

# Obedied: What Following God Costs You

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[ 0 : 00 ] All right, good morning.

This is what the tops of your heads looks like. I had always wondered. So good morning.

Can we turn to Matthew chapter one? And we're going to begin reading at verse 18.

Now, the birth of Jesus Christ took place this way. When his merry mother had been betrothed to Joseph before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

And her husband, Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.

[ 1 : 29 ] She's going to bear a son and shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us.

And when Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. He took his wife, but knew her not until she had given birth to a son and he called his name Jesus.

Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word, Lord. And as we come to it, we pray, Lord, that you would just give us eyes to see and ears to hear today, Lord. Lord, we we want to marvel.

Like those who first heard the story marveled. And yet, Lord, also, we want to be like Joseph and we want to be obedient. Lord, help us this morning to.

To love obedience. To run towards obedience. Lord, we ask this in Jesus name. Amen. So you will you will notice that this is not a very popular passage of the Christmas story to speak about.

[ 2 : 53 ] It's not often it's not often covered. We like to talk about the shepherds. We're going to talk about the shepherds tonight. We look we like to talk about the angels.

We like to talk about the little donkey. But rarely do we talk about the virgin birth. And so and even less so do we talk about Joseph.

And so this morning we're going to talk about Joseph. We're going to talk about the virgin birth.

We're going to talk about obedience, which is everybody's favorite word. It is certainly if you're one of those rule keepers.

Maybe you're married to a rule keeper. I'm married to a rule keeper and she's married to a rule breaker. We have a great time, especially when I'm driving.

So. She keeps me out of trouble. But obedience is something that we probably all struggle with one time or another. And so let me ask you some simple questions to maybe diagnose the problem to start with.

[ 4 : 01 ] And the first question is, what do you do when obedience costs you something? Right. So. Again, obedience driving along, you know, it's you know, that that I'm just going to put it out there.

You know, that silly road this goes down is 20 miles an hour and it's like there's no one in sight.

There's no but it's still 20 miles an hour and it's costing you, isn't it? It's costing you three seconds in of your life.

And I wonder how that makes you feel. And what do you do when doing the right thing actually makes life harder for you? What do you do when following God places you in a situation that looks wrong to everyone else?

Matthew chapter one opens with that tension, this story of Joseph. And what we see straight away is a righteous man's dilemma.

That's verses 18 and 19. A righteous man's dilemma. So verse 18, Matthew opens. Now, the birth of Jesus Christ took place this way, like just simple.

[ 5 : 06 ] Right. This is how it went down. And we would expect that the story would follow kind of gentle emotions. You know, little Jesus, meek and mild.

You know, this is the story of Jesus. This is how he came. And if we want to, you know, we probably hear some sheep bleating in the background. Maybe some angels up on the hill singing. Maybe some beautiful stars. Maybe some trees. That's what they are, the trees. And maybe we'd even get a little bit sentimental.

We'd expect like the Hallmark Channel to be playing. Someone to be drinking eggnog or something like that. This is how the birth of Jesus Christ took place. We might expect a quiet, peaceful nativity scene.

But the rest of the verse tells us something actually really, really remarkable. Look at that. He says, When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit.

[ 6 : 15 ] So, Matthew is quick to point out that Mary and Joseph were betrothed. Now, we don't use that word like ever. I was going to say very often, but I don't think we use that word ever, do we?

Betrothed. And we don't use the word very, very much, because in first century Middle East custom, the tradition is quite different from like our betrothal or engagement that we would have today.

In the first century, betrothal was a formal, lengthy, legally binding contract between two families. And it started when a man goes to a girl's father and convinces the father to give his daughter as his wife.

And part of the negotiation involved giving the father some kind of money, property as part of the deal. You remember back in the Old Testament, Jacob, he went to ask for a bride and he didn't have any money and he didn't have any property.

So he worked. Do you remember? Some seven years because he didn't have that. But he was still expected to give it. That was the custom in the Middle East. And so the moment then this money or this property kind of exchanged hands, the two were considered married in a kind of not yet consummated way.

[ 7 : 49 ] That's why the text says when Mary, when his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph before they came together. So that's that.

This is a marriage, but they don't know each other intimately. Right. And then the scandal hits. And you've got to kind of, if you can, put yourself in Joseph's sandals right now.

Now, because the scandal is that she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. Matthew repeats that twice in this section. It was from the Holy Spirit.

But at that time, did Joseph know that? He didn't, did he? He had gone to Mary's father and there'd been an agreement.

And sooner or later, she had found, she was found to be pregnant. And so at this point, no angels had visited him.

[ 8 : 51 ] No explanation had been given. All Joseph knows is this. The woman he loves is pregnant and it's not his child. But notice that Matthew includes what he says in verse 19.

I think it's super important. He says that her husband, Joseph, being a just man. He wasn't just a man. He was a just man.

And that word just really, really does matter because Joseph isn't naive. Joseph knows the Old Testament law. That's what that word just means.

Right. And he knows what Deuteronomy chapter 22 says. That if there is a betrothed virgin and a man meets her in the city and lies with her, and you shall bring them both to the gate of that city, you shall stone them to death.

So this places Joseph in a little bit of a sticky situation. Since adultery violated both covenant faithfulness and community holiness, the penalty was to take Mary, the one that he loved, the one that he envisaged spending the rest of his life with, and according to the law, stoning to death.

[ 10 : 11 ] And so that word just tells us that Joseph had legal grounds to expose Mary.

That's what Joseph did. He had legal grounds to do that. So in many ways, you get this picture of the gospel.

You know, Mary is found to be the guilty one. And worthy of death. And Joseph, being a just man, had legal grounds to expose Mary.

He could have pursued public justice. So when Matthew says that Joseph was a just man, it's just not a throwaway line. Under the law, a betrothed woman found pregnant could be publicly accused

of adultery.

Joseph had every legal right to expose her. He could have defended his own reputation. He could have proved his innocence.

[11:17] And let the consequences fall on her. And no one in that society would have blamed him. That was what the law was intended to do, wasn't it?

The law was intended to expose. That's what it was there for. And the law is intended to expose all of us. The Bible says that there is none just, no, not one. The law exposes us and exposes our shortcomings.

The Bible says that there is none just and that covers everyone, none of us. Not even Mary, the mother of Jesus. Have that conversation with the Catholic.

So how does Joseph then respond? Well, Matthew continues in verse 19 and says that he was unwilling to put her to shame and so resolved to divorce her quietly.

Now, what I love about that is that Joseph chooses the quietest, gentlest path that the law allowed. I don't know whether Joseph was an angry man, but I can imagine that there would have been something in Joseph's heart at this moment to not go down the gentlest, quietest path.

[12:41] But righteousness here does not make him harsh. It makes him gentle. And I think sometimes we get that wrong, don't we?

Like righteousness is there, is designed to help us be gentle, not harsh. He was a just man.

He was a righteous man. Because being just isn't just about being technically correct. Oh, look at Mary. She's pregnant.

Look at Deuteronomy chapter 22. There's the law. There's the formula. But justice and true justice, true righteousness isn't about just being technically correct.

It's about reflecting the heart of God. What would God do in that situation? So where the law shows us the seriousness of sin, Joseph shows us the tenderness of righteousness.

[13:40] And soon enough, Jesus will show up and fulfill both, won't he? Because where the law condemns, verse 21 reminds us when Jesus comes, notice what Matthew says, that he will save his people from their sins.

So the law shows up. Where law condemns, ultimately, where this verse is pointing to us, or this passage is pointing to us, is not Joseph and his obedience, but Jesus and his. That Jesus has come to save his people from their sins.

And this is important. Biblical righteousness is not cold obedience. It's obedience shaped by mercy. And Joseph chooses the most self-controlled, least destructive option that he knows.

Before Joseph understands the miracle, before he knows the child is from the Holy Spirit, he's already chosen mercy over vengeance. And yet, even this righteous plan is not God's plan.

Do you notice that? This is the gentlest, this is the most righteous path, but that's not God's path. Because sometimes obedience means letting go of what feels sometimes morally reasonable in that moment, in order to submit to what God is revealing.

[14:59] And so Matthew then says in verse 21, he doesn't just set up this righteous man's dilemma in verses 18 and 19. In verses 20 to 23, he now talks about the divine interruption.

Divine interruptions are amazing. They save us from so many stupid decisions.

Don't they? I share Joseph's struggle with the name of the book that we'll be looking at after Christmas, how to talk about Jesus without looking like an idiot.

And I've made it 20, 25 years of ministry trying to do that and failing miserably. And yet, we all know that it is God who intervenes in those moments, right?

And there's no formula in that. And so we need that divine interruption and intervention. And Joseph gets this, not Joseph, Joseph, Joseph, Joseph.

[16:11] Although sometimes Joseph does get divine interruptions called small children. They are also God sent. So we read in verse 20 that he was considering these things.

So Joseph is thinking, he's weighing, he's deciding, he's agonizing, no doubt, about what to do. And then, behold, like that word behold is like, that's amazing.

Like, stand and watch. An angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. Now, again, I'm sure that you've had God interrupt your best plans.

And what I love about this is that God intervenes most often, not when we're being rebellious, but when we're doing the right thing.

Right? When we're sincerely trying to do what's right, even if we haven't got all of the information, that's when God intervenes.

[17:26] Like, if we have our heart bent on just like, I'm just not going to obey. I'm not going to do that. That's a silly thing to do. God's not going to intervene at that moment. He's going to let you get on with it. Let you burn out and then kind of go, should we talk now?

That's generally the way the Lord works. But if you're doing what is right, if you have our heart bent on mercy and justice and righteousness, that's when God intervenes. He's like, I can work with that. And that's what Joseph is doing.

He didn't have the full picture, did he? But he's trying to do what was just. He's just trying to do the right thing. And, you know, oftentimes, you know, we'll say to ourselves or we'll say to the Lord, or maybe we'll have conversations with each other.

I don't know what to do. I don't know what to do in that situation. Look, the answer is always just do the right thing. If you do the right thing, God's going to intervene. If your heart is not bent on doing the right thing, well, you're on your own.

Joseph chooses mercy when he could have chosen self-protection. He chooses faithfulness when bitterness could have been easier. And it's there in that posture of surrender that God speaks.

[18:40] Not in rebellion, but in obedience. Not because Joseph earned revelation. Like, he's gone to sleep.

Like, I'm not sure how well he slept with those decisions that he had to make. But he went to sleep. And in that moment, God reveals himself to Joseph. And it tells us, you know, that God delights to guide hearts already bent towards obedience.

Not partial obedience. You know, the story of King Saul in the Old Testament is all about partial obedience. And partial obedience is disobedience. And obedience flows from, and certainly we see this in this story, obedience flows from revelation, not fear.

Joseph does not obey to earn righteousness. Right? He obeys because God has revealed truth.

Christian obedience is not a ladder to God. It's a response to grace. This is what God has done. I'm going to follow him. I'm going to obey him. Even if it's, even if I don't know the full picture.

[19:55] Even if I don't know the full journey. Every step of obedience is a step towards that fuller picture. You don't need a sign.

You don't need a feeling. You know, I've had conversations in the past. I'm sure you have. Where people have said, you know, I'm just, I'm just going to wait for a feeling. I just don't feel like it. I'm just going to wait for, you know, whatever.

An angel to pop his head out of a cloud. And then, you know, I'm not going to do anything until that happens. That's disobedience. That's not obedience. Oh, I'm just waiting for the Lord.

No, you're not. You're being lazy. That's disobedience. When you don't know what to do, God has already made one thing very, very clear.

Do what is right. Do what is right. You don't need a sign. You don't need a feeling. You don't need a special word from heaven to obey what God has already said. Righteousness is never confusing.

[20:54] Obedience is never unclear. The question isn't whether God has spoken. The question is whether we're willing to respond. If you plant your feet on what you already know is right, this is what Joseph is doing.

God will meet you with direction, with blessing and clarity in his time. This is exactly what is happening with Joseph. Joseph was already bent towards doing what was right.

And God sends an angel that appears to him in a dream and says, Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife. And of course, it's probably worth stating that Joseph had good reason to fear.

His obedience here will cost Joseph everything people use to measure the good life. Right. He was sacrificing his reputation, his social standing, his credibility as a righteous man.

He would no longer be seen as a righteous man. Like who's going to believe him or Mary? Right. Okay. So from this point on, people will assume probably one of two things.

[22:08] That Joseph sinned sexually before marriage with Mary. Or Joseph was complicit in covering up Mary's sin. Either way, obedience often means being misunderstood.

And obedience is often costly before it is clear. That's true. So Joseph obeys before everything makes sense.

Socially, faith is not certainty. Right. It is trust in God. It is trust in the character of God. But would you highlight the fact that God calls Joseph, Joseph, son of David?

Did you notice that? That's not a surname. You know that. It's not like I'm just making sure I've got the right Joseph. We have that problem in this church, don't we?

Just want to make sure I've got the right Joseph. Joseph, son of David. David. That's not a surname. This is not a polite kind of genealogical note either.

[ 23 : 15 ] Remember, this is a theological thunderclap. Right? God is deliberately tying this moment to the promise he made in 2 Samuel chapter 7.

Where he vowed to David as a young boy. That he would have descendants who would establish a throne that would last forever.

And God is tying this moment to that promise. And Israel had waited centuries for that promise. I mean, lots of kings had failed.

Multiple kingdoms had collapsed. Exile had come. But God never revoked his word. And by calling Joseph, Joseph, son of David.

The angel was saying, look, this story didn't die when the monarchy died. Or when Judah fell. It didn't die when the people were carried away. And look, people, I think, struggle with the same thing today.

[ 24 : 24 ] We live in a culture, don't we? Where promises feel fragile. But the gospel insists on the same truth Israel had to learn.

And that God's promises do not expire when circumstances collapse. God's promises don't expire when things look like they're going to expire.

What looks like the end of the story is often the quiet place where God is still working. And so the angel calls him, Joseph, son of David.

Joseph, do you remember the promise? Joseph, do you remember what I'm still yet to do? Do you believe that? God has a way of speaking hope into places that look hopeless.

And scripture says he calls the things. One of my favorite verses in Romans chapter 4. He calls the things that are not as if they are. Which means that your current reality doesn't get the final word.

[ 25 : 35 ] Long before David had a throne, God called him a king. Long before Sarah had a child, God called her a mother. Long before redemption was visible, God called Jesus a savior.

And so if God has named something over your life and you don't yet see it, don't despair. He's not confused. And he's not late.

He is faithful. What he declares, he brings to life. And what he promises will surely be completed. Joseph, son of David.

And he says, do not fear to take Mary as your wife for. And this is the reason that you shouldn't fear. And I'm like, I'm reading. I'm like, surely that is the reason to fear.

But according to the angel's language, this is the reason not to fear. Is that what is conceived in her. Is from the Holy Spirit. And so the angel says, let's talk about human impossibility right now.

[ 26 : 42 ] Because it's always the impossible things that God promises, isn't it? They seem impossible. Most of us have an issue with impossible.

It's impossible. How many times do you hear that at work? Can we do this? I know it's impossible. Is it really? Is it really impossible? It might be difficult. But it's not impossible.

What does impossible mean? That there is no slim chance. It's just gone beyond fluke. There's absolutely no way that this could happen.

And yet they're the things that God promises. I don't know if you're a Mission Impossible fan. But in the film Mission Impossible 2, Ethan Hunt, played by Tom Cruise, is dispatched to Sydney, Australia, to stop a terrorist organization from laying their hands on a genetically engineered virus.

It's the same film. Different story. Time and time again. Eight times, I think. And Mission Commander Swanbeck, who's played by Anthony Hopkins, turns to Hunt and says, this isn't mission difficult.

[ 28 : 01 ] This is mission impossible. We're actually okay with mission difficult, aren't we? Oh, this is going to be difficult. This is going to take some work.

It's going to be difficult. I mean, like, we'll get out of bed for mission difficult. I mean, we sing about it. Climbing every mountain, forging every stream. That's mission difficult. It's just a musical, actually.

We're okay with difficult. Make me the underdog. I'll show you what I've got. But what we can't stand is impossible. And the reason we can't stand impossible is that you can't earn it.

You can't win it. You can't gain it. Like, that's what impossible means. Completely out of your capacity to achieve it.

And so God calls Joseph, son of David, and then says, do you remember that promise?

[ 29 : 06 ] That promise is coming. And then he says something even more extraordinarily impossible than that. That was the warm-up in Joseph's conversation with the angel. Again, Romans chapter 4.

He calls the things which are not as though they are. The virgin birth is not some embarrassing detail to be explained away. It is the very announcement of the gospel.

It tells us that salvation is entirely God's work. Why? Because it's impossible. It reminds us that Christianity is not like other religions. Where moral effort or human cleverness or ritual achievement is what brings us closer to the divine.

That's difficult. It's not impossible. World religions are difficult, but they're not impossible.

Christianity? It's impossible.

In the ancient world, there are many stories of miraculous or virgin births, right? You know, Perseus in Greek myth, Romulus in Roman legend, Horus in Egyptian tales.

[ 30 : 21 ] But every single one of those stories celebrates a hero, often semi-divine, striving for power, conquest, or personal glory. They're all imitations of one true story where the child born of a virgin is not a demigod seeking acclaim.

He is the king of kings. He is God himself entering human history to accomplish salvation, the impossible. From the very beginning, God is taking the initiative with his mission.

And then verse 21 gives us the mission. Verse 21 says that she will bear a son. And you shall call his name Jesus.

And so Joseph is given authority and responsibility to name the child. And in naming him, Joseph is adopting him legally. This means Joseph is not just obeying privately.

He is publicly aligning himself with God's redemptive plan. That is the good response to the gospel, isn't it? What does God want us to do with the gospel?

[ 31 : 35 ] Well, he wants us to align ourselves with his plan. He will, she will bear a son. You shall call his name Jesus.

The reason being, he will save his people from their sins. Not from Rome. Not from inconvenience. Not from discomfort.

But from sin. Why do we need saving from sin? It's a great question, isn't it? He doesn't say he will save his people from anything else that might be pressing in that moment.

And certainly Roman occupation in that moment was pressing. He said, I'm going to save you from your sins. And the reason he does that and the reason he says that is because the sin is the thing that has separated us from God.

He said, I'm going to make your life better. First century Rome. We're going to invent something called air conditioning. And it's going to be amazing for you guys.

[ 32 : 42 ] In the summer heat of the Judea countryside. You're going to love it. And we're going to invent solar panels so you never have to have electricity. And everybody's standing going, what is electricity?

And he doesn't say anything. He says, look, the most important thing, the most important, the most pressing thing and the most impossible thing is that Jesus is going to save you from your sins.

The very thing that is separated for you from God, God is going to eradicate in your life. That's impossible. And then Matthew steps back and says in verse 22 that all of this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet.

And then he quotes Isaiah the prophet. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which means God with us. This is not a baby boy grows up who becomes a righteous and just man and somehow acquires the status of Godhead.

OK, that is Jehovah's Witnesses. Right. They believe that. And it's heresy. To call that out. This is Emmanuel, God with us.

[ 33 : 52 ] When Jesus came, he came in the full person of God. Now, look, theologically, we're not going to have that conversation.

Difficult conversation. But that's what the Bible tells us. That when he came, Jesus was fully man and he was fully God. He wasn't fully man who ascended to be God.

He was God who descended to be man. And in verse 24 is stunning in its simplicity as we finally see that obedience happens without conditions.

I don't know if you're a conditioned person, but Joseph here is not a conditioned person. And what I mean is, is that if you ever said you're going to do something and you've said it even whether in your mind or to the person, I'll do that if.

That word if. If you're if you're a rule breaker, the word if I would say is a godsend because it gets you out of all kinds of sticky situations.

[ 35 : 06 ] But but but obedience, that's not obedience. True obedience comes without conditions. Verse verse verse 24. Again, stunning in its simplicity.

When Joseph woke from sleep. He did as the angel of the Lord commanded him. That's it. No bargaining. No delay.

No demand for further confirmation. Like, I'm not too sure whether that was the Lord. I'll just wait and see what happens. No, no, no, no. There wasn't any of that.

But this was real obedience. Real obedience is not obedience if God meets your conditions. Real obedience is not driving through town.

And going, oh, you know, the word, the name Jesus. I'll tell you what, God, if if if you want me to call my son Jesus, I'm going to see it like on a number plate.

[ 36 : 10 ] That's stupid. That's not obedience. That's waiting for God to meet your conditions, not the other way around.

That makes you God, not him. And so Joseph does three costly things. He took his wife.

That's what the text says. Like, we're not given any information about that. At all. He took his wife. Public obedience. Every glance, every whisper, every raised eyebrow.

Joseph absorbs the shame so Mary doesn't have to. Anyone ring any bells who that was? And in doing so, again, he's imagining the gospel or replaying the gospel for us.

Because this is what Jesus will do. He will absorb shame. That is not his. So that we can be free. It's the second thing he does is that verse 25 says that he knew her not.

[ 37 : 26 ] Until she had given birth to a son. This matters because Joseph honors God's purpose over his personal rights.

Obedience is not just what we do. It's what we're willing to delay. It's not about positively always walking in something.

Isn't it true? Often obedience is just the refraining of doing something. Or the stopping of doing something. Or the delaying of doing something. And then the third thing he did was that he called his name Jesus.

Final act of obedience. And by calling him Jesus, Joseph relinquishes ownership over his own story. The child is not about Joseph's legacy.

This is about obedience being part of God's redemption. Part of God's redemption story. Joseph is not the savior.

[ 38 : 33 ] But his obedience becomes part of the story of salvation. God certainly doesn't need our obedience, right? We're not going to train wreck God's plan if we're disobedient.

The weight of the world doesn't hang on your shoulders. But God does delight in our obedience. And this child is about God's salvation.

And so Joseph fades into the background of scripture. Hardly read about again at all. But his obedience echoes into eternity.

Now, of course, there is one greater than Joseph. Who was obedient.

And was even obedient to a greater degree. Jesus would one day obey his father fully. Not in a dream, but in agony. Where Joseph absorbed shame temporarily, Jesus absorbed it eternally.

[ 39 : 42 ] Where Joseph took Mary as his bride at great cost, Jesus takes us as his bride by laying down his life. Paul said to the church of Philippi that he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross.

And so where the angel said that you should call his name Jesus, why he will save his people from our sins, from their sins.

How did he do that? He humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on the cross. And because he obeyed, salvation is offered.

So the call today is not be like Joseph. Don't be like Joseph. The call is trust the one Joseph obeyed.

And then follow him. Because obedience is not the path of salvation. It's the evidence that salvation has already come. To trust Jesus as the one who has gone before us.

[ 40 : 52 ] Let's pray. Father, thank you for your word. Thank you, Lord, for Joseph's obedience. Lord, thank you, Lord, that we have him as that first role model.

And yet, Lord, we would seek to follow the one who has done greater things than Joseph. Lord, and so we do thank you, Lord, that even though we could have been put to shame, we could have been stoned to death because of our guilt.

Lord, we want to thank you, Lord, that you have come in perfect righteousness, not in vengeance, but in mercy. Lord, thank you, Lord, that while you should have put us out, you have drawn us in. Lord, thank you, Lord, that you have come to save your people from their sins, Lord. And we want to look to you again this morning, Lord, and say thank you. Lord, that Christmas is not just about, you know, food and family and presents and all of those trimmings, how wonderful they are, and they should be a blessing to us.

Ultimately, Christmas is about you coming to save us from our sins. Lord, and this morning we want to commit ourselves and our hearts again to you. Lord, so easy at this time to get distracted by, again, all of those things that not necessarily speak of you, Lord.

[ 42 : 10 ] And so, again, we want to just turn to you, Lord, and, Lord, say, Lord, have our hearts again. Lord, if there's been disobedience in our hearts, even if it's just partial obedience, Lord, would we repent of those things, Lord?

And, again, this morning, just follow you. Lord, we want to say that we trust you. Lord, we want to say thank you that our obedience or our salvation isn't contingent on our level of obedience.

Lord, thank you, Lord, that you call us to take a first step of faith and you give us clarity later on.

Lord, we want to say that we want to trust you that much. And so, Lord, help us to do that today.

Lord, maybe this morning we have been veiling our disobedience in a form of obedience, Lord.

And, Lord, we have been calling something obedience when actually it's not. Lord, I pray that you would reveal that to us today. Lord, if there's areas of our lives, Lord, as we just prepare, Lord, for this greater Advent season, Lord, Lord, we want to be called just, just like Joseph was.

[ 43 : 23 ] Lord, we want to be right with you, just like Joseph was. Lord, so help us this morning.

Lord, as we sing this last song, Lord, we pray that your spirit may just speak to our heart, Lord, and just reveal things to us.

Lord, and help us to respond the right way in obedience, to follow you, to trust you, to love you.

Lord, we ask these things in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen.