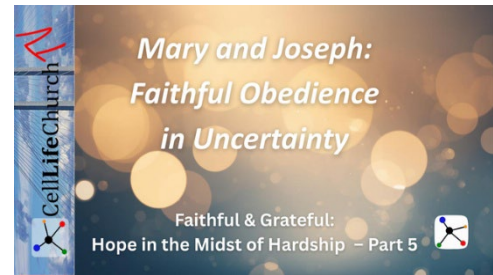


Mary and Joseph: Faithful Obedience in Uncertainty

Faithful & Grateful: Hope in the Midst of Hardship –
Part 5



Obedience becomes most powerful when the path ahead is unclear. Mary and Joseph show us that obedience in uncertainty is an act of faith that invites God to work in extraordinary ways. Their willingness to trust God, even when life was turned upside down, reveals how faithfulness in hardship opens the door for God's greatest purposes.

Introduction

Uncertainty is something we all face. Whether it is uncertainty about the future, our families, finances, health, or calling, we all experience seasons when we do not know what God is doing or where He is leading. In those moments, obedience can feel difficult, even frightening. Yet Scripture shows us that some of God's greatest works unfold when ordinary people say yes to Him in the midst of uncertainty.

As we conclude our Advent teaching series, *Faithful and Grateful: Hope in the Midst of Hardship*, we turn to the story of Mary and Joseph, the earthly parents of Jesus. Their faithfulness changed the course of history. Their obedience, though costly and confusing, positioned them to be part of God's greatest gift to the world: the birth of His Son.

Mary and Joseph were not extraordinary because of their status, education, or experience. They were extraordinary because they trusted God completely, even when life took unexpected and challenging turns. Their story reminds us that obedience is not about understanding everything God is doing. It is about trusting the One who is faithful through every circumstance.

Let us look at their story and learn how we can walk in faithful obedience even when the road ahead is uncertain.

Mary's Obedience: Trusting God When the Calling Is Unexpected

Mary was a young woman living in Nazareth, a town of no great reputation. She was pledged to be married to Joseph, and like any young bride-to-be, she likely envisioned a simple, peaceful life. Then everything changed with one divine encounter.

The angel Gabriel appeared to her and announced that she would conceive and give birth to a son, and that this child would be the long-awaited Messiah. Her calling was miraculous, but it was also overwhelming. Mary did not understand how this could happen. She is recorded in Luke 1:34 asking the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

Gabriel explained that the Holy Spirit would come upon her, and the child would be called the Son of God. It was an answer, but it did not remove the uncertainty. Mary still faced:

- Social shame



- Misunderstanding
- Possible rejection
- The threat of being cast out
- A future she could not predict

Yet despite all this, Mary responded with one of the most remarkable statements of faith in the entire Bible, recorded in Luke 1:38, which says:

[Luke 1:38](#)

(38) "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Mary chose obedience before she understood the details. She chose faith before she saw the outcome. She chose trust before she knew the cost.

Her obedience in uncertainty made way for the birth of the Savior.

Mary teaches us that God does not always call us to what is easy or comfortable. He calls us to what is purposeful. Obedience often invites challenges, but it always ushers in His presence and His work.

In the comments below, share a time when God asked you to do something you did not fully understand, and how He proved faithful.

[Joseph's Obedience: Trusting God When the Cost Is High](#)

Joseph's part in this story is just as powerful. When he learned that Mary was pregnant, he knew the child was not his. As a righteous man, he resolved to end their engagement quietly to spare her public disgrace. Joseph cared for Mary and did not want to harm her, but he could not see a path forward that made sense.

Then God intervened.

Matthew 1:19–21 describes the moment an angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. It says:

[Matthew 1:19-21](#)

(19) Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. (20) But after he had considered 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 home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. (21) She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

Joseph woke up from the dream and immediately obeyed. He took Mary as his wife. He accepted a child that was not biologically his. He embraced the responsibility of raising the Messiah. He protected his family and led them faithfully.

Joseph's obedience was costly. It cost him:



- His reputation
- His comfort
- His plans
- His expectations for the future

Yet Joseph did not hesitate. He trusted God even when the assignment was difficult and confusing.

Joseph's example teaches us that obedience sometimes requires sacrifice. It requires surrendering our plans for God's purpose. It requires choosing faith over fear, even when others do not understand our decisions.

Comment below with a moment when obedience to God required sacrifice or courage from you.

Faithfulness in Hardship: Following God When the Journey Is Difficult

Mary and Joseph's obedience did not end with their initial yes. That yes began a journey filled with hardship.

Luke 2 records how Mary and Joseph traveled from Nazareth to Bethlehem because of a census. This journey likely took several days and was physically demanding, especially for Mary in the final stage of pregnancy. Yet they continued in obedience, trusting that God was leading them.

When they arrived, there was no room for them. Jesus was born in humble circumstances, laid in a manger. The King of kings entered the world not in luxury, but in simplicity.

In Matthew 2, God warned Joseph in a dream that King Herod wanted to kill the child. Joseph immediately got up, took Mary and Jesus, and fled to Egypt. This was not a short journey. It was hundreds of miles, through difficult terrain, into a foreign land.

This was not what Mary and Joseph expected when they said yes to God. But they obeyed, and God protected them.

After Herod's death, God instructed Joseph again through a dream to return to Israel. Still cautious, Joseph settled in Nazareth to keep his family safe.

Mary and Joseph's obedience was not a single moment. It was a lifestyle. Their journey teaches us that obedience often leads us through:

- Unexpected places
- Uncomfortable situations
- Difficult journeys
- Seasons of uncertainty

Yet God was with them every step of the way. Their obedience allowed God's plan of salvation to unfold.



Share in the comments how God guided you through a difficult season when you chose to obey Him.

Worship and Gratitude: The Response of a Faithful Heart

Mary and Joseph responded to God's work with worship and gratitude.

In Luke 1:46–55, Mary responded to God's calling with a beautiful song of worship. She praised God for His mercy, His faithfulness, and His power. Her worship flowed from trust, not certainty.

Mary treasured the moments. Luke 2:19 tells us:

Luke 2:19

(19) But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Mary reflected on God's faithfulness even when life was complicated.

The Magi worshiped Jesus. Matthew 2:11 describes how the Magi bowed down and worshiped Jesus, offering Him gifts. This moment affirmed to Mary and Joseph that their obedience mattered, even if they did not yet understand everything.

Worship, reflection, and gratitude help us remain faithful when life is uncertain. Obedience becomes easier when we fix our eyes on the One who is worthy of our trust.

Share one thing you are grateful for in this season, even if life feels uncertain.

Conclusion

Mary and Joseph show us that obedience in uncertainty is a powerful expression of faithfulness in hardship. Their lives teach us that God does not need us to understand every detail. He asks us to trust Him, follow Him, and say yes to Him even when the path is unclear.

Their obedience prepared the world for the birth of Jesus. Our obedience prepares our hearts to receive what God wants to do in and through us.

As we celebrate Christmas, let us remember that God still works through ordinary people who say yes to His calling.

This Week

Take time each day this week to pray, "Lord, help me trust You when I do not understand." Write down one area of your life where you want to obey God more fully. Ask Him to give you the courage and faith of Mary and Joseph as you follow Him.

