

# *Christmas with 3Crosses*

## *“Instruction Manual Not Included”*

### PREPARATION

- Familiarize yourself with this Study Guide.
- If you missed it, watch the sermon online [HERE](#).
- Spend some time in prayer before your group gathers.
- As a leader you **always** have the option to use some or all the questions and/or prepare your own questions.

### DISCUSSION

#### **Opening Prayer:** (1-5 minutes)

*In light of what God is saying through this week’s message, here’s some suggestions of how your group can invite God into your time together.*

Thank the Lord for sending His one and only Son to be born into this world to live the righteous life that we could never live. Thank Jesus for the gift of his sacrifice on the cross on behalf of us while we were still sinners so that we may be counted righteous in Jesus Christ. Finally pray that the Holy Spirit would open our eyes to God’s grace in our lives so that we can truly grasp the Christmas Spirit and give graciously just as God gave to us!

#### **Discussion:** (30 minutes)

#### What’s Going on This Week

This Sunday, Pastor Danny led us into the third week of our series titled *Christmas with 3Crosses*. Pastor Danny focused our attention on the Christmas story at the beginning of Matthew in order to see how Joseph handled an extremely complex situation involving Mary’s pregnancy. Pastor Danny uses the story of Joseph to prove that not all of life’s situations present a clear “black and white” answer. Instead, Joseph is a great example of a Godly man responding humbly by respecting the dignity of Mary and by obeying the Lord’s instruction when he is commanded to take Mary as his wife.

**“One of the Godliest things a person can do is to be willing to endure shame and ridicule for the redemption of others.”– Pastor Danny Strange**

## Suggested Questions

**Check-In:** Review *Luke 1:67-80*: Last week, our discussion revolved around God’s faithfulness in the story of Elizabeth, who was barren for the majority of her life, and Zechariah, who was mute during Elizabeth’s pregnancy. How was the Lord able to open your eyes to how He is working through the broken areas in your life?

**Study Tip:** Joseph’s encounters with the *angel of the Lord* might seem foreign to us. However, the word for *angel* in the Hebrew (מַלְאָךְ “malak”) and the Greek (ἄγγελος “angelos”) is often translated as *messenger*. If you have ever felt like God was speaking directly to you through prayer, a conversation in our 3Crosses community, or in any other way (like Joseph’s dream), perhaps you may have more in common with Joseph’s situation than you think!

- **Objective #1: Explore the relationship between human resolve and obedience to God.**

*Primary Texts - Matthew 1:18-25:* Pastor Danny explores the story of Joseph in order to highlight the complexity of his real-life situation involving Mary’s pregnancy. What are the complex situations in your life in which you are seeking resolution, but have not found it? What aspect of Joseph’s story encourages you the most as he explores how to navigate his own complicated situation?

*Supporting Texts - Genesis 50:15-21; Proverbs 3:1-8; Isaiah 7:10-17, 55:8-9; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31*

- **Objective #2: Survey other situations like Joseph. Humble faith is required from us.**

*Primary Texts – Hebrews 11; Philippians 2:1-18:* Pastor Danny emphasizes Joseph’s humility as he debates how he was going to handle his complex situation. Danny also points to Joseph’s willingness to obey God when he receives a new commandment that would threaten his reputation. Which story in Hebrews 11 resonates with your situation the most? How is Philippians 2 challenging you to step into the same decision-making process as Joseph?

*Supporting Texts – Matthew 22:34-40; 1 Samuel 15:22-23; Psalm 119:1-8; 1 John 2:3-6, 5:1-5;*

- **Objective #3: Live confidently knowing that God is working through all situations.**

*Primary Texts - Matthew 2:1-22:* Through the story of Joseph, Matthew tells us that obedience to God allows Him to work out His will and fulfill prophecy through Joseph’s life. What is the Lord calling you to do in your complex situation that is difficult to obey and how can we encourage one another to obey God in this season?

*Supporting Texts: Deuteronomy 10:12-22; Micah. 6:8; Jeremiah 9:23-24; Romans 8:26-39;*

## **Closing Prayer: (5-15 minutes)**

*In light of what God is saying through this week's message, here's some suggestions of what your group could talk about with God in prayer.*

Thank our Heavenly Father for choosing to gracefully open our eyes and hearts to His truth! Pray that the Holy Spirit would continue to open our eyes to the significance of Jesus being born in this world and orchestrating this Christmas event through humble people. Pray that the graceful truth of the gospel message would spark in us a grace and compassion to give, receive, live, and worship humbly as we interact with the community around us!

## **THROUGHOUT THE WEEK**

- **Find out how to pray for two people in your group this week!** Pray that they would continue to find new ways to experience God's grace as they remember that God has decided to move His will forward through their humility!

-**Follow along with our Advent Devotional!** Follow this link to find our [Christmas with 3Crosses Advent Devotional](#) or go and pick one up at the church!

-**Explore New Ways to Give this Holiday Season!** Visit our [Christmas with 3Crosses](#) website to find out more ways to partner with different ministries to share the grace that God has given us!

- **Sign-Ups for the New Community Group Season begin January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2019!** If you have any questions, feel free to email AJ at [avanegas@3crosses.org](mailto:avanegas@3crosses.org)

## **Further Reading and Exploration**

**Habakkuk:** Perhaps you have never been asked to read this book, but if you are in a difficult situation and asking God why He could ever allow something evil to flourish within His will, this book is for you! As you read the story, try and put yourself into the shoes of Habakkuk and recognize his conclusion that the righteous shall live by faith (2:4) and the comfort we have knowing that God's will is for us not against us!