

## **Reflecting on God's Word**

Matthew 1:18-24 (NT Page 966)

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**MP 539:1-3**

**Once in royal David's city**

### **Short reflection**

If there is one thing in life we all care about then it is our image. We spend thousands of pounds on buying houses, cars and other worldly goods just so that others may think we are rich or important. We ask ourselves constantly: What will others think of me? I must diet because so and so will think I am fat and make fun of me? What will I wear to this wedding?

And when it comes to our faith, it is almost natural that we do the same. What will others think of me when I openly react to someone using the Lord's name in vain? What will others say when they see me in church?

And without even noticing we hand it over to our children who is more concerned about how they look, walk and talk, than the things that really matters in life namely how to inherit the kingdom of God.

Our reading this morning is telling us in very plain language that OUR IMAGE is not important at all. God can change our image in just one second like He did with Joseph.

Joseph came from an important and good Jewish family with David as their ancestor. He had a respected job. He was engaged to a nice Jewish girl Mary. Every thing seems to go well with him and his image, until Mary was with child. He was considering his options of saving his image.

But then God had another plan because He is not bothered about our self importance or lack of self importance.

He visited Joseph in a dream and revealed His plans to him.

So despite his image, the Lord God convinced him to say YES.

- in spite of his shock at Mary's news,
- in spite of the bleak future he now faced,
- the scandal it would cause to his family name,
- the damage it could do to his business.
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Joseph said, 'Yes' - which meant accepting Mary into his home, providing for Jesus' needs, welcoming the presence of God into his life.

Joseph said, 'Yes' to God breaking into his life, changing his focus and direction forever. God changed his life and image for the better. He became a mighty instrument in the hands of God just because he said YES.

Maybe it is time that we as a society and people of this society must start realizing something very important. There are things in life that is more important than our image, what others think of us or what we think of ourselves. We must start focusing on a far more important question namely: What is God telling us in the here and now? What does God want us to do? Because if He has a plan for your life, your image, your wealth and riches, your fit and nice looking body posture, or lack thereof will not make a difference to what God is planning with your life.

The only thing that will matter is if your ears and eyes are open or not, if your feet is willing to move and your hands open for new things.

May we always be like Joseph - obedient to God's calling, despite the immediate consequences.

Let us pray:

Advent God,

forgive us for undue concern with our plans and reputations,  
worrying about what others will think.

Be our companion in our quest for fulfilment,  
guiding our thoughts and releasing our imaginations.

Lead us once more to the manger in Bethlehem,  
preparing us to accept your gift of love.  
Make us ready to receive you afresh in this Advent season.  
Break down our excuses and reluctance and breathe freshness and  
enthusiasm into our living for and with you  
**Amen**