God will always require us to exercise faith.
- One of the greatest things we have to overcome and conquer when we follow God is fear. That's why the most commonly given command in Scripture is "Do not fear."
- God's redemptive work in your own life is a process and it will take time. We see this in the life of Jesus. God could have saved us in an instant, but instead He sent a child.

4. WHERE ELSE IN SCRIPTURE DOES IT SAY THIS? *The best interpreter of Scripture is Scripture.*

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. *Isaiah 7:14*

"But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel, whose origins are from of old, from ancient times." *Micah 5:2*

6. HOW SHOULD THIS CHANGE THE WAY I LIVE IN COMMUNITY? *The Bible comes alive in me when I live it in community.*

- What was something in the past that God asked you to do (a step of faith) that caused you to fear? What was your response and what has been the result?
- What is a step of faith in your life right now that you're hesitating to follow through with because of fear? How can Joseph's obedience embolden you in your faith to obey God?

7. HOW CAN MY LIFE GET BETTER BECAUSE OF THESE VERSES? *If I trust God and step in faith, what kind of life will God create?*

Many times we have an idealized picture of the first Christmas, of a silent night where all was calm and all was bright. Contrast that with our chaotic, frenzied, dysfunctional Christmas, and most of us will feel like our own experiences are falling far short. But the first Christmas wasn't as picture perfect as we imagine it to be. Joseph was racked with fear and struggled with regret. He worked through a deeply difficult relational issue with his fiancé Mary, but finally obeyed God and took a step of faith, a step that would eventually change the world. If God could make something beautiful out of the fractured, fear-filled first Christmas, then just imagine what He could do through your broken, messed up, fear-filled life! God has amazing things in store for your faith-filled future!