

12172023 final.as we continue our Christmas series...Hidden in Plain sight... **God hides his plan, and methods in plain sight ...Why?? keeps the enemy off balance...and his people walking in faith... it is his principle of operation generally speaking.** The promise as foretold is hidden in the shoot that sprouts from the stump of King David's lineage, a shoot that hardly anyone notices...As Isaiah tells us...

*NLT ISA 11:1 Out of the stump of David's family will grow a shoot— yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.*

- A stump is a sawed off tree at ground level... **one already cut down, used up and left for dead...one considered of no further use....**
- This would be symbolically the kind of person who God would use to produce the shoot from which to save humans ... someone overlooked By both man and the enemy... but perfect for God's purposes!
- I find this a hopeful message. For not many of us came from giant redwoods majestically towering over all life in the forest...symbolically speaking...
- Yet Somehow, we often expecting loud and impressive events as a way of displaying God's favor or ways...and we often think that is the best way to convince others of God's saving power; but over and over again I am reminded that spectacles, power plays, and big events are the ways of the world. But it is not...
- **And again we se this principle displayed in Joseph the last family member in the Christmas story of Jesus birth..... As God often does he called a couple..but he started with Mary three months previously...it is now time to bring her future husband Joseph into the loop...though always included in God's plan, it does not get revealed to him until God wants it too...**
- **though Joseph had already been prepared unbeknownst to him ....as his lineage is from the tribe of Judah and the root of David ...all of which he had nothing to do with .... ..as prophesied in the Old Testament..**
- **Luke tells us the story of Mary...Matthew tells us the story of Joseph...**

We pick this up in chapter 1 of Matthew's Gospel ...as the generations of his lineage to David are given...and of which he had not say...the prep work by God in his life was already in motion...

*NLT Matt 1:1 This is a record of the ancestors of Jesus the Messiah, a descendant of David and of Abraham*

**God is a Genius...if you were the enemy who also has access to the word of God ... **you would know two things...****

- It started with Abraham...He was the root of the Hebrew nation...fourteen Generations later from Abraham's son Isaac whose son Jacob whose son Judah....would come the lineage of David...the root of Jesse

**What he would not know...is there would be 28 generations from the lineage of David would come Jesus... ....do you have any idea how many sons of the line of David that would be? a whole lot!!!**

- **That would keep the enemy totally engaged in trying to keep track...from whom the Messiah would be born...**

*NLT <sup>MT 1:</sup> 16 Jacob was the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary. Mary gave birth to Jesus, who is called the Messiah. <sup>17</sup> All those listed above include fourteen generations from Abraham to David, fourteen from David to the Babylonian exile, and fourteen from the Babylonian exile to the Messiah.*

- **OT Scripture does not explicitly say there would be 28 generations from David to the time of the Messiah...just a little detail that was told after the fact!!....**

**That many generations of people from the line of 'David would keep the enemy totally engaged in trying to keep track...from whom the Messiah would be born...** Both Mary and Joseph were descendants of King David. Therefore, Mary provided the biological connection between King David to Jesus Christ. Joseph provided the legal connection or right of royal ascension to the Davidic throne.

- **So for 28 generations the enemy was kept very busy ...but always off balance and ultimately frustrated...**

**And absolutely fooled when it happened... ..**

*NLT <sup>MT 1:</sup> 18 This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup> Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.*

- **These two verses do not begin to address the emotional devastation, relational conflict and inner conflict that Joseph and Mary would**

experience in the explanation Mary would give to Joseph upon her return after three months away visiting Elisabeth.

- At this time Mary who would have been pledged/engaged/betrothed and considered legally married to Joseph though not officially wed ...was pregnant...and not by him..
- **Imagine the stress Mary was under....adultery was an offense which could be punishable by death...\**
- **Saying yes to God is sure paying off...**
- **Most people can deal with beginning stress...and still have faith...**
- **Will we say yes when saying yes includes life going sideways? Was Mary's yes to God request as strong now as it was earlier? Now that it appears her choice to follow God is costing her greatly...**
- **And Joseph** would be highly emotionally charged, mentally stressed, disillusioned, justified feeling betrayed...
- **His whole world and future ...blown up in his face....Mary had an affair on Him and is now pregnant... and her story!!**
- **Mary certainly would have told him happened...which he probably dismissed outright in his mind was she not only an adulterer but a liar also...**
- We are not given a time line... So his wrestling with this situation could have taken days, or weeks ...

Verse <sup>19</sup> *Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man ...*

**.tells us three things...the first he is a righteous man...**

- **Joseph was Righteous... What exactly is Righteousness ...Righteousness is doing that which is right in the eyes of God... righteousness is not just running away from sin...righteousness is is doing the right thing in the eyes of God when it all goes wrong!!...and when you have been wronged!**
- **\*\*\*What Does righteousness look like..... Righteousness is first of all Prayerfulness...No doubt Joseph prayed and prayed fervently. What do I do??? Maybe even a prayer like Thomas Merton used to pray..**

My Lord God, I have no idea what to do or where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end.

Nor do I really know myself, and the fact that I think I am following your will does not mean that I am actually doing so.

But I believe that the desire to please you does in fact please you. And I hope that I have that desire in all that I am doing. I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire. And I know that if I do this you will lead me by the right road though I may know nothing about it.

Therefore will I trust you always though I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and will never leave me to face my perils alone.

### 1. apparently the Lord was silent...so he had to make a decision

**\*\*\*Second when one is righteous they are thoughtful...he would consider what would be the right thing to do... (Matthew 1:19,20).**

- So the first thing he did was to do nothing. He 'considered' the situation. For days, or even weeks ...we are not told..... who knows?
- The moral for us: when you have to make a difficult decision, don't be in a hurry: more mistakes are made by haste than by delay.
- He would consider the big picture of his decisions.....For he and Mary both lived in the same town. They were brought up in the same community. They both lived in Nazareth...they had family and friends...how would this effect all involved...**it was bigger than only his hurt!**
- How would consider that Mary had been honest open and truthful and faithful. did her character really change that much?. **In his pain he still had empathy for her**....why make up such a ridiculous story??... I could go and see Elizabeth to verify at least that part...
- He needed to think this through....He thought before he acted...and apparently God was silent during this time...of anguish and inner struggle...

And he knew he would have to make do something...but the right thing

**So lets consider his options...**

**Option 1** he could expose her and make her a public disgrace. After all he was wronged!!! And had not only a cultural right but a religious right to seek Justice, to get even...he could destroy her for betraying him....sweet revenge!

1. And Joseph would have considered doing that very thing, but perhaps his love and his compassion for Mary would not permit that kind of severe treatment.

**So Option 2** He could choose to quietly divorce her and protect her life, even though she had betrayed him...for her actions would bring enough shame and negative consequences on their own to her... no need for him to pile on....let her, go quietly to live her life and pick up the pieces of her life and the child she was carrying.... And he would pick up the pieces of his...

**Option 3.** He could continue and try to forgive and carry on with the betrothal and Marry Her, raise the child as his own...and suffer the disgrace of getting her pregnant before they were married...And bear the heavy cultural and religious burden, scrutiny and judgment from their sphere of social, family,and religious relationships. apparently that was not going to work for him... **he was unwilling to continue the relationship...**

**Also Option One: was not going** was not going to work for him **as he was unwilling to put her through public humiliation and disgrace by exposing her infidelity**

**\*\*\*\*\*He chose option two...put their relationship to an end by divorcing her quietly...then pick up his life...and she could go on with hers and the child's.**

**This choice reveals Another character quality of his Righteousness**

**Three...Joseph was Humble... Humble people have a great advantage over other men...**

- **They don't have to defend their pride... .. they have a healthy self respect... They do not have to stoop to revenge to soothe their deep hurt. He did not return hurt for hurt As An eye for an eye makes everyone blind...**
- 1. **They don't have to be people pleasers...if that betrays their morals...their self worth is not dependent on the approval of others...and so betray their own values...**
- 2. **Humble people leave room for God to call the on their actions... Which means they are willing to give God the final say.....**
- 3. **Humility means we do not condemn...Joseph knew all are fallible...**

- So Joseph decides to quietly...not gossip nor slander, and not play the victim or martyr card seeking sympathy,...he will simply release her from her vow.
- With the decision probably came a deep restful sleep...

**\*\*\*Then God intervened...with a different plan...**

*NLT MT 1: 20 As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. "Joseph, son of David," the angel said, "do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. 21 And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus,<sup>[i]</sup> for he will save his people from their sins." 22 All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet: 23 "Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means 'God is with us.'"* Well that was the end of that night's sleep... **I have a question ...Why did God wait to give him his plan until after Joseph came to a good and righteous decision...would have saved a lot of time...mental agony...emotional anguish...relational upheaval...**

- Would it have been easier and a whole lot less traumatic for Mary and Joseph for the angel Gabriel to stand alongside Mary as she breaks the news to Joseph?
- Or even the angel do the talking?? He's done it twice already..
- And how about Zechariah and Elizabeth showing some support making the trip back to Nazareth coming along to cushion the blow and be there for support and comfort... ???
- and why did God let him toss and turn for however many nights it took him to come to this decision?

**I will tell you what I think! A person has to be able to Minister to themselves and choose to do the right thing...when the wrong thing is an enticing temptation to get even....this kind of self control has to be exerted if they are ever going to reach the destiny God has for them...**

- **Your mind has to be able to overcome your feelings what is the right thing to do!!!**
- **Your feelings can take you down many destructive options...and you yourself have to mature to the place of giving yourself good counsel...**
- **To convince yourself To act in accordance to what you know is the will of God!!**

- If you cannot make that a practice in the little day to day things, you will in no way be able to make right decisions in the greatest trials and challenges
- **And apparently this was Joseph's practice in smaller issues ....**
- **So God let Joseph wrestle with Joseph to do what is right in this huge issue ...and this righteous man proved his righteousness as shown by His Godly decision...**

*NLT MT 1: 24 When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. 25 But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.*

**Tim write put these up...So how do we become all that God would have us be?...**

1. **You seize it one opportunity at a time...**all Joseph had to do was marry Mary.

- following God is always one step at a time...count the cost but you only have to live it one day at a time

2. **Do not focus on the hardships...but doing the best with what you have...**

- **If God thought he could handle this...Then dang it he could handle this!!!**
- **He did not disqualify himself if God didn't...**with negative thoughts like...I can't raise the Messiah...I don't know the Bible well enough...instead I will teach him how to build things...I am a carpenter...
- And carpentry was a skill Jesus developed and used successfully until he was thirty... actually time wise he did it much longer than his official ministry.

3. **Don't let what you can't do or understand, keep you from doing what you can... and he could Obey!!**

- He knew obedience was best...He did not know how to raise the son of God...but he could learn...he could work and he could be a good husband...now... and and he was willing to live with uncertainty...
- He would live with a greater purpose then he had ever thought possible!!  
And so can you!!

**Be alert for God's plan in your crisis!!!!** Let's get something clear here...if God is in it...it is a win/win...since he never fails... When it comes to God...you will never give up more than you will receive...

The regrets we will have at the end of our lives will be that we didn't seek God more or seek God sooner or take advantage of the opportunities he sent our way.... So Joseph grabbed on to God's plan and let go of His...and he never regretted it!! *May that be our legacy also*

