

## DAY 2: Time to face your village – Mary's return to Nazareth to face Joseph

*"Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly"* Matthew 1:19

**H**ave you ever been in a position you needed to share news you knew could result in animosity all around, putting in jeopardy your own well-being if you told the truth? Mary did.

She returned to Nazareth after being strengthened spiritually by Elizabeth. But now she needed to face her village, especially Joseph – her husband to be – with the news she was pregnant. Because she knew God was with her, she shared the news with courage. She spoke the truth of God's incarnation: that the conception had been through the Holy Spirit and the son to be born would be called the son of God (*Luke 1:35*). That was the truth, even if it was hard for others to believe.

Joseph on the other hand, responded with grace. The Jewish laws at the time would allow for public judgment exposing Mary to public disgrace and potentially death. But Joseph was a man of God. Being a "righteous man" meant he was a man of integrity, living by the provisions of the law. But love gives place to grace. His love for Mary was evident in that he had resolved to divorce her quietly instead of the public scandal. A test of integrity, a test of love.

Jesus' life was always full of grace and truth (*John 1:14*). Perhaps there are circumstances you are currently experiencing that challenge you to the core. You may be dreading your village's reaction, or the comments of other's judgment. They may be testing you with staying truthful or showing grace no matter how painful the situation may be. We may feel tempted to twist the truth for our own protection or even of our loved ones. Or we may

wrestle with the idea of showing or not grace to those who hurt us.

Take courage in Jesus to face your village. It may be your extended family, your community of faith or your workplace. God will back you up when you face your village with integrity and compassion.

Christmas starts with Christ and thus, is always a time to rejoice. Sing today's carol with joy and gratitude for the courage God gives you to face those around with grace and truth.

*Come, Thou long expected Jesus*



COME, Thou long expected Jesus,  
Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us,  
Let us find our rest in Thee.

Sweet chiming bells, O how they ring  
To welcome Christ, the newborn king  
Sweet chiming bells, O how they ring  
To welcome Christ, the king.

All Thy people's consolation,  
Hope of all earth Thou art;  
Dear desire of every nation,  
Joy of every longing heart.

Born Thy people to deliver,  
Born a Child and yet a king,  
Born to reign in us forever  
Now Thy gracious Kingdom bring.

By Thine own eternal Spirit  
Rule in all our hearts alone,  
By Thine all sufficient merit  
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.