



Can God trust me?

One of the biblical characters in the Bible that has made the greatest impact on me is Joseph, Miriam's (Mary's) fiancé and husband-to-be, a man God chose to take care of His Son and a young woman He chose to be the mother of His Son. This man that only occurs in the first pages of Gospels of Matthew and Luke and then disappears - he is never mentioned before or after. He does have a very famous namesake in the Old Testament - Joseph, the son of Jacob. But Joseph himself, it looks like he almost was a nobody. Is there anything in this man God wants us to learn from? Why did God choose this ordinary man for this task in His plan of Salvation?

Was Joseph, after all, an ordinary man?

Joseph is first mentioned in the first chapter of Matthew. *"Then Joseph her husband, being a just man..."* The Greek word for 'just' is 'righteous in this verse (1:19). Joseph was just, righteous.

Of how many men and women of our time such a good testimony could be given? We know God is righteous and we know He expects us to be righteous. The Bible talks a great deal about righteousness. *"If the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"* (Psalm 11:3).

We can only speculate what happened in Joseph's heart once he learned Miriam was pregnant. Did it break his heart? Was he angry? Did he feel betrayed? The Bible does not answer these questions. It says Joseph did not want to make Miriam a public example, and wanted to send her away secretly.

His love was the kind of love that did not behave rudely - we are called to love one another with love which 1 Corinthians chapter 13 talks about. Joseph knew that according to the Law of Moses Miriam would have been stoned to death if he had forsaken her and made her a public example (Deuteronomy 22). But his love was redeeming - not condemning.

Miriam was probably as astonished by what happened. She could find great comfort with Elisabeth and share a bit similar experiences. The Hebrew word for pregnant (*harah*) has different meanings. One of the meanings is '*something that includes a future promise*'.

Miriam was pregnant; there was a promise for the future of the whole mankind growing inside her. God had already revealed to Miriam a little bit of His plan of Salvation and Miriam had agreed to be an instrument in this plan.

At this point Joseph was still in the dark not knowing anything. God had not yet spoken to him. We can only speculate what was going on in his heart and in his mind, the questions he might have had, the decisions he was thinking he needed to make.

This was the time of approval and testing for Joseph. The Bible paints before us a picture of a righteous man, who knew where his help was coming from. He knew Him in whom he trusted. ***“But while he thought about these things...”*** (Matthew 1:20)

How many of us would have stopped thinking in a situation like that? In how many of us would anger have blinded us made us deaf or even would have hindered us from hearing God's voice? Joseph was different.

Interestingly enough, the Hebrew word for 'pregnant' (*harah*) also has a root in itself, which means '*meditating, thinking, suspecting*'. That is the verb also used concerning Joseph's thinking: ***“While he thought (hirhur) about these things...”*** Miriam was pregnant of the Holy Spirit, which for sure caused her to meditate and think a lot. Joseph had his own process to go through, to think and to meditate about.

Joseph was a human being. From a human point of view, it's obvious that he must have had a lot of thoughts, feelings, emotions - the whole situation was enough to make his mind go crazy! But the difference in Joseph was that he brought everything to God in a quiet meditation of his heart - this quiet spirit so clearly respected by God and so obviously seen in Yeshua, our servant Master and King.

And God did not leave Joseph to struggle alone forever. God had a plan and Joseph had a very important role in this plan. As it says: ***“The Lord is in His holy temple, the Lord's throne is in heaven; His eyes behold, His eyelids test the sons of men. The Lord tests the righteous...”*** (Psalm 11:4-5a). The Lord tested the righteous man, Joseph, of whom He had chosen.

And then, God came to Joseph in a dream through an angel. ***“Joseph, son of David...”*** (1:20) Son of David? How? It is true that Joseph came from that family. But when we look at earlier people in that genealogy, they were not called sons of David. Not all of them walked in the ways of the God of David.

I believe Joseph knew who His Lord and King was. He also knew His Lord had been faithful to David. He knew His Lord was faithful to those that walked whole-heartedly in His ways. He knew God made a covenant with David, His great-great-grandfather and it was *an eternal covenant*. He knew **who** he was in God and he knew **how** God saw him. His destiny was to be known as son of David.

What God spoke did not make sense to human logic. But Joseph chose to believe. And God rewarded him greatly. He and his wife had the great privilege of taking care of God's only begotten Son.

God gave Joseph a very hard task. But he also gave him a great promise. Joseph was to name the child Immanuel - God with us. So every time he would see the child, he would be reminded of God Himself being with Him. What a great promise! He would not have to live one single day without having the proof of God's help next to Him, in front of His eyes. God with us, Immanuel. He was able to touch God's promise with his both hands every moment he would feel a need. Every time He would call Yeshua's name he probably was reminded of God's logic and understanding that overcomes ours.

And in all these Joseph *saw* with his own eyes how God was with him and Miriam. ***“For the Lord is righteous, He loves righteousness; His countenance beholds the upright”*** (Psalm 11:7). In the original Hebrew the meaning is much more amazing. The last sentence actually says that ***“righteous will see His face”***.

God kept His promise. Joseph saw God's face in Yeshua's face. Every morning and every evening and throughout the whole day, Joseph would see God in Yeshua. He could actually touch His face, enjoy the joy of His presence, His laughter and His everlasting love.

Joseph was a very humble man. God had tested him and his attitude was approved. God knew Joseph would give Him the glory. Joseph knew who the main character of this play was and he did not even try to take his place. When the wise men from the East came to worship Yeshua and opened their treasures before Him, Joseph was not in the picture, he is not even mentioned (Matthew 2). Joseph knew who was to be the centre of every moment, who was to be worshipped and glorified.

There is a reference to his existence later in Matthew: ***“Is this not the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary? And His brothers James, Joses, Simon, and Judas? And His sisters, are they not all with us?”*** (13:55-56) Joseph, the carpenter without name.

For others, Joseph was nothing special. He was just an ordinary carpenter, so ordinary that even his name could be forgotten because it was so ordinary. For some religious leaders, who were mad with Yeshua and His actions, maybe Joseph's life was even miserable. Their spiritual eyes were blinded and their human eyes saw a man who married a woman that had committed adultery during their engagement; a man that didn't make an extraordinary career; a man whose firstborn was crucified as one of the greatest criminals; a man whose wife and all his other children were as ordinary as could be in the ordinary village of Nazareth.

But Joseph fulfilled the greatest destiny God had prepared for his life. Joseph's life was proven, he was found faithful by God Himself and God entrusted into Joseph's empty hands His most precious thing, the life of His Son, His plan of Salvation, His plan of bringing the Good News to the whole world. His only begotten Son.

Joseph's life and character leave me with questions.

Maybe you want to ask yourselves the same questions.

Who or what is the centre of my life?

Who is the main character of my life?

Who writes the plot?

What can He entrust into my hands? Are they empty to receive His fullness?

Can God look to and fro and find me as His vessel?

Can He trust me?

May the Lord give us the same humble spirit Joseph had. May His glory so shine and make us blind to everything else in this world but Him. May the greatest desire of our heart be to see Him glorified and may He help us to step aside and give Him the greatest place over everything, in every act in every play of our live.

- Virpi