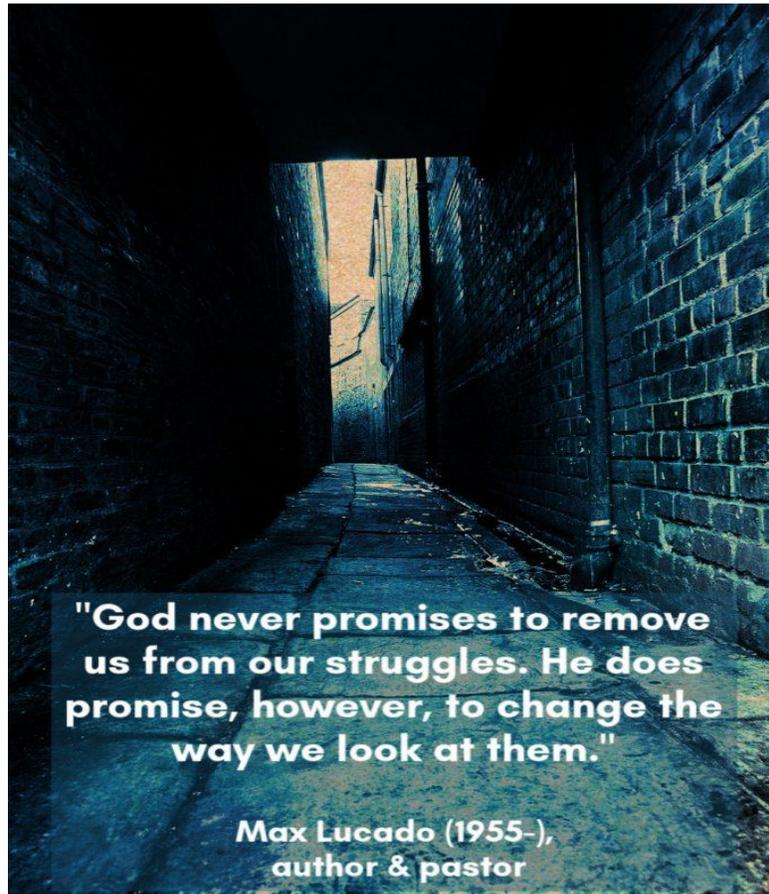


Minster Bethel Congregational Church (MBCC)

06/12/2020 – Joseph

Joseph-Our attitude to Christmas



Next week is our prayer tree and gift service where we bring gifts to go to the refuge. If you want to donate a gift please let one of the deacons or Brigade officers know and they will arrange to collect them.

All lockdown services can be found at: www.mbccs.co.uk

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

Good morning and welcome to our journey to Christmas.

Our carol today is “God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen”

[GOD REST YE MERRY GENTLEMEN by PENTATONIX - YouTube](#)

God rest ye merry, gentlemen, Let nothing you dismay
Remember, Christ, our Saviour Was born on Christmas day
To save us all from Satan's power When we were gone astray
O, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy
O, tidings of comfort and joy

In Bethlehem, in Israel This blessed Babe was born
And laid within a manger Upon this blessed morn

The which His Mother Mary Did nothing take in scorn
O, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy
O, tidings of comfort and joy

"Fear not then, " said the Angel "Let nothing you affright
This day is born a Saviour Of a pure Virgin bright

To free all those who trust in Him From Satan's power and might"
O, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy
O, tidings of comfort and joy

God rest ye merry, gentlemen Let nothing you dismay
Remember, Christ, our Saviour Was born on Christmas day
To save us all from Satan's power When we were gone astray
O, tidings of comfort and joy, comfort and joy
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Our reading today are taken from Matthew 1:18-25

[Matthew 1: 18-25 NIVUK - Joseph accepts Jesus as his son - This - Bible Gateway](#)

Over the next few weeks people will ask you "Are you ready for Christmas?"

What is really being asked is, "Have you put up all your Christmas decorations? Have you finished your Christmas shopping? Have you sent your Christmas cards? Are you ready for Christmas?"

Sometimes the Christmas season becomes very hectic, & because of that we tend to forget reason for the season.

I heard a story of a little girl who watched her mum & dad getting ready for Christmas. To her, it seemed that dad was preoccupied with burdens & bundles, & mum was concerned about parties & presents, & they just had no time for her. She felt that she was being shoved aside. In fact, it seemed to her that she was always being told, "Would you please get out of the way?" So one night in December she knelt beside her bed & prayed this prayer, "Our Father who art in heaven, please forgive us our Christmases as we forgive those who Christmas against us."

What if when we were asked "Are you ready for Christmas?" we thought about our attitudes. What are the right attitudes we ought to have so that Christ becomes real in our homes & in our lives?

Joseph isn't in the spotlight very long, & we don't know much about his life. But Joseph can teach us a lot about attitudes.

First of all, Joseph teaches us, **to be ready to accept God's Will**, whatever it might be.

Put yourself in his position. Joseph thought his life was pretty well planned. He was pledged to be married, which means that he & Mary had made all necessary arrangements, & the wedding ceremony was soon to take place. Joseph knew that he & Mary would be married, & that they would settle down in Nazareth. He would continue on in his carpentry business, & they would live happily together ever after. But then Mary came to him & said, "Joseph, I am expecting a baby." He knew the child was not his, & so the only conclusion he could reach was that she had been unfaithful. She had broken the bond that existed between them. According to the law, Mary should be stoned to death. But Joseph loved her so much that he didn't want that. So he decided to divorce her quietly. As he was thinking about this, an angel came to Joseph in a dream & in effect said, "Joseph, trust God. He is in this. You may not understand all that is happening, but just trust God & everything will be all right."

Joseph was evidently a man of faith. But sometimes it is hard to live by faith. If God always does what we expect Him to do, then maybe it's easy to have faith. But when God doesn't do what we expect, then it's hard.

We find ourselves in much the same position as Joseph. Christmas comes as a time of peace, but there is conflict. Christmas comes as a time of joy, but there is so much sadness. Christmas comes as a time of love, but there is so much hatred in our world.

We cry out, like Joseph must have cried out, "God, how can this be?" But like Joseph we hear a still small voice from God saying, "Trust Me."

God's ways are not always our ways. His thoughts are higher than our thoughts, & we may never understand everything that God is doing this side of heaven, but God says, "Trust Me, & it will all work out."

Christmas happened because Joseph trusted God. And we must learn to trust God, too.

The second thing Joseph teaches us is this, **"We must learn to care about others."**

You know, Joseph's assignment was a pretty simple one, & that is the way we often portray him in our Christmas plays. We picture Mary looking so angelic. Over here are excited shepherds, & even though they don't show up until later, over there are the wise men with their gifts of gold, frankincense & myrrh.

In the midst of them all is the Christ child in the manger, looking so pure & clean. Then there is Joseph. His isn't a starring role, but his part is so important. His task is this, "Take care of Mary & the baby Jesus." Joseph had the important role of caring for the needs of others.

Christmas comes once a year, & this season probably causes us to be more sensitive to the needs of others. There is so much to be done that we often find ourselves frustrated. But still we try. Maybe the finest descriptive title that can be given a church is this, "a church that really cares."

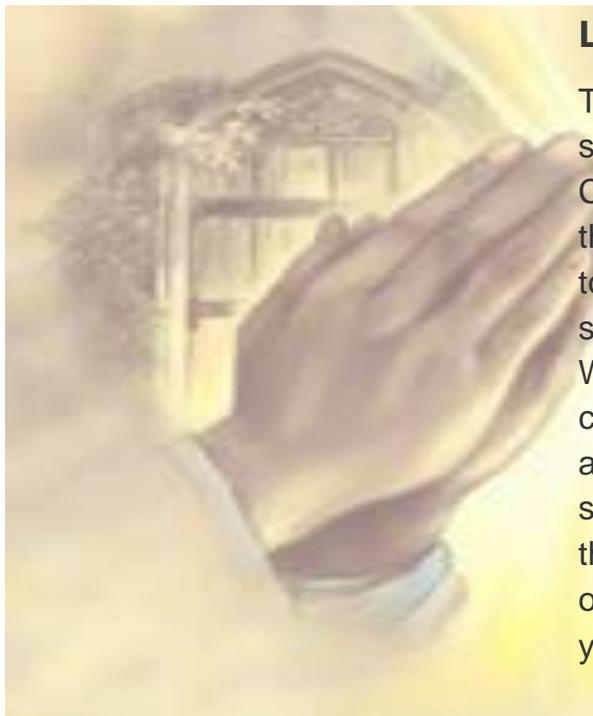
Christmas came because Joseph cared about Mary & Jesus. It will also come for us when we, too, learn to care about others.

Thirdly, Christmas came because Joseph **gave**. He gave whatever he had to give.

He didn't know that after Jesus was born that he would have to take Mary & the baby down into Egypt. He didn't know that he would be separated from his home town & his loved ones there for a long period of time. He didn't know all the demands that would be made on his time & his pocketbook. But whatever God asked of him, Joseph freely gave.

Are you getting ready for this very strange Christmas? I don't know if we will be able to get all your shopping done or not. We don't know what we will be able to attend and how our usual will happen.

But we do know that Christmas will happen and because Joseph accepted God's Will, cared for those around him and gave of himself that we will be able to celebrate the true reason for the season. I hope in these extraordinary time that you are getting ready in attitude. I hope you are getting ready for the real spirit of Christmas to come, because if you're ready for that, it'll happen. Even this year it'll happen in the greatest way of all.

A close-up photograph of a hand with fingers spread in a prayer gesture. The background is a soft-focus image of a church building with a steeple, set against a bright, hazy sky. The overall tone is warm and spiritual.

Let us pray.

Thank you, God, that even in these strange times we can still prepare for Christmas. As we prepare help us to have the right attitude towards the season. Help us to accept Your Will, in these times when we so often ask why? Help us remember Your Will be done. We know Your Will includes caring for others so help us care for those around us and make time for those that are struggling. We also pray that we approach the season giving to others and not wanting or taking so that we can truly receive from you all that you give. Amen.



An angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. He said, "Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. She will have a Son, and you will name Him Jesus."

MAY GODS BLESSING SURROUND YOU

EACH DAY

AS YOU TRUST HIM AND WALK IN HIS

WAY;

MAY HIS PRESENCE WITHIN

GUARD AND KEEP YOU FROM SIN.