Sermon Title: Disruptive Beginnings

Preacher: Rev. Olivia D. A. Maxwell

Bible Passage: Matthew 1:18-25 NRSV

Date: December 18, 2022

**Scripture:**

***18****Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah[*[*a*](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew1:18-25&version=NRSVUE;NIV#fen-NRSVUE-23163a)*]took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be pregnant from the Holy Spirit.****19****Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to divorce her quietly.****20****But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit.****21****She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”****22****All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:*

***23****“Look, the virgin shall become pregnant and give birth to a son,  and they shall name him Emmanuel, which means, “God is with us.”****24****When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife****25****but had no marital relations with her until she had given birth to a son,[ and he named him Jesus.*

**Sermon Notes:**

Joseph was confronted and challenged with a Disrupted Beginning. His plan was to take Mary as his wife, but she was found to be pregnant with a child that was not his child. As a righteous man who wanted to do the right thing, he planned to divorce her quietly so as not “to expose her to public disgrace.” However, an angel appeared to him in a dream and told him, “…*do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife,”*

**Sermon Points:**.

1. **Even when we mean well, God steps in disrupting our plans by inserting God’s will .**
 We have our own plans and dreams, our own ideas and our own visions about how the future should unfold. However, Rev. Maxwell reminded us, we too experience Disrupted Beginnings because God stepped in revealing God’s will.
2. **God is big enough for our doubts and questions!**
 We will have doubts and questions when God disrupts a direction we have chosen. When we are faced with doubts and questions, we should take them *to* God so God can give us some answers. We may have to do what Joseph did, and that was to lay down, get some rest so we can deal with it in the morning.
3. **Embrace unfamiliar messages delivered unfamiliar ways and in unfamiliar times!**God can use anything to deliver God’s message. In our relationships, especially our relationship with Christ, God may use an unfamiliar messenger at an unfamiliar time, in an unfamiliar way. It’s always about the innovation and renewal that God is doing upon the earth. In the text it’s about “Emmanuel!” which means God is with us.
4. **The sacrifice is bigger than us**.
When God disrupts, our gift is a sacrifice that is bigger than we are.
5. **The greatest gift during this season is to deny our own wants for the sake of God’s vision**
The real thing we need is Christ our Savior, not more things. GOD SHOW US WHAT YOU WANT US TO DO, WHAT YOU WANT US TO BE!

**Discussion Questions**

1. How can you know you have experienced a Disruptive Beginning?
2. What gift(s) do you hope to receive this Christmas?
3. What Christmas gift(s) will you be giving this year?
4. Who is on your Christmas list this year?
5. How would you describe the gift of “Emmanuel” – God with us?

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