

Advent Calendar: Day 8

The reflections for this week are centered around the readings for this Sunday's texts
Jeremiah 33:12-16, Romans 13:8-12, Matthew 1:18-25

Matthew 1:25

(Mary's) husband Joseph,
being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace,
planned to dismiss her quietly.

We are told that Joseph was a righteous man which fundamentally means he did what was right in the eyes of God. This right-ness is quickly demonstrated by the way Joseph initially decided to treat Mary's pregnancy; "he planned to dismiss her quietly." While Joseph was compelled out of the belief Mary had been unfaithful and promiscuous to dismiss her, he also sought to do so quietly: in grace and mercy rather than in punishment and vengeance. This mutual embrace of both God's unwavering demand for holiness and His unrelenting display of mercy, serves as both a foundation and foreshadowing of the perfect truth and perfect grace that Jesus would live out. Joseph's example is available to inspire us as it undoubtably informed Jesus.

A faith informed by Jesus necessitates both the rightness of an obedience to the Law and an embrace of grace. If we forget obedience, we can tragically turn grace into allowance and begin to promote wickedness. If we forget grace, we can unfortunately turn obedience into oppression and begin to become judgmental and legalistic. Do you more frequently fall toward allowance or Judgmentalism? Consider how you might more rightly display the righteousness of Joseph and Jesus.