

Unspeakable Tragedy to Tremendous Task

This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

-Matthew 1:18-21

Can you imagine the horror Joseph must have felt when he learned Mary was pregnant? Certainly Joseph was a pious man, the text tells us that, but he still must have been beside himself at the news. How was he going to explain this to friends and family? Who was going to believe some crazy story about the Holy Spirit giving her a child?

But in the middle of his greatest tragedy God called Joseph to a greater task. Through the words of the angel God tells him not to worry; what Mary has told him is true and Joseph is to carry out the task of raising the coming Messiah! What Joseph saw as a tragedy about to mar his life, God was going to use as a task to mark his life. We don't know much about Joseph. There is some speculation that he may have even died by the time Jesus went to the cross. Yet we know the most important thing. He was willing to humbly submit to God and be used for an extraordinary purpose.

The events in your life this Christmas season may not be what you planned. You may feel like Joseph and think your life is about to spin out of control. But take courage. God can take the most absurd and tragic of circumstances and use them as some of the most defining and sanctifying moments in your life.