

God's Answer to Your Deep Disappointment This Christmas

Do you remember when you were engaged to be married? I remember those days so well and experiencing all of the excitement that was yet to come!

Engagement is the singular moment in life when one's all hours are spent imagining the incomparable joy that is to come with marriage to the perfect man or woman. It is the extraordinary time in one's life when love seems perfect and trustworthy.

However, Mary was forced to speak words to Joseph that certainly damaged their perfect love story, "Joseph, I am with child."

Joseph and Mary's love story had been horribly and unexplainably interrupted. Mary had become pregnant and Joseph knew that he was not the father. Joseph surely must have wondered if Mary had been violated although she was quietly insistent that the child in her womb had been placed there by the Holy Spirit.

I wonder if Mary told him this ravaging news with tears running down her beautiful and innocent cheeks.

Did Joseph wonder if Mary was delusional? How else was it possible to explain this catastrophic turn of events? What was once lovely was now tinged with ugly. What was once anticipated was now dreaded.

Joseph was a righteous man whose pure heart was breaking because his bride was with child and he knew that child was not his.

Mary, his lovely and sweet Mary, had surely been taken advantage of by someone. What could he do? What should he do?

Joseph apparently did not believe Mary's story because the Bible recounts that his plan was to put her away privately. Joseph knew that this was the most loving choice for a young man found in the throes of betrayal. He could have allowed his intended to be stoned before the baby was born. Or, after giving birth, he could have allowed both Mary and the baby to be stoned. Sending his betrothed away and never to be heard from again was the ultimate loving sacrifice on Joseph's part.

It is impossible to even imagine Joseph's disappointment with God and with the person whom he had loved the most in the world.

Joseph did not deserve this betrayal or this heartbreak. What he "deserved" was a wedding day filled with joy and the promise of young love.

Now, perhaps, Joseph's reputation had been sullied on the streets of Nazareth and his boyhood friends were snickering behind his back.

Joseph had to face Mary's parents and his own parents. Although he bore no guilt, there was still the possibility that they would not believe him. There was no nuptial frivolity for this disappointed, heartbroken young man. All hopes of love and joy and promise had been dashed with the announcement of an early pregnancy.

Are you encountering deep disappointment as you face Christmas this year? My prayer is that you will allow the promise of Christmas to overshadow the painful realities of your life. Christmas should never be minimized or ignored due to the disappointing realities of life; human disappointment should always be overcome by the promise that Christmas only brings.

Joseph was a righteous man ... a good man ... and a kind man. The word "righteous" in Matthew 1:19 is defined this way in the Greek: 'used of him whose way of thinking, feeling and acting is wholly conformed to the will of God.'

Joseph was not making decisions based upon his own best interest, but his decisions were birthed in the conviction of God's perfect and holy will.

This is a sobering lesson that perhaps we all should grapple with this Christmas season. Christmas is not about how I feel, about my circumstances or about the comfort of family and friends. Christmas has always been and will eternally continue to be about making room for Jesus in the disappointed hallways of life.

Joseph's wise and kind plans, born in the heart of his best intentions, were interrupted by a Christmas angel. How wonderful to know that even when we are doing what we believe to be the highest good, God's ways are still higher than our best intentions. Christmas is a time when heaven's best interrupts our good.

The angel said to this brokenhearted man, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid" (Matt. 1:20b).

The words spoken to Joseph over 2,000 years ago ring clearly across the ages into our disappointment. "Do not be afraid," is the message of Christmas to your life today.

Was Joseph just an ordinary boy in love with an ordinary girl named Mary? Not a chance! God always has plans other than ordinary for those who choose a lifestyle of uncompromising righteousness. God desires to use each one of us as the vehicle through which Christ is revealed to every generation.
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Seasons; Let There Be Joy!; Pass the Joy, Please!; Guide Your Mind, Guard Your Heart, Grace Your Tongue; and Stormproof, which releases on March 1, 2019. Her teaching DVD, The Rooms of a Woman's Heart, won the Telly Award, a prestigious industry award for excellence in religious programming. You can also listen to Carol's "Jolt of Joy" program daily on the Charisma Podcast Network. Connect with Carol or inquire about her speaking to your group at .