

# Sermon Study

December 17, 2017

THE GIFT: Let Earth Receive Her King  
Matthew 1:18-25

## vision

Eastview  
Christian  
Church is a  
fearless church  
of Christ  
followers whose  
ridiculous love  
and dangerous  
witness are  
irresistible.



### **AUTHOR'S NOTE** (summary of key points for this study)

*A gift may not always come how you want it or when you want it. It may not be what you were expecting, and at first, it may not even seem like a gift at all. That's why gifts can be let-downs. Or generic. Or meaningless. People don't always know what to get you...but God knew exactly what to get you for Christmas. In this study, we'll look at two things: 1) the gift of Jesus through the eyes of Joseph, and 2) the gift of Jesus himself.*

### **Gather** (your group getting to know each other)

Share a time when you received a gift that you didn't like or didn't want (maybe for Christmas or a birthday). How did you react? Why do you think it was given to you?

**Go**  
(your group on mission)

As we approach Christmas, your non-believing friends and co-workers might be more open to having conversations about Jesus. Presenting Him as God's gift might be a way to connect with them during this time when they're likely buying presents for their friends and family. It could be an opportunity to remind them that a truly great gift isn't something you have to earn based on who you are; it's something that is freely given because of who the Giver is.

**Grow** (your group growing as Christ-followers)

### Key Scripture

"...you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." (Matthew 1:21, ESV)

### Discussion

1. Have someone begin the discussion time by leading the group in prayer, then read Matthew 1:18-25 aloud.

2. Let's start by considering three stages Joseph probably experiences here: a shocking discovery, a shattered dream, and a sorrowful decision. Which events discussed in v.18-19 would fit those descriptions and why?

3. Why do you think people care so much about "appearances," and are concerned about "how it would look" or "what others will say?" To what extent do you feel influenced by these sorts of pressures in your own life?

4. Can you relate to Joseph at this point in his story? Can you share a time when your life was characterized by one of those three categories: a shocking discovery, a shattered dream, or a sorrowful decision?

5. As v.20 begins, the story of Joseph (from his own perspective) is probably a story of tragedy. But then God intervenes. How would you describe the way in which the angel of the Lord recalibrates and refocuses Joseph's perspective on these events?

6. After Joseph receives the dream, he obeys (v.24-25). He certainly doesn't fully understand everything that is happening, or that is about to happen, but Joseph still changes his mind. He listens. He allows himself to be persuaded by the word of God which was spoken into his life. Can you relate to Joseph in this part of his story? What issue, topic, or perspective have you changed your mind on because you've allowed yourself to be persuaded by the biblical truth of it?

7. Now let's talk about the gift Himself, Jesus Christ. First, we're twice told (v.18, 20) of the Holy Spirit's role in the conception of Jesus. (This is a big topic, for sure!), but do you have a sense for what this means and why it's important? Why do you think the angel emphasizes this truth to Joseph (and to us)?

8. In v.21, notice the angel didn't say, "And you shall call his name Jesus, for we think it's really catchy and popular." Rather, Jesus was named Jesus for a reason. It was clear from the start that the name was to communicate something critical about His mission. What was it? And why is it important for us to understand this gift as God intended it in a culture that wants to say a variety of diverse things about Jesus?

9. Read Acts 4:10-12 and Philippians 2:9-11 aloud. What in these Scriptures stands out to you about the name of Jesus and the gift of Jesus?

10. Let's conclude by looking at the name Immanuel (which Matthew tells us means "God with us"). What does that mean to you, that "God is with" you? Read Matthew 28:20. What does it tell us that Matthew's gospel begins and ends with this idea?

**Give**  
(your group serving each other)

Serve your group this week by praying that each member would more fully consider the truth that Jesus is the greatest gift from the greatest Giver. It's possible to get so wrapped-up studying the teachings and history of Jesus, that we can forget (on an emotional level) to simply rejoice and be thankful that God so loved us that he gave us the greatest gift of all time. Pray that your group would be joyfully reminded of this during the Christmas season.