

***Being a Father***  
***Matthew 2:13-15, 19-23***  
***March 19, 2023***

How much do we know about Joseph, Jesus' stepfather? We know he must have proposed to Mary. And when Mary was found to be pregnant with Jesus, Joseph was going to divorce her quietly. In today's cancel culture, he, if he wasn't a righteous man would have had her drug out before the people and stoned but he must have loved Mary enough not to do that. The angel of the Lord appeared to him and not Mary, in a dream to tell him it was OK to marry, Mary as she was carrying the Messiah. He in that dream was told what the name of this baby boy was to be called once He was born. His name was to be Jesus because He would save the people from their sins.

Then we see Him in Luke taking he and Mary to Bethlehem to be registered in their home town where Jesus is born. While there, the shepherds come to see Jesus. The family then goes to Jerusalem to present Jesus and offer the sacrifice for Jesus. While there, they heard from Simeon and Anna about Jesus and they marveled at what was said about Him.

Matthew then tells of the coming of the wise men and then after they are gone, he is visited by another angel to not go back home but to go to Egypt, which he obeyed and the family went to Egypt for time until an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream telling him to take Mary and Jesus back to Israel. He takes them back and they settle in Nazareth.

It isn't until Jesus is around 13 years old that we see him again. They go to Jerusalem for the feast of the Passover and Jesus stays behind. He and Mary find out later that Jesus isn't with them and go back to Jerusalem in search of Jesus. They find Him and He says He must be in His Father's house but it wasn't Joseph He was talking about but God the Father.

Other than that, we don't know much about Joseph. We think he was a carpenter and that Mary had other children by him but other than that we don't know much. So why is this a day of celebration, a day of recognition?

Even though we don't know what went on in the family of Joseph during those 30 years or so of Jesus' life, we know His family must have been much like others of the day. Yes, there were times when the Bible talks about Mary treasuring up these things in her heart. If she is like most wives, she discussed those thoughts with her husband.

We think about the Saining of Joseph and we may wonder why? Yes, he put his reputation on the line by marrying Mary. He took her to be his wife even though Mary was pregnant. People would assume the child was his and there would be talk behind his back about all this. Yet, even though he married her, they didn't consummate their marriage until after Jesus was born. And if you were to believe that Mary was a perpetual virgin, we might see why Joseph would be declared a Saint as he didn't have physical relations with his wife their whole marriage.

Joseph knew Jesus was not his child. He knew that Jesus was the Son of God and for him to raise the Son of God must have been a challenge and responsibility that must have weighed heavily on him as he dealt with Jesus, a son who never did anything wrong and would shine His light on Joseph and others in the family.

We know Jesus' brothers and sisters were challenged by Jesus perfect life. How could they not be? Having a perfect brother who always did what was right. How did Joseph deal with that as he had to deal with all the kids in a fair way, in a non partial way?

Joseph was chosen by God to be the step-father of Jesus. The Lord worked with Joseph to be the father of His Son. We don't know what went on in the family but as some mention of Jesus being the carpenter's son, we can see Jesus growing up in the carpenter's shop learning and doing as His father directed and taught Him

We have Jesus in the temple conversing with the religious leaders there. He was special and those there knew it. When Joseph and Mary found Him, those there must have wondered about Joseph and what he had been teaching the boy. Were there discussions between Joseph and Jesus as He grew up? I can imagine there were. I can also imagine there were discussion between Joseph and Mary as well as they attempted to raise Jesus in the right way, in the way the Lord would have wanted them to do.

Joseph had a challenge to raise his children and Jesus. Like any dad, he didn't always do things the best way. He was a sinner and yes, as a sinner, he made mistakes that may have been unfair to Jesus and to his other children. Yet, Joseph was chosen by God to be the father of Jesus.

As fathers, we all know we don't do things the right way all of the time. Yes, there are times when we need to ask forgiveness and we hope Joseph did as well even

though as Jesus left the temple, it is written that He was submissive to His parents as they went back to Nazareth.

They didn't understand Jesus' words about His needing to be there in the temple. Yet, even though they didn't understand, we can imagine that those words were brought up later as Mary and Joseph discussed what went on that day and we can imagine they had daily talks of what their son, Jesus had done that day that opened their eyes or made them take a second look at what was said that day.

Jesus was submissive to them. We see that submission later when He was directed by His mom, Mary to provide wine for the wedding feast. We don't know what had gone on in His life previously to this. Was it a common occurrence for Him to do miracles? We don't know but some have speculated that He had to have done something miraculous earlier as it seem His mom knew He could handle some wine creation.

Jesus was submissive to His earthly parents. He listened to Joseph tell Him what to do and how to do it. Was there ever discussions about how to go about Joseph's commands? We don't know but we know Jesus handled it well. There may have been times when Joseph and Mary didn't know exactly what He was talking about but as they thought about it, they must have discussed what all this would mean for the Son of God and His mission as He lived out the life He came to live.

We look at Joseph the protector of Jesus knowing we don't know a whole lot about him. As we look at fathers around us, we may not know a whole lot about them either. They are trying to raise their children well, as well. They have been given children by God, too. They may not be the Son of God like Jesus was but as they are made His through the water and the word. It is a responsibility not unlike what Joseph had as he helped raise Jesus in the home of he and Mary.

In raising Jesus they not only had Him the Son of God but other children to care for as well. Those of you who have children know each is an individual and sometimes you probably wonder how each, raised in the same home could be so much different. What do you think Joseph and Mary had to deal with, with one of their children being the Son of God?

Joseph was probably challenged as he had to deal with children that were sinners and with one who was not. Did Jesus see more attention dedicated to others of his brothers and sisters as Mary and Joseph knew they didn't have to correct Jesus and

He almost was relegated to the background? I guess it could have been the opposite with them comparing each of their children to Jesus, the perfect Son.

There is so much we don't know and for some reason, God thought it good that we only know what we do know. If we knew it all, that would have set the stage for parenting or not how to parent and we would be judging based on that list of ways to handle children like Joseph. Instead, the Lord has two different individuals raise children He gives them in the way they see fit, based on who they are and who God is in their lives.

St Joseph had the responsibility of taking care of the Son of God. We too have a responsibility of letting the sons and daughters of God know who Jesus is and why He came to this earth for them. I'm sure Joseph wondered how he was going to fulfill his responsibility for raising the Son of God. We too have questions as to how we are going to deal with those the Lord has placed in our lives and in a sense are placed in the lives of those who need Jesus.

You have been picked by God to shine the light of Jesus to the world. Joseph raised Jesus, the light of the world to go out into the world with His light for the world. We thank him for taking on the challenge even before Jesus was born.

We don't know how Joseph died or when he died, the Bible doesn't let us know about that. He left his mark with Jesus though and we get to see Jesus the man, living out His life and giving His life for all. Did Joseph have a role in His life and how Jesus dealt with the world?

God placed Joseph at the time and place He was going to send the Messiah, looked for from the beginning. Like all things God does, He does it for a reason. He made Joseph and He has made you. It may be 2000 years since Joseph walked on this earth but he still is remembered by us and others as the protector of Jesus as He matured into the man He became.

We remember Joseph and all those who have touched the lives of children raised under their care. He had a harder time than most we might think especially as he had other children who in no way could compete with their older brother. Joseph had to deal with that kind of difference and yet let all of the children know how loved and important each were to him and Mary. May we be able to do what Joseph did as we deal with children today who are still needing a dad to watch over them as they live their lives in the world we have been placed in.