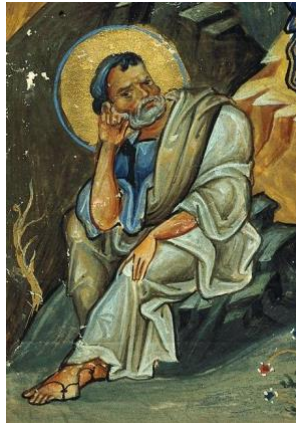


120918 Growth Group Study

How Can This Be?

Matthew 1:18-25



“as he [Joseph] considered these things...” (Matthew 1:20)
from the Menologion of Basil II, c. AD 1000.

1. Discussion around most recent sermon

- a. **Date:** 12/09/18
- b. **Series:** Advent: Peace
- c. **Title:** How Can This Be?
- d. **Text:** Matthew 1:18-25
- e. **Preacher:** Bernard Bell

f. **Sermon Text: Matthew 1:1-17**

18 Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. 19 And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. 20 But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” 22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet:

23 “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son,
and they shall call his name Immanuel”

(which means, God with us). 24 When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, 25 but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

2. Discussion Questions

a. Preparation questions

1. As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
2. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
3. What questions did you come away with from the sermon?

b. Sermon questions

1. Mary was most likely very terrified when she found out she was pregnant. Joseph was probably infuriated and alarmed. Who do you identify with and why?
2. The response by “just” Joseph was compassion. He shows himself to be a model disciple. Where in your life can you be a “Joseph” and show compassion in the midst of a tough situation?
3. As Bernard said, Matthew’s account focuses on the Holy Spirit, the defining characteristic of Christians. He described the Holy Spirit as “the life-giver” and “the enabler to do God’s Work.” Have you experienced the Holy Spirit in your life as life-giver and/or enabler? Explain.
4. How are broken people restored and transformed? After hearing Bernard’s sermon, how would you answer that? How does that lead you in how to live your life (leader note: Discussion could include a few different things, including leaning on the Spirit, but also could include something about hope – about becoming transformed people)?
5. Today’s Advent theme is peace. Where do you see shalom/peace in your world? Explain a place where you would like to bring peace this week, and what that would require.

c. For Further Reflection

1. If Joseph was alive today, what question would you like to ask him?
2. The Jews of the first century missed much of what Jesus was trying to teach, because they wanted saving from the Romans, not from sins. How do we blind ourselves today and miss Jesus?