

# Crossway Life Group, Week of December 2

See sermon notes on [CMC's webpage](#) for background information

## Community

Take time to share and pray for each other's concerns and joys.

## Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25 Sermon: "When Faith takes Courage"

### Reading & Discussing the passage

- Courage has been defined as strength and perseverance in the face of danger, fear, pain, difficulty, or intimidation. How can you tell if someone has courage? How can you tell if they do not?
- **Read Matthew 1:18-25.** As you read this passage, in what ways might Joseph have needed courage?
- When does God explain to Joseph what had happened with Mary? Why might God have waited until after Joseph had wrestled with this question and come to a decision about what he would do? How might our experiences in life today be something like what Joseph experienced?
- Matthew 1:1 starts by saying that Jesus was the son of David, the great king of Israel. Since the family line went through the fathers, how did Jesus become a son of David? What is the significance of Joseph's obedience to the angel to take Mary home as his wife and to name Jesus?

### The Big Idea

**Our salvation**

**through the Lord Jesus Christ, who was also called Immanuel (which means God with us),  
originated in God**

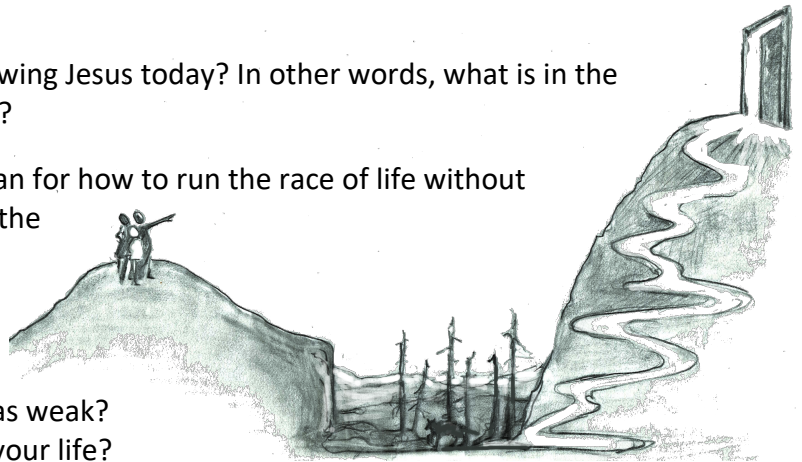
**through the courageous act of faith of a man**

### This idea applied to our lives today...

**Faith in God requires courage  
that will bring wonderful blessing  
in God's time and in God's way**

### Reflection Questions

1. Where do you need to have courage in following Jesus today? In other words, what is in the valley or canyon that you see in front of you?
2. **Read Hebrews 12:2-3.** The author gives a plan for how to run the race of life without growing weary and losing heart. What does the passage teach us?
3. What practices help you fix your eyes on Jesus and on our hope?
4. Who has strengthened your faith when it was weak? Have you told them how God used them in your life?
5. **Read 2 Corinthians 4:16-18.** What does the passage teach us about not losing heart in our Christian lives?
6. Who around you might have "feeble arms and weak knees" of faith (see Hebrews 12:12-13)? How might you strengthen and encourage them?



## Serving beyond ourselves

---

Our prayer of intercession on Sunday focused on Isaiah 58:5-9. In that passage, God calls His people to care for the hungry and the wanderer. Some suggested applications included giving money to a food bank or [immigranthope.org](http://immigranthope.org), educating ourselves about public policy related to poverty and immigration, or serving among the poor.

Given this call of God, how might your group spur each other on to love and good deeds, and perhaps even serve together?

## Growing in Cultural Understandings

---

Shame and honor play a significant role in this passage. One orientation to honor and shame can be found at <http://honorshame.com/honorshame-101/>. That video describes honor and shame as a “social credit rating.” In a situation that focuses on honor and shame, “your most valuable asset is your reputation in the community.”

- In what ways might honor and shame have been a part of your own cultural settings? What are some examples?
- How does thinking in terms of honor and shame help us understand some of the difficulty of Joseph’s choices with regard to Mary’s pregnancy?

## Matthew 1:18-25 - New International Version

### Joseph Accepts Jesus as His Son

<sup>18</sup>This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

<sup>20</sup>But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

<sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: <sup>23</sup>“The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

<sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. <sup>25</sup>But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

## Hebrews 12:2-3

Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.

## 2 Corinthians 4:16-18

Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.