

Joseph

Scripture Reading — Matthew 1:18-25

*Because Joseph ... was a righteous man ... he had in mind to divorce her quietly.
Matthew 1:19 —*

Let's say that you're Joseph. You're a respected member of the community. People know you as a righteous man. But now you've discovered that your fiancée is pregnant. You know that the baby she's carrying is not yours. What will you do?

From the community viewpoint on righteousness in those days, most people would say you should make sure none of the scandal gets pinned on you! You should cut all connections to the pregnant girl. You should break off the engagement publicly to protect your honor and preserve your good name.

Joseph's righteousness, however, is different. It generates selfless compassion rather than self-righteous pride. Yes, Joseph plans to break off the relationship. But he will do so in a way that shields Mary from public shame even at the expense of his honor.

But then God tells Joseph that he must not turn his back on Mary at all! He must keep her as his fiancée and marry her as planned. Now even Joseph's selfless righteousness is being stretched!

That's often the way it is with God. The virtues that he plants in us get stretched and expanded as he calls us into service and prepares to make use of us.

Where is God stretching you these days? Like Joseph, are you open to his leading?

Prayer

Show me where you are stretching me, O God. Are you deepening my patience, compassion, wisdom, love, obedience? Stretch me and use me for your glory! Amen.

Devotion topics: [Christianity](#), [Discipleship](#), [Service](#)

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Printed on October 27, 2020

