

straight from The Heart

The Silent Lessons of Christmas



Christmas is all about Jesus, yet many of the essential figures of the nativity are still recognizable, well maybe, except for Joseph.

THE ANGELS take centre stage to announce the birth of the Saviour. They appear to Joseph to announce that the name of the child would be Jesus.

The VIRGIN MARY, whose Divine selection humbles her, offers her beautiful hymn and thanksgiving in Luke 1:46-48.

The WISE MEN are desperate in their search to find the newborn king and prepared to divest themselves of treasures to present Him with gifts of worship. In Matthew 2:2

The SHEPHERDS became early evangelists! In Luke 2.

Oddly enough, only Joseph has no speaking part. He is the silent member of the cast and often forgotten. No notable lines are attributed to him. No sound bites. No quotes, only silence.

However, while Joseph is the forgotten figure of Christmas, he is irreplaceable in the story of Jesus' birth. Through Joseph, God protected the unborn life of Jesus and preserved human life for the Savior.

Joseph's life teaches us 3 lessons; each important in preserving and realizing God's purpose and promise in our lives.

A LESSON IN RIGHTEOUS MERCY

Joseph heard the news of Mary's pregnancy, unexpectedly. Heart-broken and betrayed, he was unsure of how to respond, it was difficult for him. Her explanation of the pregnancy was unbelievable, even profane, and did nothing to ease Joseph's emotional pain.

If Mary would not have been stoned on the charge of adultery, she could

have been stoned on the charge of serious blasphemy. However, Joseph chooses the path of mercy... V. 19 - *Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly.*

It is the righteous mercy of Joseph, which preserved the life of Mary and preserved the unborn Christ. This merciful carpenter would raise a merciful Savior.

GOD'S PROMISES ARE PRESERVED IN PLACES OF OBEDIENCE

When people deserve the sentence of justice, choose a righteous mercy, which extends patience, grace, encouragement, prayer, empathy...

A LESSON IN REDEMPTIVE FAITH

The unborn plans of God are also protected by redemptive faith. We see this in Joseph's faith, his willingness to believe God. In Joseph's dream, God reminded him of His God-given

identity. God's angelic messenger addressed Joseph with a unique title, "Joseph, Son of David."

Do you understand that in Christ, you have a special identity as a member of His family and that God knows who you are? With that recognition, we come into the confidence of His working through our circumstances to perfect His purpose.

Next, God assured Joseph that he did not have to be afraid. Fear is the enemy of faith and steals our hope.

Third, God gave Joseph direction. He was to take Mary as his wife and be a father to the child, whom he would give the name - Jesus. Be teachable and allow His instruction.

A LESSON IN READY OBEDIENCE

Obedience followed Joseph's faith. With an informed faith to trust God, Joseph obeyed. He took Mary to be his wife and suffered the caustic remarks, a result of a child conceived prior to wedlock.

He would also obey by giving this child the name given by the Angel, the name JESUS - a name declaring the God, who saves.

Herod can't destroy you in a place of obedience. God's promises are preserved in places of obedience. Mercy. Faith. Obedience. Each is important to preserve and realize God's purpose and promise in our lives.

Are you waiting on a particular promise? Are you looking for an answer to a prayer? Continue in mercy, faith, and obedience and God will soon answer you.

Merry Christmas!

Olayemi Adeleke

