

**#3 SOME PERSONAL APPLICATIONS FROM  
THE CHRISTMAS STORY  
(Matt. 1:18-25; Luke 2:1-20)**

**Notice...**

**I. AN ILLUSTRATION OF LOVE AND COMPASSION (Matt. 1:18,19)**

A. Love and compassion led Joseph to show mercy toward Mary (19)

According to oriental customs regarding marriage there was a nine months betrothal period in which a couple was legally espoused. During this time if a woman was found to be unfaithful her espoused (or engaged) husband had the right to have her stoned as a public example (Dt. 22:13-21).

This is the right which Joseph had according to the law, but because of his love and compassion for Mary, he was "not willing" to do it.

The law prescribed the same sentence for an adulterous wife (Dt. 22:22) and on one occasion the self-righteous Pharisees caught such a woman and brought her to the Lord Jesus (Jn. 8:3-11). It was love and compassion that moved the Lord Jesus to show mercy upon this woman. This is what was lacking in the hearts of the religious Pharisees. They were following the letter of the law but because they had no love or compassion upon others they showed no mercy (Mk 12:28-33; Matt. 23:23).

B. Love and compassion led Joseph to take a different course (19)

Joseph had in his mind to "put her away privately."

Real Christ-like love and compassion will lead us to help others even though it appears that they have done wrong and deserve judgment.

**II. A MATTER OF BEARING REPROACH (24,25)**

A. Bearing reproach involves love

Because Joseph loved Mary he was willing to bear the reproach of her supposed unfaithfulness.

Apparently Mary and her firstborn son were the subjects of reproach as we consider the charge of the Pharisees against Christ (Jn. 8:41).

B. Bearing reproach involves faith

We find in this account that Joseph, in the face of such unreasonable and impossible circumstances, believed what the angel from God had told him.

It took faith for Joseph to bear all the things that others had to say about the one he loved.

So it is with those who love the Lord.

### **III. THE PROBLEM OF OVER-CROWDEDNESS (Lk. 2:7)**

#### A. The simple reason for the over-crowdedness

The little town of Bethlehem was filled with people who came to be registered and taxed in their own city. And the people were simply complying with Caesar's decree.

Just as there was a reason for the over-crowdedness at Jesus' birth so it is in our day. Everyone's life is simply filled up with a host of demands which seems impossible to fulfill.

#### B. The shameful results of being overcrowded

Because of the crowds in the little town of Bethlehem the inn there was all filled up and there was no room for Mary, Joseph, and the Christ-child.

The principle is the same in our own day - there's no room for the Saviour in people's lives because He has been crowded out by other things.

### **IV. THE EXAMPLE WHICH WAS SET BY THE SHEPHERDS (Lk 2:15-20)**

#### A. The shepherds went and found the Saviour who was born (15,16).

This ought to be the first order of business in everybody's life (Mt. 6:33).

#### B. The shepherds told others what they had seen and heard (17).

This is what God wants us to do - to spread the good news of Christ to others (Matt. 28:19,20). "While going make disciples."

#### C. The Shepherds glorified and praised God for what they were blessed to see and hear (20).

We should never take our salvation and the blessings of God for granted. We should rather express gratitude (Mt. 13:15,16; Lk 4:25-27).

