



## **EXPECT CHALLENGES THIS CHRISTMAS**

**Matthew 1:18-25**

- **Living out God's will for our lives is not always easy.**
- Jesus - *"Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows."* (John 16:33)
- **The Lord allows difficulty in our lives from time to time because He is more interested in our character development than He is in the comfort of our lives.**
- *"When trouble comes your way, let it be an opportunity for joy. For when your faith is tested, your endurance has a chance to grow . . . When your endurance is fully developed, you will be strong in character and ready for anything."* (James 1:2-4)
- **Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, was *resolved* to live out the Lord's will, even though doing so was going to be very difficult for him (Matthew 1:18-25, 2:13-23).**
- **"Resolve" means "to come to a definite or earnest decision about something; to be determined to do something; to deal with a matter of uncertainty conclusively; to clear away or dispel doubts."**
- ***What situations require great resolve and determination from us?***

***We Need "Resolve" When Dealing With:***

### **DISCOURAGEMENT IN OUR LIVES**

- ***What kinds of discouraging news have I had to deal with in recent months?***
- **Joseph had to deal with the discouragement of discovering that Mary was pregnant while knowing that he hadn't slept with her (Matthew 1:18).**
- **Some of God's best people throughout the centuries have struggled with discouragement (i.e. Moses, Elijah, Jeremiah, Jonah, John the Baptist, Jesus).**
- **We often have to deal with physical, emotional, financial, relational and vocational discouragements in our lives.**
- ***What types of discouragement am I struggling with at this time?***
- Jesus – *"Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."* (John 16:33)
- **Resolve enables us to "push on" when we should be totally discouraged.**

***We Need "Resolve" When Dealing With:***

## **DOUBT IN OUR LIVES**

- ***What situations have caused me to struggle with doubt in my life?***
- Joseph had doubts about Mary's explanation for her pregnancy (Matthew 1:19).
- We often (and sometimes justifiably so) have doubts about others, but many people also have doubts related to the Lord.

### ***Some People Doubt That:***

- **THE LORD EXISTS IN OUR DAY**
  - *"From the time the world was created, people have seen the earth and sky and all that God made. They can clearly see His invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature. So they have no excuses whatsoever for not knowing God."* (Romans 1:20)
  - *"Only fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God.'" (Psalm 14:1)*
- **THE LORD CARES ABOUT THEIR LIFE**
  - *"God says, 'I have loved you with an everlasting love!" (Jeremiah 31:3)*
  - *"God showed His great love for us by sending Christ to die for us."* (Romans 5:8)
- **THE LORD CAN CHANGE THEIR LIVES OR CIRCUMSTANCES**
  - *"I pray that you will understand the incredible greatness of God's power for us who believe Him."* (Ephesians 1:19)
  - *"He (the Lord) opens doors, and no one can shut them; He shuts doors, and no one can open them."* (Revelation 3:7)
- **THE LORD'S DIRECTIVES ARE BEST FOR THEIR LIVES**
  - Jesus - *"Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and He will give you everything you need."* (Matthew 6:33)
  - **Living by God's Word, way and will is sometimes difficult for us, but God's way is always the best way.**
- ***What doubts am I struggling with at this time?***
  - *"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)
- **Resolve enables us to "trust God" even when circumstances are very trying.**

### ***We Need "Resolve" When Dealing With:***

## **DANGER IN OUR LIVES**

- Joseph had to deal with the danger of King Herrod's threats and plans (Matthew 2:13)
- ***What types of danger have I faced or am I facing right now?***
- *"God is our refuge and strength, always ready to help in times of trouble. So we will not fear . . ." (Psalm 46:1-2)*
- The Lord - *"Do not be afraid, for I have ransomed you. I have called you by name; you are mine. When you go through deep waters, I will be with you. When you go through rivers of difficulty, you will not drown. When you walk through the fire of oppression, you will not be burned up; the flames will not consume you. For I am the Lord, your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior."* (Isaiah 43:1-3)
- **Resolve enables us to live "faith-filled" rather than "fear-filled" lives.**

- **When we have “resolve” in our lives, we will find ourselves:**
  - **Living a Godly Life**
    - *“Joseph, to whom Mary was engaged, was a righteous man . . .”* (Matthew 1:19)
    - **When we are committed to living a godly life we will have the Lord’s help in and for our lives.**
    - David – *“For You bless the godly, O LORD, surrounding them with your shield of love.”* (Psalm 5:12)
  - **Hearing God’s Voice**
    - **Four times Joseph received direction from the Lord that helped him and his family (Matthew 1:20-21; 2:13, 19-20, 22).**
    - **The Lord speaks to His people through His Word (Psalm 119:103-105), His Spirit (Acts 13:2), other Christians (Proverbs 15:22) and Dreams and Visions (Joel 2:28).**
    - Jesus – *“My sheep hear My voice . . . and they follow Me.”* (John 10:27)
  - **Obeying God’s Word**
    - *“Joseph . . . did what the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.”* (Matthew 1:24)
    - Jesus – *“You are truly My disciples if you keep obeying My teaching.”* (John 8:31)

**When we have “resolve” in our lives, we will find ourselves:**

- **Experiencing God’s Blessings**
  - *“He did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named Him Jesus.”* (Matthew 1:25)
- **God’s job is to reveal His will and our job is to trust Him and determinedly pursue His will regardless of our circumstances.**
- ***What decisions or actions do I need to resolve to take in the near future?***