

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:

- We've become familiar with the four "gospels", Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. As a literary genre, how would you describe a gospel? How is Matthew's gospel distinct from and similar to the other three?
- As far as we know, Joseph and Mary were typical of the people who lived in Nazareth. What do we know about each, and what might they have expected for the course of their lives before Jesus entered their picture? How did Jesus impact them immediately – just through the events we see here in chapter one?
- The Gospel of Matthew is about Jesus. But in telling his story, Matthew also tells about people who met Jesus, and in our verses, that is Mary and Joseph. How do they become part of the good news?
- Think about when and where you grew up. Maybe you knew the Lord already. If so, imagine what the course of your life would have been without Jesus. What factors would have shaped your life, and how might it have gone? If you didn't know the Lord when you were young, recall what you expected your life course to be. How has Jesus changed the expected course of your life?
- What part of your life most readily portray the good news of Jesus?

Next week as Advent continues we will consider the whole story of Jesus' birth in song.