



Your Kingdom Come
December 22 | Group Guide

Open with prayer and Scripture (5 minutes).

Take a few moments to begin your group time together with this prayer:

O Almighty God, you visited your servants, Elizabeth and Mary, with news of the world's redemption in the coming of the Savior. Make our hearts leap with joy, and fill our mouths with songs of praise, that we may announce glad tidings of peace, and welcome Christ the Savior in our midst. Amen.

Pray also for your group time together. Then, read **Matthew 1:18-25**.

18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. 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."

22 All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: 23 "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

24 When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Introduction and questions about Matthew 1:18-25 (15 minutes).

In the book of Matthew, Jesus not only shows us what the kingdom of heaven is like, he teaches us to pray: "Your kingdom come, on earth as it is in heaven." We want the love of heaven to come to earth, the wisdom of heaven to come to earth, the joy of heaven to come to earth, the abundance of heaven to earth, the king of heaven to come to earth!

In this series, we hope to not only learn more about Jesus, but learn to become more and more like Jesus, seeing his Kingdom come in our lives, our city, and our community.

Questions about the Matthew 1:18-25:

- What was something new from the sermon you learned? What was something that resonated or challenged you? What do you have questions about?
- In his sermon, Dan highlighted three characters: (1) Mary; (2) Joseph; and (3) Jesus.

Before this sermon, how would you have described Mary - who she was, her importance, etc.? How has your perspective of her shifted because of this sermon and text?

Before this sermon, how would you have described Joseph - who he was, his importance, etc.? How has your perspective of him shifted because of this sermon and text?

Before this sermon, how would you have described Christ - who he was, his importance, etc.? How has your perspective of him shifted because of this sermon and text?

Break into smaller groups for sermon discussion (35 minutes).

In groups of 3-4, reflect on the following questions:

- Reflect on the admirable qualities found in Mary...

In this passage, Dan highlighted how Mary was highly favored, worshipful, and blessed by God. What specific characteristics of Mary's life, heart, disposition towards God do you feel like you want to cultivate in the coming year?

How have you experienced hardship in being worshipful and obedient to God this past year?

- Reflect on the admirable qualities found in Joseph...

Take a few moments to self-assess. In this passage, Dan highlighted how Joseph adhered to God's law, was compassionate, and was also obedient.

In what ways have you fallen short of living into God's rules for your life lately?
In what ways have you lacked compassion for the people in your life?
In what ways has obedience been lacking for you?

Share your thoughts with your group.

- Reflect on the admirable qualities found in Jesus...

In his sermon, Dan talked about how Jesus is described as "born of a virgin by the power of the Spirit." Why is it important that Jesus be both fully man and fully God?

Dan also talked about how Jesus is described as "Emmanuel – God With Us," which reminds us that, indeed, God is with us. In what ways have you experienced God's presence in your life recently? How have you been tempted by distraction in this season?

Lastly, Dan pointed out how Jesus is described as he who will "save us from our sins." Reflecting on your answers to the above questions related to Mary and Joseph, where are you needing a fresh reminder of the gospel of grace and the freedom from sin?

Conclude with prayer requests and then the following prayer to end the night (5 minutes).

Share prayer requests and pray for one another. Then, pray the following prayer:

*Shepherd of Israel,
you gently support the one who is with child
and call forth the Lamb who dances in the womb,
Stir our hearts to recognize Christ's coming,*

*as Elizabeth recognized his presence
in Mary's radiant obedience to your desire,
an open our souls to receive the one
who came to love your flock. Amen*