



APC Advent Devotional – December 17<sup>th</sup>, 2020

## Be Ready Again

*Today's Scripture: Matthew 1:18-25 (NIV)*

I have read Matthew 1:18-25 hundreds of times, but this time, the name “Joseph” suddenly popped up. It says he is a “righteous man”, that’s it. Joseph is an “unnoticed person” in the Bible, you don’t read much about him, not as much as his wife, Mary.

But imagine what he has been through: his wife was pregnant before their wedding; he’s going to have a child that is not his blood; and for the next 30 years, he would have to raise this child up, not mention other people’s peculiar looks...

If I were in his shoes, I don’t know how I would feel and act. But it says “Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man” (Luke 2:52), that somewhat confirmed that Jesus was well nurtured by his parents. And, if you read the whole life of Jesus, certainly Joseph had positive influences on Him.

So how does Joseph do it? I think it is **love** and **faith**. Love to his wife and faith to his God. But it is not our human nature to love others more than ourselves. It is also not human nature to have such a strong faith that we could endure the pressures and strange looks from the crowd even for something that is right. That’s why I guess when the angel appeared in Joseph’s dream and said “don’t be afraid,” he actually meant “don’t be afraid, because your Lord will bless you with strength, so you could love your family and trust your God to do right things.”

Advent is a time for us to be ready again for His call. So let’s ask these questions beforehand: Have I ever hesitated to do righteousness because of other people’s looks? Ever feel powerless in serving because we are unnoticed and unappreciated? Ever lost faith and the ability to love others because we are tired? I know I have, or almost had. But I guess it’s alright, because **to us a child is born**, and that child will tell us “Don’t be afraid for I will grant you the strength and bless your name.”

By Yian Tai