

DENAIR FRIENDS CHURCH

Devotions with Matt

MARCH 19, 2020

EMBRACING GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR LIFE

In an effort to stay connected as best we can during this time, I thought I would send out a devotional to everyone until Easter. Hopefully we will be meeting again by then.

This morning I woke up with quite a bit of anxiety. Part of it was due to a dream I had, part of it is because I think of my kids and grand-kids being so far away in Texas and Portugal and part of it is just the unknown of everyday life these days.

In trying to keep up with the news, I stumbled across an article that said today, mostly in Catholic circles, is the Feast of Saint Joseph. As you know Joseph was the one who was to be married to Mary, but she became pregnant before the marriage was official. He had quite a decision on his hands as to what to do when he found out about the pregnancy.

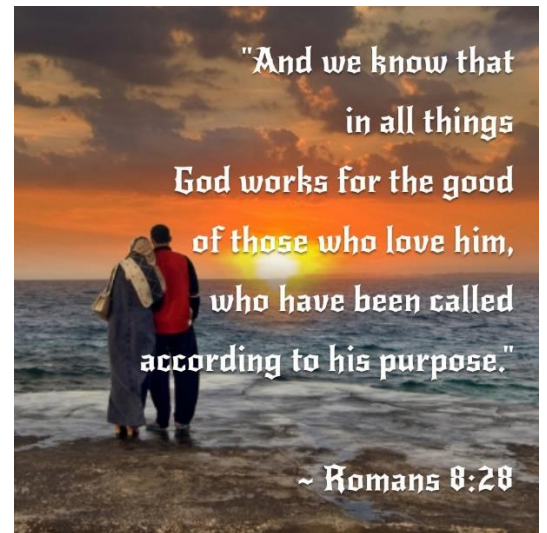
As my thoughts turned to Joseph and why there is a celebration in his honor, I began to wonder what was his greatest legacy. What lessons can we learn from Joseph? We know that he stepped up and did the right thing in claiming Mary as his wife- thereby not exposing Mary to public shame and ridicule for being pregnant before the marriage was truly finalized.

But what did Joseph really do? We could say he sacrificed a lot. It is true an angel of the Lord told him to take Mary home as his wife and that the baby she was now carrying was indeed conceived by the Holy Spirit. This may be doctrine to us some 2000 years later, but imagine you were Joseph and you were told this same story. We might be a little skeptical, to say the least, and run from this odd predicament we suddenly found ourselves in. The Bible says that Joseph was a righteous man and what he did was a righteous act in doing the right thing.

We could also say that Joseph really was a social justice warrior. Imagine if he did walk away from Mary. She would have been exposed to public disgrace and disdain by all who knew her and heard about what had happened. By Joseph stepping up and doing the right thing he kept her from it. He believed what the angel told him and took a stance for another in order to protect her and her name. Social justice is often standing in the place of another to protect them from undue harm due to their poor and vulnerable situations. Joseph did just that.

Those are all true and there are other lessons we can learn about Joseph's decision to take Mary as his wife and about his character in a time of crisis. But the thing that stands out most to me is that Joseph embraced God's Will for his life. It may not have been the path he wanted when he and Mary decided to marry. He probably didn't know all the ramifications of what lay ahead- including having to flee for their lives from the wrath of Herod to Egypt. The unknown can be a very scary thing, but Joseph stepped up and embraced it.

When we accept Jesus into our lives we are not just embracing salvation and eternal life, we are embracing God's Will for our lives. It may not be what we thought it would be and sometimes it is harder than we think it should be. A temptation for us, and Joseph too, would be to run from His Will in hard times. We might find ways to make life "easier" and shy away from the hard things He is asking us to do. In this environment it might be easy to shelter in place and forget the outside world- and each other.



Maybe a good thing for us to do right now is to really embrace God's Will for us in this crisis. We know God did not create the virus, He did not spread the virus and He does not spread fear about the virus. But we also know that even though the virus is not of His Creation, He can make good out of it. He can use it for our character, our redemption and for Godly fruit in our lives. He can use this thing that Satan means for harm for our good. He can use it for us to reach out to the hurting, scared and hopeless in our lives. He can use it for us to step in and protect those who most vulnerable from undue harm. And He can use it for us to take a step of faith in trusting Him- even if we don't know what is next.

We don't know much about Joseph except in the birth narratives of Jesus. But what little we do know about him can teach us a lot about God and ourselves. May we not just know the story of Joseph, but may he help spur us on to a deeper faith in God during these unknown times. May we embrace His Will for us- whatever that looks like.

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose." Romans 8:28

In Christ ~ Matt