The Boys of Christmas

Pastors Jeff Bucknam and Jeff Thompson | Matthew 1:18–25

NOTE: As a guide, use these questions to help with group discussion. Not all questions are needed. Select the ones that will best serve your group as you grow in Christ together through His Word. Soli Deo Gloria.

ICE BREAKER:
What's one thing you're hoping to experience this Christmas season? Hope, peace, rest, clarity, or joy?

UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT IN CONTEXT:
Describe the unique circumstances that Joseph faces.

Two names describe the miraculous child: 'Immanuel' (meaning 'God with us') and 'Jesus' (meaning 'God saves'). What do these communicate about Jesus' identity and mission?

CONNECTING TO JESUS AND HIS GOSPEL:
Read Matthew 1:21; Hebrews 2:17-18; 2 Corinthians 5:21. With those texts in mind, discuss these Questions and Answers below from the Heidelberg Catechism (1563) about the importance of Jesus being both fully human and fully God.

Question 16. Why must the mediator [Jesus] be a true and righteous man?
Answer. Because God's justice requires that human nature, which has sinned, must pay for its sin; but a sinner could never pay for others.

Question 17. Why must he [Jesus] also be true God?
Answer. So that, by the power of his divinity, he might bear in his humanity the weight of God's wrath, and earn for us and restore to us righteousness and life.

LIVING OUT THE TRUTH:
How does understanding Jesus as both fully divine and fully human affect your relationship with Him?

Are there any actions or areas in your life that you feel God calling you to? What would obedience look like to do 'the next right thing,' like Joseph did? Pray for one another.

PARENTING MOMENT AND FAMILY FOCUS:
This week, we see that Joseph obeys the Lord just as he commanded him. Why do we obey the Lord? What does it look like to be quick to obey when given a command, and how can you encourage your kids to obey this week, to do 'the next right thing'?

FURTHER STUDY:
Read the article 'What is the Hypostatic Union?' or listen to an interview with D. A. Carson on 'The Doctrine of the Incarnation,' both at DesiringGod.org.

This page gets us into the text for the next sermon. The more familiarity we have with God's Word, the better we can see God and all that He has for us.

In the days leading up to next weekend, set aside a few minutes to read the text and reflect on these questions. A prayer to start: 'Open my eyes that I may behold wonderful things out of your law' - Psalm 119:18

1. Describe Herod's motivation. What does that reveal about his character?

2. What does the Old Testament prophecy about the Christ being born in Bethlehem reveal about that baby's special purpose (see Matthew 2:4-6)?

3. In this chapter, Joseph is met by angels a couple more times. What do Joseph's actions after those meetings reveal about his character?

4. What in this text confuses you?

5. What in this text compels you?

6. Matthew 2 contains some great heights of wonder (baby Jesus!) as well as some great depths of evil (Herod killing baby boys). Pray for God's justice to restrain the evil in our world. Pray for God's mercy in bringing people to himself. Pray to God in thankfulness, that baby Jesus has grown, has conquered death through His crucifixion and resurrection, and will return one day to end all evil and to be with His people forevermore.