

December 13, 2019

“Joseph – Unnoticed Man of Christmas”

“When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord commanded him...” Matthew 1:18

NOTE: I want to share an article this week by Lynn P. Clayton. Lynn was the editor of the Baptist Message of Louisiana. He wrote a weekly column called *“On Second Thought”* I loved to read. This was one he wrote during the Christmas season years ago that touched my heart and my life.

Joseph, foster father of Jesus, remains an almost unnoticed figure in the Christmas drama. He is always there, but seldom noticed, sort of a furnishing. Sermons and devotionals abound about Mary, the shepherds, the angels, but not many about Joseph. Still, he did look after God’s son. He did protect him and look after him. Maybe not a grandstanding job, but he did it.

Where I graduated from high school, a young man’s most precious possession was not a car; we had nowhere to go. It was not a girlfriend; we had nowhere to take her. It was not an education; we were not that far-sighted. The most precious possession was a job; it meant we could go somewhere, maybe even college, and take someone with us.

Graduation came and a job on a wheat-harvesting combine crew opened. My parents mulled the situation because, as a 17-year-old, my summer would be spent operating dangerous equipment and driving a truck, top-heavy with a combine, over less-than-friendly roads, all far from home. But a job was precious. They consented.

The first of the three months away from home was great because I was sick of home. The last month was miserable because I was sick for home. We drove the roads and cut the wheat and slept under stars, rain and even snow. The dangers were in ways greater than my parents imagined and probably not as great as I imagined. But the homesickness was every bit as severe as I imagined and grew daily. On the couple of rare occasions, I called home, collect! They said they missed me and they were praying for me every day. I could tell they did.

The wheat cut and the Canadian border reached, we convoyed back to our small hometown, arriving in the middle of the night. Exuberant shouting and horn-honking brought the entire community awake with a start, which wasn’t hard because a honk and a shout on one side of town was heard by everyone on the other side.

I was a mite surprised that, at 3:30 a.m., my parents weren’t anxious to hear me recount, non-stop, of my entire summer’s experiences as I was to tell them.

A few hours sleep that night did fine.

The next day, my dad put me in the car and drove out to the home of the man for whom I had worked. Dad got out of the car, walked over to the farmer storing equipment in the workshop, simply shook his hand and said, *“Thanks for taking care of my boy.”*

I don’t know how these kinds of things work, but I suspect that on the day Joseph died and went to heaven, God stopped everything, walked over to Joseph, hugged his neck and said, *“Thanks for taking care of my boy.”*

Think about Joseph as you read Matthew’s account In Matthew 1:18-2:23. Joseph heard what the angel said to him and he went about doing it. Being obedient would change Joseph’s whole life! He took Mary to be his wife and he fled with Mary and the baby to Egypt! Then at the time appointed, he took Mary and Jesus and moved to Nazareth! Can you imagine that I day when God the Father welcomed Joseph to heaven? Thank you, Lynn Clayton for helping me see a side of the Christmas story I had never seen before. God fulfilling His plan came through the ones who hear the call of God and faithfully go about fulfilling that call in humble obedience.

Merry Christmas! I hope to see you this weekend as we celebrate His Joy on the 3rd week of Advent.

Pastor Garry