DAY 8

MATTHEW 1:22–25

All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us"). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

This passage begins, "All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said..." All of what took place? Matthew 1 covers the genealogy of Jesus—how he was a descendant of Abraham and David, fulfilling the requirements to be the Messiah, both the blessing and the King of the world. The miraculous story of Mary becoming pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Ultimately what that meant for her upcoming marriage to Joseph, as we read yesterday.

But everything changed after the angel talked to Joseph in a dream.

Joseph was told the baby was from God, that Joseph should take Mary home as his wife, and here we learn they are to name the baby Jesus. Obedience would mean losing his righteous reputation by acting righteously. The whole story must have seemed crazy. We might ask the angel why he didn't show up nine months sooner with this information. And yet...

Joseph obeyed with radical, countercultural obedience. Against cultural norms, he moved in with a young pregnant Mary (can you imagine the conversation with his family?) and later gave their son the name Jesus. And Jesus became known as Immanuel, God with us. These must have been difficult, crazy times. And yet…

All of this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet in Isaiah. It was an Advent Conspiracy that required an obedient Mary and Joseph. God asked Joseph to Worship Fully in radical, countercultural obedience.

Can God count on us to do the same?

REFLECT

God knew what He was doing when He chose Joseph. If you know Jesus as your Savior, He chose you, too. And He knew what He was doing when He chose you as well. How might God want to use you in your world? In what way might He want you to Worship Fully in full obedience to Him? Joseph is a significant role model of a Godly man, husband, father, and friend. How can you apply his example in your own life?

PRAY

Heavenly Father, thank you for choosing me. I don't get it, but I'm thankful for it! I trust that your will is best, even when it seems countercultural. I desire to follow you even in difficult times. Help me to be bold when I want to shy away, to trust you when I'd rather trust my circumstances, and to be more concerned about pleasing you than those around me. In the name of King Jesus, I pray these things. Amen.