



Out On a Limb Week 3 – Joseph Spiritual Formation & Discussion Guide

We hope you'll use this guide to take the teaching from Sunday's service and reflect on it with a few friends or a group. If you have questions or want to talk more about how to take your next spiritual step, contact us at info@wschurch.org.

Scripture:

"We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them."

Romans 8:28

"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. ¹⁹Because 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.

²⁰But 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. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus."

Matthew 1:18-25

Reflection Questions:

- Have you ever been truly surprised by someone or a situation – perhaps something incredible or unexpected? Why were you surprised?

- What stood out to you from Sunday’s service? How did you sense God encouraging and challenging you through the songs, the message, and being with others as part of the church? (The message’s main points and scripture are listed below if it helps you think back.)
- Read Romans 8:28. This often-quoted verse powerfully says that God can use everything for good. How do you react to this?
- Read through Matthew 1:18-25.
 - What do you notice about God – his character and actions?
 - What do you notice about Joseph – his character and actions?
- Eddie offered several takeaways from Joseph’s story:
 - When people disappoint you, leave room for God to work
 - God works on a deeper level and a longer timeline than we do (so don’t manipulate things to force a shortcut)

Which of those reminders do you need to hear most today? How so?
- He also encouraged us to “look for Jesus in your messy Christmas.”
 - How has this Advent and Christmas season been for you so far? More messy or merry? How so?
 - Have you had any glimpses of how God is at work in your life lately? Write them down or share them, if so.
- If you’re having a hard time believing God is at work in your mess, consider praying this prayer: “God, if you’re real, make yourself real to me.” What is it like to pray those words?
- Is there anything else from this teaching that you want to explore more?
- Take time to pray as you close your reflection or discussion, asking God to help you act on what he has asked you to do.

Advent – How can you stay connected to God in the midst of this season?

We have put together a list of Advent and Christmas resources, including Bible reading plans, devotionals, books, and video devotionals for families. Let this season be grounded in Jesus and his story by choosing one tool to use either on your own or with friends or family. Learn more at www.wschurch.org/advent.

Visit www.wschurch.org/resources to see additional tools and resources.

Message Main Points and Scripture:

- *Out on a Limb*
- **God works his perfect will through imperfect people**
- Romans 8:28 – “We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them.”
- Matthew 1:18 – “This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant...”
- **you and I must stop equating our feelings and our beliefs**
- Matthew 1:18 – “This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly.”
- **Betrothal**
- Matthew 1:20 – “As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”
- **we grow most when we entrust our messy lives to God**
- **Jesus never sinned, but he is a great friend to sinners.**

- when people disappoint you, leave room for God to work
- God works on a deeper level and a longer timeline than we do.
- look for Jesus in your messy Christmas
- “God, if you are real, make yourself real to me.”
- Jeremiah 29:13 – “If you look for me wholeheartedly, you will find me.”