Daily Devotion #198

**What Will They Think**

**Matthew 1:18 (NASB)** *“Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.*”

One of the things I like to do when I read the Scripture it to try to put myself there, in the moment of whatever I’m reading. To me, it makes the text come alive. I have to be careful because I never want to take the Scripture out of context, but there are things that can be thought about to better understand what was happening in the moment.

Take, for example, Joseph and Mary. Can you imagine what they were going through? Fo today, let’s think about Joseph and Mary in the context of how the neighbors looked at them. You may not know this, but Mary could have been killed by stoning because she could have been found guilty of adultery. Under the law adultery was punishable by death. **Deuteronomy 22:22 (NASB)** *"If a man is found lying with a married woman, then both of them shall die, the man who lay with the woman, and the woman; thus you shall purge the evil from Israel*.”

So can you imagine the view the community had of Mary? We don’t know exactly the timing of everything during the nine months of her pregnancy, but word has a way of getting out. So, just imagine the gossip. Imagine the conversation about her when she walked down the street. Afterall, it’s pretty hard to hide a baby in a pregnant woman. Can’t you see the times she would walk to the local market and realize everything went quiet as soon as she stepped into the store? If you were one of the village people in Nazareth, wouldn’t you have some questions, especially knowing the circumstances?

But that’s just it, isn’t it? People didn’t know the circumstances. They only thought they did. Again, we are speculating, but it stands to reason this could have been the thinking on the part of the people. People love to talk. They especially love to talk about things that are unusual. That’s why soap operas and reality tv have been so popular over the years. Yet, all of this in the life of Joseph and Mary was God’s doing. Yet, Joseph and Mary had to deal with the people and what they thought. And so do you and I.

There are times in our lives when the world will have an opinion about our circumstances. And too often we allow the world to influence our decisions. In fact, we will sacrifice what we believe God is telling us in a given situation for the sake of keeping the peace, or not looking weird, or not sounding too “religious” or “spiritual”. But God often works in ways the world thinks is crazy. For example, what person in their right mind lives their life for a Man who died thousands of years ago? What person sacrifices time and energy to worship a God who cannot be seen with the human eye? What person doesn’t go along with the crowd because it violates the conscience that is fixed on God? Who lives their lives sacrificing themselves and their money so that others have a better life?

Beloved, you and I are called by our God to be different no matter what the world thinks. We are to always follow through with what God has told us in His Word, even if it doesn’t make sense to us. You and I are to fully surrender ourselves to our God and His desires for us, even if and when the world shuns us and calls us crazy.

Joseph and Mary didn’t know the plan of God fully. All they knew was God had called them to a task, a great task. And their role was to be faithful even if the world looked at them sideways. What about you? Are you compromising you relationship with Christ because of the world? Don’t do that. Blessings will abound if you stay faithful to God.