

**Songs of the Season**  
**Joseph - The Gift of Obedience**  
**Matthew 1:18-25; 2:13-23**

Luke 2:1-5 gives us the reason for the season.

For Joseph, there are more questions than answers

While the other characters are given a clear sign of what God was doing, Joseph only had a dream. He had to trust that what he was told during his sleep was from God. He chose to obey God and, in doing so, set an example for us to follow.

### **1. Joseph Obeyed God in Difficult Times**

Obedying God is challenging because we want to do what we want to do, however...the general challenge is intensified when you throw in difficulties.

Joseph has a plan...avoid the difficult times. Matthew 1:18-19

Joseph has a plan. It is a benevolent plan. He is going to step away quietly, so Mary is not exposed. He is not running away. He is planning to do a righteous thing here. There is only one problem with his plan...it is not God's plan. Matthew 1:20-25

During the most difficult time of Joseph's life, God called him to be obedient.

Obedience is not about who is watching or who knows what. Obedience is about trusting God's plan even when it seems impossible and doesn't make sense. Joseph is obedient because he is a righteous man who trusts God's plan is the best plan.

John 16:33 Christ has overcome the world! Do not be afraid when difficult times come! He is asking you and me to trust!

You experience peace when you obey God during the difficulties of life.

### **2. Joseph Obeyed God in Distant Places**

Joseph will have three dreams, three visits from the angel. The first comes when he is instructed to take Mary as his wife even though she is pregnant. The second comes after the Magi make their visit to see the Christ child. Matthew 2:13-14

God instructs Joseph to take Mary and child to Egypt to escape King Herod's genocide of all baby boys under the age of two to kill the Messiah. Herod was paranoid that the Messiah would dethrone him. So, the Angel in Joseph's second dream says, "Take the family to Egypt." Egypt. Egypt is not a "safe place" ...it is a "safer place." "This is a foreign land. Joseph, Mary, and Jesus are refugees, seeking asylum from a tyrannical ruler. They will stay here two years.

Do you feel distant from God? If you feel this way, remember this: God has not moved, you have. Because of sin, choices, or circumstances, you have moved away from God. Your fellowship with Him may be broken, but your relationship is never broken. John 10:27-30; Matthew 28:20; 1 Cor. 6:19

### **3. Joseph Obeyed God in Daily Life**

The final dream we have of Joseph's is a calling back to "home". Matthew 2:19-23  
Joseph's life is instructive for each of us: *God uses life's circumstances and challenges to work in you to accomplish His plans.* Isaiah 11:1. God was using Archelaus and working through Joseph to make this come true. So, Joseph took his family to Nazareth instead of Judea.  
*It is the day-to-day obedience in your life that builds up the bedrock of being a disciple of Christ.*  
Matthew 7:24-25

Hearing the word is good but obeying it or "putting it into practice" is the key to your handling the storms of life. This is a challenge for most of us. You and I get wrapped up in ourselves, that we sometimes live life on autopilot. We get sidetracked by life that we don't even consider obeying God; or we think that our way of handling the situation or problem is better than God's way, and therefore, we choose not to obey.

This Advent and Christmas, take the time to write down the different ways you are going to seek being more obedient to God. This is a great way to make a fresh commitment to Him and to remind yourself what obedience to God looks like.

### **4. An Offering of Obedience**

Joseph was an ordinary man who desired to follow God's will. God said go, and Joseph said, "Okay." He didn't know how this journey would end, or what would happen along the way, he just obeyed. You don't need your name in the history books. You are called to obey God and His Christ. Romans 12:1