

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

During Advent we have anticipated God's goodness in the gift of his Son through the stories of John the Baptist and Mary. Today, on the cusp of Christmas, Joseph's story.

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

- How many words from Joseph does the Bible have? Trick question! None. What can you glean about Joseph even without hearing him?
- Joseph and Mary were betrothed – like our engagement, but more (fully committed but not yet married, nor living together). When Joseph learned she was pregnant, the law directed divorce. Joseph was a “a righteous man” - thus, his intent to honor the law and divorce her (v. 19). But the same verse also tells us that he wanted to avoid disgracing her, which means he was also kind and loving. When have you found keeping the law apparently at odds with showing love? What did you do?
- Joseph sought to obey God's word in general, as it came through scripture. But he also sought to obey 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?

Next Sunday, on New Year's Eve, the sermon will focus on several scriptures: Psalm 100; 1 Corinthians 1:4-9, Nehemiah 9:5b-37; Luke 5:17-16; Joshua 4:1-9 and Matthew 7:24-27.