



Welcome

SERIES: THE MATRIARCHS OF CHRISTMAS

Message: It's Going to Work Out

Dr. Lance Watson, Senior Pastor

PRAYER: Gracious God, we would like to be among those who saw the coming of the Christ Child, those who dropped all that they were doing and traveled to worship the coming of God's love into this world. We would like to be those who cared for God in infant vulnerability, who tickled and cuddled and comforted the growing child, that he might know love and safety. And yet, merciful God, we must recognize all the times we are more like Herod. Whenever we, in our actions or in our inactions, find our own need for control more compelling than the needs of others for health and safety. Loving God, we confess our sins against you and one another and pray that you will fill us with your light, that we may live our lives trusting and knowing that it will all work out according to your plan. In the name of Christ, the one who showed us the way, we pray. Amen.

ICEBREAKER: Have you had an experience in the last year where things worked out positively when you didn't expect them to end that way? Share it with the group.

INTRODUCTION: In the first chapter of Matthew, Mary's story begins with the unexpected and daunting news of a pregnancy that precedes her marriage to Joseph. Because the child was conceived through the Holy Spirit rather than by human means, she initially faced the potential for public shame and the end of her relationship. However, divine intervention through an angelic dream guided Joseph to stand by her, transforming a scandalous situation into a fulfillment of ancient prophecy. Ultimately, everything worked out according to a higher plan, ensuring that Mary was protected and that her son, Jesus, was born into the lineage of David as the promised Savior.

BIBLE STUDY: Read **Matthew 1:16**: Jacob the father of Joseph, the husband of Mary, and Mary was the mother of Jesus who is called the Messiah.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. **What was your biggest takeaway from the message?** What's one thing you learned? What questions came to mind as you listened to the message? What points did you find most insightful?
2. **Navigating Uncertainty:** In Matthew 1:18-19, Mary and Joseph faced a situation that appeared socially and personally devastating. How does seeing the "positive end" of their story change the way we view the "confusing middle" of our own difficult circumstances?
3. **The Role of Divine Intervention:** Joseph's plan to quietly divorce Mary was compassionate, but God had a much larger plan in mind (v. 20-23). Can you share a time when a situation seemed to be going one way, but a "God-moment" or a change in perspective turned it into something much better than you expected?

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4. **The Strength of Partnership:** Things worked out for Mary in part because Joseph chose to obey the angel and stay by her side (v. 24). What does this tell us about the importance of having a supportive community or partner when we are trying to walk through a challenging season?

CHALLENGE: With what confusing circumstance do you need to trust God today? Pray about it now.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Take this time to share group announcements. Church wide and campus specific announcements can be found at www.myspbc.org. You can also “find, follow and like” our Facebook page at facebook.com/myspbc. Turn on your notifications.

CELEBRATIONS: Take this time to share praise reports (e.g. answered prayers, birthdays, anniversaries, promotions).

PRAYER REQUESTS & PRAYER: Take this time to share prayer requests. Close with prayer.

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We Care!

NOTICE: As a small group leader, we depend on you to show members that we care. Here's a list of resources to help you.

FOR PRAYER:

CALL: 804.463.2472

EMAIL: prayer@myspbc.org.

FOR COUNSELING:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org

TO REQUEST A HOSPITAL VISIT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (For Emergencies)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST FUNERAL SUPPORT:

CALL: 804.304.3890 (Pastor On Call)

EMAIL: ecare@myspbc.org.

TO FIND A SUPPORT GROUP:

CALL: 804.643.6177

EMAIL: care@myspbc.org.

TO REQUEST EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE:

CALL: 804.643.4000

EMAIL: emergencyassistance@myspbc.org.

TO CONTACT MY LIFE STAGE PASTOR: CALL: 804.643.4000 and Press 1 for the Dial by Name Directory

EMAIL:

- Imagination (0-10): Vernita Williams: Vernita.Williams@myspbc.org
- SMB (11-19): Martina Jones-Smith: Martina.Jones-Smith@myspbc.org
- Dreamchasers (20-29): Juan Shackelford: juan.shackelford@myspbc.org
- Aspire (30-39): Lance Watson, Jr.: lance.watsonjr@myspbc.org
- Fusion (40-49): Michelle Townsend: michelle.townsend@myspbc.org
- Encore (50-59): Lisa Johnson: lisa.johnson@myspbc.org.
- Prime Time (60-69): Maceo Freeman: maceo.freeman@myspbc.org
- Refiners (70+): Roscoe Jones: roscoe.jones@myspbc.org

*GPS is a study guide based on the weekend message. The purpose of this guide is to assist small groups in study.
Previous GPS Guides are available online at www.myspbc.org.*



Small Group Leader Guide

Would you like to START or JOIN a Small Group at Saint Paul's?

Most existing groups are open to new group members, and new groups begin on a regular basis. If you have friends in a small group, ask about joining their group. If you are new to Saint Paul's and are looking for a place to connect, please feel free to contact us and we will do our best to help you find the right group.

Leader Tips:

The GPS document is a guide for discussion. Don't feel like you must use every question. Some questions will take a while to work through while others will be over in a few seconds!

1. Don't teach the lesson. The lesson was taught on the weekend. Just ask questions and let everyone else talk.
2. Let other people ask questions. It's OK to go "off topic" for a while. Sometimes those conversations are more interesting anyway!
3. Have fun. Relationships, not curriculum, are the heartbeat of our small groups. So, have fun with the people in your group.

Agenda for a Small Group Gathering

Gathering Time

Take 5-10 minutes to welcome everyone, catch up and if planned, share some food!

Discussion Time

Here's a suggested format:

1. **Ice Breaker** – Lighthearted icebreaker question (5-10 min.)
2. **Discussion** - Discussion time, Bible study, application challenge (30-40 min.)
3. **Prayer** – Prayer requests and praying for one another (10-20 min.)
4. **Planning** – Remind the group of how we serve together (e.g. usher, sing, greet, pray, etc.)