

4. How does the reality and wonder of God's story give us courage to do the right thing even if it will lead to ridicule, gossip, rejections, troubles, potential financial hardship?

5. How has the wonder in the Christmas story captured your heart and mind?

6. Looking back over this week's sermon and study, what one thing is most important for you to remember and apply?

Missional Application

God gives us courage to be salt and light in a world a dark, decaying world.

Christ Connection

The baby born to Mary is God with us.

SERMON APPLICATION GUIDE

Angels We Have Heard - Part 3 (Advent 2018)

"Where to Find the Courage to Do the Right Thing"

Matthew 1:18-25

Why would Joseph be afraid to marry Mary? It's a fear we can all relate to. It's the fear of what others will think. It's the fear of what others will do to him and his family because of what they think.

Shaming is alive and well in our culture.

God's message through the angel is, 'Don't be afraid to do what I'm calling you to do even if it makes you look bad or results in bad things happening to you and to your family.'

There is only one way you can do the right thing without fear when others think the right thing is stupid or when others think the right thing is the wrong thing.

What does Joseph hear the angel say?

- The baby in Mary's womb is a divine baby—a god or half-god.

Jesus isn't a god or a half-god. Jesus is truly God and truly man. (Matthew 1:22-23)

- The child in Mary will save the Jewish people from their sins.

What about this message gives Joseph courage to face the ridicule, the gossip, the rejections, the troubles, the potential financial hardship? One word:

When the unseen realm breaks through and we hear how much God cares about us and we understand that God is weaving a story of salvation, we are captured by the wonder of all of that.

Hope born in wonder gives us courage to do the right thing even if we suffer consequences like rejection, shaming, and financial setbacks for doing the right thing.

The words of Jesus in Matthew 5:3-16 are empty without the wonder of God and the angels and the reality of a better future God is weaving.

We need the wonder if we're going to be the salt and light God called us to be in a world full of decay and darkness.

The angels re-enchant the world and bring back the wonder.

Personal Reflection & Small Group Questions

Please complete this study on your own, then bring it to your small group for discussion.

1. Looking back over your notes from this week's sermon, what particularly caught your attention, challenged, or confused you?
2. Read Matthew 1:18-25. What might be going through Joseph's mind and heart when he learns that Mary is pregnant?
3. What are some of the ways obediently following Jesus can get us in trouble with others?

Family Discussion Questions

1. Why is Joseph afraid to marry Mary?
2. How does the angel help Joseph be courageous?
3. How does the angel's message offer us courage?