

## 12.15.21 – A Weekly Word for Covenant Church

**Title:** “A Cute Couple”

**Scripture Reading:** [Matthew 1:18-25](#)

**Reflection:** Rev. George Vink

Matthew wastes no words. He lists [Jesus’ genealogy](#), including various ancestors whom we’d be inclined to omit. Then comes, “This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about....” The focus is on Mary’s being pregnant without having “come together” with Joseph.

A scandal in the making! Sounds contemporary! And, without details, Matthew simply states, she was “with child through the Holy Spirit.” Sounds incredulous! So far, we’ve heard nothing about the work of the Holy Spirit in the genealogy. Jacob, Joseph’s father, is listed, and then Joseph is identified as “the husband of Mary,” but not as the father. An explanation follows.

The betrothed, committed couple is not presented as a cute, loving couple who out of deep love for each other had “come together” a little earlier than ordinarily allowed. So, it’s understandable that a righteous, but also gracious, Joseph had decided to break the relationship quietly, avoiding Mary’s being “exposed to public disgrace.” After all, he was a man.... But, reading further, we learn that Joseph’s taking her home as his wife comes after additional divine, angelic intervention!

Joseph did what righteous men do. He did the right thing. He did as Matthew put it, “what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife.” There’s no mention of a ceremony and specifically, “no union with her until she gave birth to a son.” Joseph did what fathers do and gave Mary’s son the name of Jesus.

As we reflect on these things, let’s realize that what Matthew’s gospel covers in a few paragraphs spans months of waiting, wondering, and possibly worrying. How often did Joseph ask Mary about the angel who had visited her? What did either of them understand about the work of the Holy Spirit? Whom did Joseph tell about his dream? Did their families whisper their conclusions, or did they have loud family discussions? So much silence, such wondering.

Our Christmas pageants often portray Joseph and Mary’s trip to Bethlehem as a hardship and their flight to Egypt as an escape, and in doing so, correctly reflect the troubled world into which Jesus was born. Christ’s birth was not the “love child” of a cute couple. Instead, it reveals the divine plan to redeem a less-than-divine world as well as less-than-perfect people. Joseph and Mary were chosen for their willingness to obey, even when doing so meant living a mystery.

Joseph and Mary demonstrate God’s using ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things. He’s still doing that today. Don’t wait for angels to explain it. Just do what you know needs doing, do the righteous thing. There’s a real need today too!

**Prayer:**

Lord, thank you for using ordinary, common folk like Mary and Joseph to accomplish uncommon accomplishments. Give us insight into what that means for us as righteous people having the gifts and talents to do so. It's your kingdom and we're its citizens. Amen.

**Action Item for the Day/Week:**

Look around and see what ordinary things you can do to make a big or little difference in someone's life. It may be a single mother dealing with financial hardships and there's no "righteous" fiancé/boyfriend to be found. The needs are next door.

**Songs for today:**

[Seek Ye First the Kingdom of God](#)