

Marinating in God's Word: Matthew 1:18-25

Advent: it's the season when we both anticipate and yearn for good news, with our urgency rising each week. Our scripture today is one of anticipation and yearning too.

For further reflection on your own or in a small group, consider these questions:

- Joseph and Mary were betrothed – like our engagement, but more (fully committed to each other, but not yet married, not living together). When he learned she was pregnant, the law made it clear that he should divorce her for unfaithfulness. Joseph was a “righteous man” – thus his intent to honor the law and divorce her (v. 19). But v. 19 also tells us that he wanted to avoid disgrace her, which means he was also kind and loving. When have you found keeping the law at seeming odds with being loving? What did you do?
- Joseph wanted to obey God's word in general, as it came through the scripture. But he also was intent on obeying God's word as it came to him specifically via a dream telling him to marry Mary (v. 20). How did he sort out that seeming conflict? When have you made a hard decision to obey God's word in scripture? Have you ever had a specific direction from God (like the word in the dream)? What did you do?
- The angel also told him to name the child Jesus. The name means “the Lord saves” – significant! And having Joseph name him meant in their culture that he was acknowledging the son as his own – in this case adopting Jesus. What did that mean for Jesus? For Joseph?
- The passage also mentions two other names for Jesus. Read through and find them (check vv. 18, 23). What do these names mean?

Next week as Advent continues we will again focus on Matthew 1:1,18-25.