

What does Johann S. Bach, Gerald Ford, Babe Ruth. Steve Jobs of Apple, David Thomas of Wendy's, your pastor have in common. You might be thinking special talent, above average intelligence, or perhaps they failed a lot in life; what we share in common is also with Moses and Jesus. We are adopted. Consider Joseph, adopts Jesus. He could've done the respectable thing in the eyes of men, acted according to his reason, quietly divorced Mary. He could've done the convenient, easy path and leave. Instead, he's a model of faith. He follows God's Word. It doesn't make sense, goes against human reason, but he simply follows the Word. It may not be what he desires nor the choice he wants. But he humbles himself to God's Word.

Interesting, you don't find Lutheran Churches named, St. Joseph. The reason is Joseph is 'the' patron saint of the Roman church. Lutherans have traditionally avoided the name. But it certainly would be good, right and salutary to call a church, St. Joseph Lutheran Church. The guardian and protector of Jesus and Mary, no man of human parents ever born has had greater honor given. Holy Scripture lays on him the godly honor of calling him—a just man. God working in him for his holy purpose. Joseph is certainly a model for us, a dear saint, though he was a weak sinner as we.

He comes from a royal family, living in meekness, chosen by God, placed in the story. **Joseph did as the angel of the Lord commanded him.** Joseph did. God's Word was enough. Shame on you for not trusting solely upon God's Word. When the world dictates what's right, or the wisdom of man, your human reason causes you to not simply trust what God says. Hold to it. Live by it. You don't have to understand it, you're not God. Like Joseph, you are to embrace it even when it goes against what you're comfortable with, your wants, your desires, what you prefer. We are sinfully good at living as if we matter most, how we spend our time, give, treat others, want our way.

Okay, this is extra-Biblical legend since the Early Church. Mary was youngest girl in family, which often sent to the temple, set apart for holy service, to serve on the Altar Guild. But there was another purpose. As life expectancy and death, widowers, orphans very common, these young women would be available to be step mothers, wife to young men widowed. Mary perhaps 15, 16; Joseph widower, young man with children, perhaps his wife dies at giving birth, not uncommon. Of course, Joseph has children which fits the Scripture account of Jesus' brothers and sisters. And Joseph older as he was did not live to see Jesus death. So he'll have a new bride, young women, 16, and says I'm pregnant, and has amazing story.

God comes to him with His Word. Matthew's account. Righteous Joseph knew what this meant. He knew Mary was going to give birth to the Christ. He

God. He also knew from Isaiah the Christ would suffer, die for the sins of the whole world.

Amidst things Joseph finds overwhelming, many questions, fears! Not know how it will all work out and take place. He has God's Word. We hear with him the word Scripture speaks more than any other. **Do not be afraid.**

We need this time before Christmas to grasp the depth of our condition, our desperate need, reflect upon our sin filled lives, this Child comes for you.

**And she will bring forth a son, you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.** There it is. There's only 1 way to save people from sin, only 1 method for the removed of sins. A sacrifice. There in the infancy narrative of Matthew, in the Christmas story, already there, you see a cross.

In Matthew's Christmas story we see the child destined to a life of slander, persecution, death. The note of sadness doesn't wait til Holy Week as even as a baby there is rejection, suffering, hardship, given gifts for a dead man, exile, and people dying because of him with a nation full of baby martyrs.

This story, this birth continues -not just as a past event, but woven into the very fabric of your life as this baby will one day united Himself to you in your baptismal adoption. Christ's birth not only draws you to heaven, but His birth draws you into this story. This is your family, your adopted family, your Lord, your relatives. The story lives on, not just history, but it is who you are.

**You shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.** That should put a "merry" in your Christmas. Look at the manger; look at Him, speaking forgiveness, saving you on the cross. Do you think He comes to be born, does all this for those who are well, who have no need for a physician. Think again. He did it to heal you of sin and death. Christmas is not just about Jesus and history. It's about His birth for you, it's your story. Your adoption in water, by His blood. How else does He live up to his name "God with us" more properly "the Lord is salvation." He would live, suffer, die, and rise again to lead us into the promised land like His name's sake, Joshua, long ago, but it would all begin with His birth. God became man.

That beyond all thought, understanding, and love, He makes you adopted children in His family. Like Joseph, you're of a royal family, living in meekness, chosen by God, placed in the story, loving you to call you His people. He named you. You bear His name. You have been given something far greater than Joseph, greater than an angelic dream, and certainly better than your own selfish dreams, you have the full revelation of God in the Scripture. His name on you. 'God with you; the Lord your salvation.' His works in you, joined to you. No greater Christmas present for you.