

This is a monologue to accompany a Bible study or sermon on Mark 1:18-25

Timeframe: Joseph has heard Mary's news of pregnancy and has also been visited by an angel in a dream, but has not yet decided what his involvement if any will be with Mary and the child.

[Joseph enters stage with divorce papers and pen in hand, script could act as divorce papers. The script is to be read in a fanatic manner, supporting this range of emotions: humor, anger, anxiety, depression, hopelessness, at this point joy is exempt for Joseph]

[with great anger]

(Holding up papers) What Choice do I have but to divorce her now!? Mary tells me she's pregnant! I haven't even kissed her, let alone held her hand, and all the sudden she's pregnant! Oh, but that's not the worst of it, to top it off, she won't even tell me the truth, claims an angel came and told her that she was made pregnant by the Holy Spirit. Now come on Mary! It's one thing to become pregnant by another man when you're betrothed to me, but now stories of angels and the Holy Spirit? I believe in God and all, but seriously Angels and the Holy Spirit? People will accuse me of infidelity before they believe that. I guess she hasn't grown out of those bed time stories her mother used to tell her.

[takes a sad, resentful tone]

I should have known though. Here I've been storing away for all these years. All my friends they married when they were young and already have lots of kids now, but I've patiently bided my time waiting to get it just right. I've been saving my money, I've got this great house, and a job that I'm good at and people trust my work. I was finally ready to let someone in to my life, with the comfort of knowing I could support my family and it would be a good and simple life.

[reminiscing of a better time, leading into anger again]

Then I found Mary. She was quite a bit younger, but she acted much more adult than her age, or so I thought. I really had a good time getting to know her, but I should have trusted my instincts, should have known I was much too old and she'd go looking for someone more her age. She should be out-right stoned to death for this, but I'll not forget the good times God provided for us. No, I think I shall have her dismissed without making a scene of it. For all she's done to damage our relationship, some part of me still loves her. But we can never be together, She can't be trusted and her life is certainly ruined for her choices, to continue with her would ruin me as well.

[pause]

[in a puzzled tone]

Ah, but then there's the dream I had. So ironic that it should have involved an angel as well. You won't here me going about telling everyone I dreamt of one, no, I'm no fanatic like her. But the things it said to me,

“Do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit”

[again with anger]

Ha! Easy for him to say, he won't lose anything over the matter, but I've got everything to lose by taking Mary! My reputation will be ruined! I'll be the laughing stock of the town!

[in a mocking manner]

“Oh, lets hire Joseph for the job, his labor is as cheap as his wife,” they’ll say. Or perhaps they won’t even pay me at all seeing as how I will turn the other cheek for anything.

[anger and resentment building]

Oh, and I almost forgot my favorite part of the message,
“She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins,” **(under breath)** better start with his mom.

[now sarcastically angry]

And the name, OK, SURE! Why not, I’m raising Mary’s illegitimate child with her, I didn’t help bring this child into the world, why should I get to name it?

[pause to give time to change moods]

[with curiosity]

But the name, it struck me, what did the angel mean, “for he will save his people from their sins. I had to ask a friend about the name. He perked up and looked at me through narrowed eyes.

“Who do you know called by this name?”

“No one,” I denied,

“I just heard it passing through the streets the other day and thought it sounded peculiar,”

“Well,” he said, “it would be rather audacious for anyone to name their child Jesus, seeing as it means Emmanuel, or God Saves. It’s not the kind of name you give your child just because it rhymes well, it is a name that is sacred to our people.”

I left before he could ask me any more questions.

[now walking back and forth raising hands in the air in frustration, speaks with anger and sarcasm]

Ah, it just gets better; the name I’m to give him bears great meaning. That’s wonderful; the town will just eat that up.

“Listen to what Joseph has allowed now, Mary’s bastard child is called Jesus, ha-ha, Savior of the people? Wow Joseph, you really have lost it.”

I guess I couldn’t blame them; this baby is going to be the savior that we’ve waited so long for? Hardly possible!

[confused]

But the dream, so vivid, and strangely matching Mary’s story. Could this be for real?

[pause]

[now quickly questioning himself]

Don’t be stupid Joseph; think of everything you’ll lose if you go through with this. You will have no credibility in this town, you’ll have to move away and hope the stories don’t come with you. All that you saved up for, all your carefully made plans for the easy life thrown out the window. And Mary, can you really ever trust her again? What

about this baby Jesus? How can you know if he's really this savior from God? You just had some crazy dream right?

[now calming down]

Just quietly let Mary be on her own rocky path and go back to the safety of your solitude. All you need to do is sign these papers and it will all go away.

[Goes to hard surface to sign the papers, but instead sets them aside, kneels and prays]

Oh Lord, I am faced with what is by far the most bizarre and probably dangerous situation in my life. The simple hard facts are right in front of me, screaming for what I should do and the consequences from my peers for doing otherwise seem harsh. And yet, as much as I want to I cannot deny the connections between Mary's story and my dream. If I follow these would be facts that have no anchor in my reality, I will certainly forsake everything that I have built up for myself. My burden will hang heavy, and only you will be able to lighten it for this family. If I go through with your command.... **[pauses, changes mind]** When I go through with your command, please guide me, for it will be the first time in my life I have lived without my own plan. Thank you for your continued faith in me, may I have the same faith in your promise to Mary about this child Jesus.

Amen

Some topics for discussion or a sermon/homily.

1. How has God "disrupted" your life with his plans?
2. Do you make room in your daily plans for God?
3. What happens when we don't allow God to lead our lives?
4. What difference would it have made if Joseph had left Mary?
5. What are some daily practices that can keep our lives open to God's involvement in our lives?