

The Festival of St. Joseph, Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and Guardian of our Lord  
St. Matthew 1:18-21  
March 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
Sts. Peter and Paul Ev. Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## Joseph Being a Righteous Man

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Sermon Text:**

“And Joseph her husband, being a righteous man, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But when he thought on these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, ‘Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she shall bring forth a Son; and thou shalt call His Name JESUS; for it is He that shall save His people from their sins.’”

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

My dear friends, the Apostle and Evangelist St. Matthew calls St. Joseph, the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary and the Guardian of our Lord, a “righteous man.” What does it mean to be a “righteous man?” What makes someone righteous? The short answer is faith. We are justified, that is, made righteous, through faith in the Lord God. What this means is that St. Joseph, being righteous, placed his faith in the Lord God. He trusted in the Lord God. He listened to what the Lord God had to teach and command. This is why when the angel appears to him in a dream telling him what to do about St. Mary, he immediately obeys, for he trusts the Lord God. He has faith in the Lord God.

St. Joseph is even given something to strengthen and confirm his faith in the dream. For, what does the angel tell St. Joseph? He tells him exactly what and who resides in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. That which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. She will give birth to a Son. This Child will be the Christ, the Anointed One of the Lord God. He will be named + JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.

Imagine that you are St. Joseph: you find out that your betrothed wife, Mary, is with child. This child is not from you. Everything seems to point to scandal and adultery. St. Joseph had every right to drag St. Mary before the proper authorities and have her put to death for her alleged sin. For death was the penalty for adultery. She would have been stoned to death. But St. Joseph is a righteous man, and does not want Mary to suffer for her condition. It is “bad news” to St. Joseph that his betrothed wife as apparently been unfaithful, but he is willing to cover over her alleged sins. He is doing exactly what we teach and confess the Eighth Commandment teaches, “to put the best construction on everything.” He did not want to ruin St. Mary’s reputation. He did not want to see her put to death.

But he also no longer wants to have her for his wife. There must be some consequences for her supposed infidelity. He determines to put her away, that is divorce her, secretly. All this cannot have put him in a good mood. Receiving bad news rarely, if ever, does put someone in a good mood. All that changes when an angel of the Lord appears to him in a dream. He is given something in which to cling to in faith. He is given the same promise that his betrothed wife was given three months prior to these events. We will hear about those events next Tuesday, on the Festival of the Annunciation of our Lord. St. Mary is told by the angel Gabriel that she would be the Mother of the Lord. She would give birth to the Savior of the world.

This is the same thing that the angel tells the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary. She would give birth to a Son, Who would be the Savior of the world. His Name would be called + JESUS, which means Savior. She has not been unfaithful as the circumstances would suggest. Rather, she has been chosen to be the vessel by which the Lord God takes upon our flesh, and is made man. She is the bearer of the Christ, the Messiah, the Anointed One of the Lord God. She has conceived in her womb by the work of the Holy Ghost. She will bear the Savior of the world. For this reason, St. Joseph need not fear to take her as his wife. For all these things are because the Lord God wills them to be so.

A righteous man like St. Joseph, one who trusts in the Lord God, can only have his faith strengthened by this news. That is what the Gospel does for us, and for all those who hear it. It strengthens our weak faith. It gives us something in which we may cling to in order that we may have peace and joy. The Gospel, the promise of a Savior from our sins coming into this world gives us hope and happiness. This is why it is called "good news." It is news that we want to hear; that we are glad to hear. It covers over any bad news that we may have been listening to, either from other people, or within our own consciences.

St. Joseph had heard the bad news that his betrothed wife was with child, before they had come together. Before the marriage was consummated, his wife was with child. But the angel comes to him in a dream and tells him the good news that his wife will be the Mother of our Lord. He will be the Spouse of the Blessed Virgin Mary, and the Guardian of the Lord. He will be entrusted with the task of raising, along with his wife St. Mary, the Savior of the world.

Our Lord + Jesus has chosen His parents well. These are parents to which all parents should aspire. For St. Joseph is called a "righteous man." He is a man who has faith in the Lord God and desires to fulfill His will. St. Mary is also a woman with faith, for she is called "highly favored." Both of our Lord's parents cling in faith to the Lord God and desire to do His will. They would raise their Son, the Lord + Jesus, as all Christian parents should: in the fear and admonition of the Lord God. St. Joseph as the Lord's guardian would place the Word of God in His hands. He would teach Him how to pray. He would teach Him how to worship; to make sacrifice to the Lord God often for the remission of sins.

This is what all parents should do. They should bring their children up in the fear and admonition of the Lord God. They should teach them that they are poor, miserable sinners in need of the Lord God's grace. They should be given the Word of God, taught to pray, taught to worship. They should be taught to come to this holy house and receive the gifts of the Lord through the instrument of the Divine Service. Here they will learn to confess their sins, and receive the absolution from their heavenly Father at the hands of their spiritual fathers, the Ministers of the Lord.

Earthly parents, Christian parents, should do this for their children, so that they also come to trust in the Lord God; that they also are bestowed with faith in the Lord God and are made righteous in His eyes. St. Joseph was a righteous man, and would raise his Son in the way of the Lord. Our Lord + Jesus, the son under his care, being without sin and rebellion towards the Lord God, would willingly receive all that His earthly parents put into His hands from the Lord God. He would grow in wisdom and strength, and in favor with both God and man.

This why our Lord chooses St. Mary and St. Joseph as His earthly parents, for they would do their best to instill in their Child the fear and admonition of the Lord God. Therefore, my dear friends, we can give thanks for the example of St. Joseph, who is a righteous man. We can give thanks that he shows us how a righteous man, a man filled with faith in the Lord God, behaves when presented with bad news about his fellowman. He covers over their sins, and does his best to protect their reputation. St. Joseph also shows us how to be a good parent. For he raises the Lord + Jesus, the Savior of the world, in a Christian home. A home filled with the Word of God and prayer to the Lord God.

Let us therefore, my dear friends, also cling in faith to the Lord God, for He has sent His Only-begotten Son into our flesh to be our Savior, and to redeem us from sin, death, and the power of the devil. Through faith in Him and His work of redemption, we are declared righteous, that is, justified by faith in the Lord God. Through faith in His Son + Jesus, we are declared righteous and holy, and will be gifted with an eternal life in heaven. May the Lord God, by the work of the Holy Ghost, keep and preserve us in this faith, until He calls us out of the vale of tears to our eternal home in heaven. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus, the Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord + Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same + Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ + Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*