

Charles Blackstock Preaching

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[0 : 0 0] This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfred, Georgia. It is our prayer that you will be blessed by the preaching of God's Word. Well, I hope you enjoyed that. Glad to have them sing tonight. It is a great honor for me to be able to introduce you if you don't know him.

How many of you already know Pastor Charles Blackstock? Hold your hand up, most of you. It's a wonderful thing to have pastor friends, friends in the ministry. And just about 30 miles up the road from here is Lighthouse Baptist Church.

And Brother Blackstock has been a friend of mine for, I don't know, it's been 15 years maybe. It's been a long time. He supported me when I was a missionary. And we've been friends. We've worked together. And I am very pleased that you have the opportunity to get to know him tonight.

He's preached here before, so if you don't know him, you will know him. And he'll have him back. Brother Blackstock, you come and preach for us. You give him a good, strong amen. Thanks, brother.

Well, I appreciate the opportunity. It's good to see you tonight. And good to be here at Vision Baptist Church. We have prayed for this ministry for many years. And watched God's blessing upon it.

[1 : 0 1] We were excited when it began. I remember the first time I went to Peru and met Austin Gardner and the ministry there. And how we got excited about that. And the opportunity to partner in Bible College in the early days.

And then to see him come to Alpharetta and start the church was a great joy. We got involved in the phone canvassing originally and tried to send as many as we could to help try to get this thing up and going.

And it's good to see it thriving and growing and doing a great work. I think this area is desperately needed. And I think that churches like this and to see souls being saved and lives being changed and people being sent forth into missions.

And I prayed so many times, so many years, so fervently for Brother Gardner. I don't know of a man personally that I've ever met that I've had the relationship we've had with.

I've heard of great men. But I've never met anybody that I know personally had a greater passion for world evangelism than Austin Gardner. And I'm appreciative of all that God has placed upon his heart.

[2 : 0 4] It's a privilege to be able to stand here tonight and to preach at this church. If you'll take your Bibles to turn to the Gospel of Matthew, chapter number 1. I'm kind of a home person myself.

I don't get out a whole lot and don't preach a whole lot of different places. And when I do, I always feel like a fish out of water. And I never know what to preach. I know all the problems in my church, but I know what to preach on.

So I couldn't think of how to fix any problems tonight, so I just thought I'd preach a Christmas message. How about that? A message I shared with our folk here a couple weeks ago at church.

And, you know, I love the Word of God. I love the Christmas season. I often find that at different times of the year, I find it challenging to preach messages that are thematic.

You know, I love Mother's Day, but, you know, there's only so many wonderful, dynamic Mother's Day messages. And I know because I've searched the Internet.

[3 : 12] But I never find that Christmas is exhausted. It just seems like that there are so many great things to extract from this Christmas season.

The stories, the truths from the Word of God. And I found a thought that just challenged me and stirred me as I was studying through it one more time, another season, another year to look at these great stories.

And I thought maybe I'd share some of that with you tonight. I really deliberated on preaching the message that I preached last Sunday, and I can't do both of them. But I want to challenge you about one thought before I say this.

I challenged our church last Sunday to become Christmas angels. You know, angels are very instrumental in the Christmas story. Between the message that came for Elizabeth and to Joseph and to Mary and the shepherds, angels are very instrumental.

And yet, an angel is just a messenger sent from God. I mean, they were created being specifically for that purpose, but pastors are also referred to as angels in the book of Revelation.

[4 : 17] And I would challenge you to think about, even between now and Christmas, how you can become a Christmas angel and share a message, bring good tidings of great joy to somebody. It may be somebody at a drive-thru window that you've seen week in and week out as you pick up your cup of coffee, and you never stop to think maybe they're going through a hard time to be a blessing to them.

Maybe somebody that works at the gas station. Maybe somebody you work with. Everybody could use good tidings of great joy. And maybe you can think about that. But for Matthew chapter 1, look at verse number 18.

The Bible said, Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise, when as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost.

Then Joseph, her husband, being a just man and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily. But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost.

And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name Jesus, and he shall save his people from their sins. Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled, which was spoken of the Lord by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is God with us.

[5 : 40] Then Joseph, being raised from sleep, did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife, and knew her not till she had brought forth her firstborn son, and he called his name Jesus.

You know, there was a slogan that went around, and it may still be said occasionally, I don't know, but it was real popular for many years, entitled, What Would Jesus Do? You know, bracelets came out, and all these things came out, WWJD, and bumper stickers, you still see some occasionally.

But I often notice that sometimes we as believers have a hard time identifying with what Jesus would do. He's the Son of God, He's the sinless Savior, He's the one that never could sin, never did sin, can I get a witness?

And sometimes we think, well, that's the Lord, but when we have a hard time, when we get hurt or injured, when we feel bruised, when we feel like we're down or forsaken, sometimes we don't react like Jesus would.

So I want to challenge you tonight, and as we look at this man Joseph, and ask a question, what would Joseph do? Joseph was just a poor man. Perhaps I doubt that he had very much of wealth at all.

[6 : 43] He was a carpenter, a tradesman, just a common man, and to be clear tonight, he was not the father of Jesus. I hope we all understand that.

Jesus had an earthly mother named Mary, but his father is the heavenly father. Joseph was a stepfather, if you will, a surrogate father that was there to help in the upbringing of a young baby into this world, but certainly did not father the child.

He was a divine or the Holy Ghost of God brought forth Jesus into this world. I'm not saying that if a person didn't understand the virgin birth that they couldn't be saved, but I don't believe a person could reject the virgin birth and understand what it really means to be saved by the blood of Jesus Christ.

It's instrumental in realizing that Jesus Christ did not come into this world by human origin. He could not sin because he had no sin nature. He could be tempted, but he's a divine son of God.

And he's God, all God, and yet he lived in a body that is all man. But Joseph was not that father. We may find it difficult to identify with Jesus sometimes, and I hope we can be more and more like him.

[7 : 48] But tonight, let me just take you in your minds for just a moment and take you through these scriptures and show you some remarkable traits about this man, Joseph. Number one, the Bible teaches us right here in verse number 19, that Joseph, her husband, being a just man.

The word just is 33 times in the English Bible it's translated just. 44 times or 41 times, I believe, it's translated righteous. And in its roots, it simply has in view both aspects, perhaps a just man being justified, being innocent.

But also, it has in its understanding the idea of living a just life or living a righteous life or doing that which is right. And the Bible said that when God looked down at Joseph, he was described as a man that did right.

I say tonight what we need as Christians more than I've ever seen in this time is people that want to do right. I mean, if we're going to learn anything from this story tonight, it's that God wants to use people that he can call righteous people.

God wants to call righteous people into his services. He wants to be able to put his hands upon and anoint us that would live righteously in a day which is so easy to defile ourselves, even as Lot vexed his righteous soul.

[9 : 03] We need people that have made a covenant with their eyes, a covenant with their heart, a covenant with their God to live righteously in this present age. I heard a story about a preacher was talking one day and he was teaching a class and he said, has anybody ever, and he was talking about nobody being perfect, but he said, has anybody ever seen a perfect man?

And he was kind of looking, you know, just to get the reaction and one man's hand kind of sheepishly lifted up high. And the preacher looked at him and said, sir, so you have seen a perfect man?

He goes, well, no, no, I've never really seen one, but I've heard of one. And he said, well, tell me who he is. He said, well, he was my wife's first husband. Now, there are no perfect people and we don't expect to set a standard higher than for us to achieve.

But I think that God is looking for young people that will be like Daniel, that purpose in his heart did not defile himself. I think he's looking for young men and young women that will serve him in a capacity where God can put his hand of anointing on him.

It's a shame that we see too many of those called into ministry falling out because of immorality or falling out because their lives just didn't hold up to the scrutinization that it requires to be in the ministry.

[10 : 13] I'm saying tonight what God is looking for is somebody that's willing to just do right. Amen? The world is looking for somebody that's willing to do right. They're so tired of seeing fish symbols on cars for people that have bad attitudes.

We got law enforcement people in our church. You've heard about the deputy sheriff that pulled a guy over and he said, what did I do wrong? Officer, he said, well, he said the guy was ranting and raving to carry on fussing about the traffic and the officer pulled him over and he said, what did I do wrong?

He said, the people in front of me, the one is doing wrong. He said, no, sir. He said, I saw that fish symbol on the back of your car. He said, yeah, I'm a Christian. He said, well, for the way you're behaving, I thought somebody must have stole this car. You know, it's amazing what we claim to be and how it measures up.

And I'm just excited about this man, Joseph. You say, well, Mary was chosen because of the character that she had, that God picked a young woman that would be somebody that could be the mother of his son.

And I think it's wonderful that Mary had that virtuous nature about her. But you know what? Sometimes we put two standards, one standard for a woman and one standard for a man. And God was also looking for a man that was a righteous man.

[11 : 21] God, help us to live righteously in this present age. You know, I read a story about Charles Haddon Spurgeon. And him and one of his deacons were crossing a busy street in London.

And the day in which carriages came through and everybody hastily rushed through and there weren't much in the way of sidewalks and crosswalks. And Charles Haddon Spurgeon was crossing this busy London street with his deacon.

And the deacon got to the other side and looked back and Spurgeon was standing in the middle of the street with his head bowed. And the deacon was perplexed and carriages were rushing by and horses were trampling right next to him.

And there stood Spurgeon in the middle of that road with his head bowed. When he lifted his head, he crossed on over and the deacon said to him, Pastor, were you praying in the middle of the street?

And he said, yes, I was. He said, what was so important that you had to stop in the middle of the road? He said, as I was passing the street, a cloud came between me and my God. And he said, I didn't want to make another step until I got right with him.

[12 : 24] Oh, that we would have a heart. I want to be that close to God. Amen. Oh, that we'd have a heart to sense anything between us and the Lord. And Joseph was described as being a just man.

Not only that, I want to notice tonight that we see that he was a righteous man, but also notice he had a respect for people. You know, when he found out about Mary, the Bible said that he was going to put her away privately, or privately put her away privately, divorce her.

You're probably aware of the tradition of that day in which a person will be espoused. Who was it that's getting married? Jason's getting married.

Amen. So what would typically be that, see, if y'all were to get married, you'd have to wait a year before, you know, you consummated that marriage. And it was just a time to examine everything, you know, so I'm sure y'all probably not going to do it that way.

You're ready to get married, aren't you? Amen. Yeah, amen. Amen. He's afraid, doesn't he? Amen. So Joseph, Mary was considered his wife.

[13 : 33] If she was espoused to him, if there was found anything wrong with her, he was to divorce her and legally put her away so that it would be declared that he had not done anything wrong, that she was totally at fault.

They had not. See, if Joseph didn't do that, it would seem like they had been in this sin together. So Joseph said, but I don't want to hurt Mary. I just want to do the right thing.

Joseph was a just man. I just want to do the right thing. But I don't want to hurt her. I noticed his respect for people. You know, sometimes I feel like that as Christians, we have way too quick of a knee-jerk reaction to what goes on in our life.

You know, as I deal with people more and more, it's amazing to me that we overreact sometimes. I'm so glad that Joseph showed some restraint. Do you realize if he'd have been like a lot of us, Mary could have never been the mother of Jesus because he'd have jumped up, he'd have dragged her down to the square, and they'd have then stoned her before he'd ever figured out what was going on.

Before the angel had a chance to talk to him, he would have already humiliated and probably had her put to death. He could have gone that far and had her stoned. But Joseph didn't do that. He had respect for people.

[14 : 43] I want to say tonight, if there's one thing that we need in the ministry, it's respect for one another. Amen. It's a love for one another. It's a desire to not to offend but to take an offense, not to attack but to yield.

It's a desire to care for one another in such a way that we don't get resentful and we don't get angry and we don't have knee-jerk reactions. And I'm not fixing it.

I don't know anything about it. The pastor hasn't told me anything. He never said anything about his congregation. I know my church. I just know that I want our church to live in harmony. I want our church to get along. I want our church to love each other.

But, you know, I think that one of the ways that people know that we're believers is we have love one for another. And, you know, we pray for each other. It's amazing that sometimes we can get embittered in our own midst.

It's amazing that I've heard this for years. I know this is such a missions church. I feel like all these missionaries are on the platform. I need to preach to the missionary as much as anything. But it's amazing to me that we find that oftentimes the people that can't get along, the ones that can't get along the most are the missionaries on the field.

[15 : 48] I'm thankful for a good group of people that I've been associated with, particularly that I've known with Brother Gardner, with Vision, and the people that we've worked with for many years that don't have that situation.

They've worked together well. But it's not always the case. And many times if you had two missionaries in the same city, they wouldn't talk to each other. It's a crunch chain that we don't have a respect for people that endures the hardships, the Bibles that a friend loves at all times.

And Joseph, even though he wanted to do the right thing, he wanted to be right with God and what he was commanded to do, he wanted to do it, but he didn't want to do it in a way to hurt Mary.

He didn't want to do it in a way that would cause her shame any more than it had to be. He didn't want to do it in a way. He certainly didn't want to hurt her. He had a respect for people. I believe that what we need, I'll never forget a message that I heard Brother Gardner preach years ago about building that brother's name.

And it just stirred within me this idea that if we can help each other in the ministry, well, let's do it. Let's don't be so about me, about mine, that we can't invest in what somebody else is doing and be thrilled about it, be thrilled about a work.

[16 : 56] You know, there's so many times, I mean, I know we don't have so many. I feel like that the options that people have are less than they've ever been as far as good churches.

I don't mean to be critical. But, you know, we occasionally have people visit. You have people visit. We all that. And I think that, you know, we ought to be real careful.

This is a wonderful, wonderful, wonderful church. You know what? What God invests in this church is a joy to my soul to see it growing and see people, you know, attracted to this ministry and serving in this ministry.

I'm thankful for that. I think we need to have respect for people. You know, Leonardo da Vinci was painting that great mural in the Sistine Chapel of the Sealand there.

They had the scaffolds all set up. And as he was painting on that ceiling, they were painting that Last Supper scene. They had all the different apostles there. And Jesus was to be the last one to be painted.

[18 : 01] And that was the, he had people helping him. But Leonardo da Vinci was going to paint the face of each disciple, each apostle, and then Jesus. And it was said that when he got to Judas' face, that him and one of the painters had had a deep disagreement.

And they had been injured. And Leonardo da Vinci was angry at this painter. And they were working together. And he didn't fire him per se, but he was upset at him. And when he got to Judas' face, he put that man's face on Judas' face.

And everybody knew it. Everybody knew that what he had done was intentionally took the Judas, the betrayer, the traitor, the only one that did what he did to Jesus, and put that man's face on his face.

And somebody said something to him. He said, no, it's going to stay that way. And so he moved on. And he came to Jesus, the last one. And he tried.

And he tried. And he tried. And ultimately, he admitted that he could not paint the face of Jesus until he changed the face of Judas. And I don't think sometimes, my friends, that we're ever going to be able to paint the face of Jesus until we can get right with the people in our midst.

[19 : 20] Amen? Until we can love one another. Until we can respect one another. Until we can pray for one another. Until we can want the best for one another. And we can lift up our brethren and stand in the ranks together. Hey, listen, I feel like that there are many forces that we fight against in this world.

Evil forces, false religions, and principalities, and powers, and spiritual weakness in high places. But I want you to know, we're not each other's enemy. We're on the same team.

I noticed that Joseph had a respect for people. I'll give you the last thought, and then I'll be done. The Bible said that the angel came to him and said, Fear not to take Mary, thy wife, in verse number 20.

And he told her, he explained to Joseph, he said, You know, she's going to bring forth a son. You're going to call his name Jesus. And he's going to be the Savior. And now, don't have anything to do with Mary. You marry her.

But you just wait until that baby's born. And the Bible said, Joseph being raised from his sleep, in verse 24, Did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him. Did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him. I want you to see, not only was he a righteous man, and I noticed that he had respect for people, but thirdly, I want you to see his receptivity to God's plan.

[20 : 27] He was a man that was willing to do what God asked of him. It doesn't matter what our plans are. It doesn't matter. Joseph had a plan. He was going to marry Mary, and he was going to have a little boy perhaps, and he was going to have all these dreams about starting, but it all turned upside down on him.

It all went backwards to him. It all was not what Joseph, and it just rocked his world. And you've got to realize, I was preaching a message recently entitled, A Dysfunctional Christmas. Christmas is a very dysfunctional story, if you think about this story.

I mean, all the things that went wrong. I mean, can you imagine Mary and Joseph going to Bethlehem? You know, they get there, and Mary says, All right, Joseph, you made reservations?

And Joseph says, No, I don't have any reservations. Well, you've got the diaper bag, don't you? No, no, had to wrap the bag in swaddling clothes, no diapers. Well, you've got a crib, don't you? No, no, no, it's going to be a little manger.

You know, all the things that went wrong. But think about that journey down the way. You know, they're traveling all the way that distance to Bethlehem, and, of course, they can't travel in the morning because, you know, pregnant women can't get much done in the morning.

[21 : 32] And then along the way they had to make occasional stops for different food cravings along the journey. And just the time as they get off, get out of the cafe and back on the road and headed down the road, she's got to make a pit stop because, you know, bladders get smaller when you're pregnant.

And then, but think of this. Every time they stop somewhere, somebody say, what's your name?

My name is Joseph, and this is Mary. So is this your wife? Well, she's my spouse's wife. Your spouse's wife? Well, is she with child?

Yeah? Well, it's a long story. It's a long story. You know, that was not Joseph's plan. He didn't want to have to tell.

First of all, yeah, an angel told me that the baby she's got is of God. Can you imagine telling that story every time you stop somewhere? Can you imagine how many times you think, please don't, or just don't let them ask me again about Mary.

[22 : 41] Nobody believes my angel story. Nobody believes all this stuff. God, this was not my plan. Mary and I were going to be married. We were going to have a child together one day. We were going to have a family. It's not going to happen this way.

But Joseph did everything the angel of God asked him to do. I don't know what your dreams and plans are. I planned on being an engineer. I went to Georgia Tech and planned on making money and being an engineer.

And God got a hold of me and called me into the ministry. And I'm glad that I followed His plan. And I would have no other plan but God's plan. I was pastor of the church, been there for eight years, didn't have any plan on leaving and starting another church.

But I'm glad that I followed God's plan. I want you to see tonight that Joseph was a man that was receptive to God's plan. He didn't react to the problems. He just let God have His will and way.

He didn't react to the change of plan. He didn't resist or resent. He just did what God asked him to do. So many times, you know, I deal with parents and children and their parenting.

[23 : 35] And I find when talking to young people, I find this when I was raising my own boys, that oftentimes children have the attitude that they're very obedient children. They grew up in church and they're very obedient. But here's where the rub comes.

It's easy to be obedient when you want to do what you're asked to do. The test of love and loyalty is when you do what you're called upon to do when it's not what you want to do. When it's not where you want to go.

When it's not what you planned on being. When your dreams are ushered up into an offering of smoke. When you burned them at the fire of sacrifice. When you said, not my will, God, but thy will be done.

And he was a man that responded to an unusual command and did what God wanted him to do. And, you know, again and again and again, Joseph obeys God.

In verse 24, he did as the angel bid him. In chapter 2 and verse 12, when he wanted to go home, God warned him in a dream and told him, don't go home, go into Egypt.

[24 : 36] And God said, Joseph was thinking, well, finally we get to go home. No, he didn't get to go home. He had to go into a foreign land. Maybe you think that it's so important for you to be with your family.

You realize how long it was before Joseph's family ever got to see his children and his family. But Joseph went.

When he finally gets to leave Egypt, he's told to come back and said, no, no, no, no, no, Joseph. Another angel comes to him over in verse number 22. And in another dream, he turned him aside into parts of Galilee, even into Nazareth.

And all this was fulfilling the prophecy of God that the child would come out of Nazareth. He'd be born in Bethlehem. It was all planned by God. But it had to be a man that was willing to adapt his plan to God's plan.

A wonderful Christian story. So sometimes when you ask yourself the question, what am I doing, God? I might take you well. Do you well to go back and ask what Joseph would do. Joseph would do the right thing, the just thing, the righteous thing.

[25 : 41] Joseph would do the thing that was right to his brethren and his people and his love and respect for others. He wouldn't do anything to harm another brother or sister in Christ. He wouldn't do anything out of self-will or vain glory.

What would Joseph do? Joseph would do whatever God asked him to do. What would Joseph do? That's not a question. We know what Joseph would do.

The question is, what would we do? Amen? What would we do? And I hope tonight that we will be as honorable in our lives as Joseph was. Joseph was not the hero of the story.

Jesus is the central figure. Mary is the one that oftentimes is lifted up even beyond measure. Joseph is just a surrogate father that really doesn't get a whole lot of glory.

But I think he was happy with that because one day he stood before his heavenly father, no doubt, and heard God say, well done. You did what I ask you to do.

[26 : 39] Amen. Let's bow for a word of prayer. Heavenly father, tonight I pray that you'd help us to take on some of these traits of Joseph. Help me, Lord, to be that kind of a man that would do the right thing.

And have a heart to be just and righteous and live righteously in this present world. And God, I pray that I'd always be true to my friends and true to my brothers and sisters and never out of self-will injure another.

Forgive me as I have. And God, I pray tonight that I could often say, Lord, it's not my will, but it's thy will that I want done. In Jesus' name, amen.

This message was recorded at Vision Baptist Church in Alfredo, Georgia. For more information, log on to www.visionbaptist.com, where you can find our service times, location, contact information, and more audio and video recordings.