

## Small Group Discussion Guide

**Sermon Date:** December 12, 2021

**Speaker:** Pastor Raphael Warnock

**Sermon Title:** From Disgrace to Grace

### **Sermon Text: Matthew 1:18 – 24**

*<sup>8</sup>This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement quietly. <sup>20</sup>As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup>All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord’s message through his prophet: <sup>23</sup>“Look! The virgin will conceive a child! She will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel, which means ‘God is with us.’ <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife. <sup>25</sup>But he did not have sexual relations with her until her son was born. And Joseph named him Jesus.*

### **Background Summary**

The Gospel of Matthew traces Joseph’s genealogy to situate Jesus’ human origin within the Davidic lineage. The story of the Virgin Birth recorded in Matthew declares it is told as fulfillment of prophecy and foundational doctrine for the Christian faith. The virgin birth interrupts the human transmission of sin nature through the seed of man. It is the Word of God that impregnated Mary not Joseph therefore Mary’s Son is not corrupted with sin nature. The humble beginnings of the Son of God and His rise to the high calling of Savior of the world speaks to God’s ability to bring anyone from “disgrace to grace” if we trust God to do it.

### **Sermon Summary**

Reflecting on his own financially humble upbringing in South Georgia, Reverend Warnock praised God for the rich character of his parents to whom he attributed much of his personal success. Pastor Warnock uses the story of Joseph, Mary and Jesus to illustrate the message of disgrace to grace in our lives by showing that humble and/or disgraceful beginnings don’t have to pre-determine failure. The lives of biblical characters were filled with problems but yet people such as Tamar, Rahab and David rose to greatness through their relationships with God. In the text, Joseph, Mary’s fiancée is faced with three challenges: 1) Believing the virgin birth; 2) Putting Mary away to avoid shame; 3) Obeying God to accept Mary and name her son Jesus. By grace Joseph was receptive to the instructions he received from God in a dream and he became instrumental in moving his family from “disgrace to grace”. The sermon calls us to reject the notion of “illegitimate children” through an acceptance that anyone can move from “disgrace to grace” with God.

**Questions:**

1. Describe a situation that required you to believe God for something unexplainable.
2. Do you believe in the virgin birth or is it not meant to be taken literally? What role do faith and trust play in the scenario of the virgin birth?
3. What do you think your reaction would be if you were in Joseph's position?
4. Can you relate to Joseph receiving God's word in a dream?
5. What other messages does the humble beginnings of Jesus have for you?
6. How can we seek out and assist others to move from disgrace to grace?