

Answers to Sermon Notes

“Peace, Be Still”

Matthew 1:18-25

11/28/21

1. What kinds of things cause you to **worry**?
 - a. Worry is at the **center** of the **human** experience, isn't it?
 - a. And everywhere you look you see people **trying** to **deal** with it.
2. The biblical word for this, by the way, is **fear**.
 - a. There are no Greek words for **worry**, **anxiety**, or **stress**.
 - b. While giving it other names might be helpful to **distinguish** it from other **fears**, it is helpful, I think, to realize what it really is.
 - c. As such, it is the **enemy** of that for which we just lit a candle: **peace**.
3. When I was a child, I **worried** about all kinds of things.
 - a. By the time I was in middle school, it was somewhat **debilitating**.
 - b. And I **needed** to **learn** how to deal with it.
 - a. I knew that trusting **myself** wouldn't work.
 - b. I knew that trusting the **odds** wouldn't work.
 - c. I knew that trusting the **experts** wouldn't work.
 - d. Only trusting **God** would work.
4. It was clear from the scriptures that God **doesn't want** his children to worry, and give us many reasons not to worry, calling on us to **trust him**.
 - a. But, **what** does that really mean – what are we **trusting** about God?
 - b. And **how** does one do that in a way that works?
5. These are the two questions at the **heart** of our passage today.
 - a. Though Joseph's situation was **unique**, the answer to his fear is also the answer to **ours**.
 - a. And it is at the **center** of the Christmas story, for at the center of the Christmas story is dealing with our **fears**.
6. First, we need to look at **what** it meant for Joseph to **trust God** in this moment – what was he needing to trust?
 - a. To trust that this was, indeed, the **call** of **God**. (vs. 20)
 - a. Given that Joseph was a **righteous man**, he could never be at peace unless he was assured that he was on a **righteous path**.
 - i. **Peace** is only possible for the righteous. (Psalm 85:8-10, Isaiah 48:22)
 - ii. Therefore, in order for the righteous to **live in peace**, they must be confident that they are on a righteous path, or that they are walking their path **righteously**.
 - a. This comes to us through the **confirmation** of his **word**.
 - b. While this path is unique to Joseph, the dynamics of **dealing** with his **fear** are not.
 - b. To trust that the **purposes** of God in this call will, indeed, be **achieved**. (vs. 21)
 - a. Righteous paths are filled with **uncertainties**.
 - i. Even here, **infant mortality** was 25-30%.

- ii. Not to mention the other **challenges** they would face. (vs. 19)
 - b. We need to be assured that walking the path will not be in **vain**. (I Corinthians 15:58, Job 42:2, Revelation 3:7)
 - c. To trust that this is all somehow part of the **grand mission** of God. (vs. 21)
 - a. That the good that is achieved will have **eternal** significance.
 - i. “The things that **make** for peace,” lead to peace. (Luke 19:41-44)
 - a. And is the work of every **disciple**. (Matthew 5:9, John 14:27)
 - ii. While it may be **easier** to **see** in Joseph’s case, the same is true for us. (Ephesians 2:8-10)
7. And that leads us directly into **how** Joseph was to **trust** in God.
 - a. By faithfully and obediently **following** the word of God to him. (vs. 24-25)
 - a. **Facing** the fear.
 - b. Trusting in God is always an **active** thing, and it is always focused on the **positive**.
 - a. This is why we are told to bring our concerns to God, “with **thanksgiving**.” (Philippians 4:4-7)
 - b. “Aim to **hit** a spot, not to **avoid** an area.” Jack Nicklaus
 - c. Though Joseph’s fears were largely focused on the potential **shame** and **social** difficulties he and Mary would endure, God does not **address** any of those issues with him.
 - i. His **relationships**?
 - ii. His **livelihood**?
 - d. Instead, he focuses his attention on **trusting** and **following** him.
 - e. **The rest** will take care of itself.
8. So, God doesn’t address Joseph’s fears by **taking away** the cause of them, but rather by **assuring** him of his purposes in, and control of, the situation, and that it is central to his grand mission of **redemption**.

Application

1. What kinds of things **worry** you?
 - a. When it comes to dealing with **fear** only trusting **God** will bring peace.
 - i. Trusting **what**?
 1. that this path is the **call** of God?
 2. that his **purposes** will be achieved?
 3. that this is part of his grand and **eternal** mission?
 - a. That there is a **greater** peace coming.
 - ii. Trusting **how**?
 1. Obediently **following** his word down the path.
 - a. Including **prayer**, which is grounded in **thanksgiving**.
 2. And **letting him** take care of the rest.