

JWAR: Advent 2011/LOVE – Joseph and Mary

Intro: Have you ever traveled any distance with a small baby? Returning from a survey trip to Cali Red Eye Mom with baby and toddler...don't sit here...don't sit here...don't sit here...for 6 hours baby cried toddler kicked my seat! Annoying at first...then after a bit I started to feel bad for Mom...Doing all she could...but...some things you cant control!

As I read the accounts of the first couple years of Jesus life that story came back to mind, because in a very real sense that is a LOT of what is happening. Mary and Joseph are traveling a lot...In fact, they almost never stop for first 3 yrs of Jesus life From the moment of the first announcement by Gabriel Mary beings to walk on a treadmill of one Journey after another.

When we think of the birth of Jesus, idealized view...Stable, manger...softlight...Reality probably very different... Travel with me just a little, lets think about what it must have REALLY been like...

Luke 1:26-45 Pg 723

The Journeys:

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|------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------|----------|
| • Announcement from Gabriel: | Journey to Visit Elizabeth: | 80-100 Miles | 4-7 days |
| (Travel newly pregnant) | Return to Nazareth | 80-100 miles | 4-7 days |

8 or 9 months later...

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| • Census: | Nazareth to Bethlehem | 80 miles | 7-10 days |
| (Travel with a newborn) | Return | 80 miles | 7-10 days |

OR: Stay a month...6 miles to Jerusalem...Temple Dedication on way home

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| • Temple Dedication: | Jerusalem to Nazareth | 65 miles | 4-7 days |
| (Travel with 1 month old) | Return | 65 miles | 4-7 days |

1-2 yrs later

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|------------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| • Flight to Egypt | Nazareth to Egypt | 200-300 miles | Month on Road |
| (Travel with baby under two) | | | |

1 year later

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|---------------------------|-------------------|---------------|---------------|
| • Return From Egypt | Egypt to Nazareth | 200-300 miles | Month on Road |
| (Travel with toddler 2-4) | | | |

For the first 3 to 4 years of Jesus life it was an UNENDING journey...one trip after the other...That never ended. I traveled 6 hours...on a plane...nice lady bringing me peanuts...and it was nerve-racking!

What make it endurable? How did Mary and Joseph avoid a complete MELTDOWN?

I think God provided some people in their life that made the days endurable. Strategically placed along the way LOVE Not love the way we think of it, with diamonds and dinner, soft music and presents...REAL LOVE

1 Cor Kind of Love: Patient, kind, not rude, self seeking, not easily angered, no record of wrongs, protects, trusts, hopes

The People God Provided:

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|----------------------|--|
| • Announcement: | <u>People of the Town</u> |
| | Elizabeth: <i>Protects</i> Blessed (honored) Favored (Who am i?) |
| | Who better than Elizabeth (One who endured the shame of childlessness in that culture) |
| | Joseph: <i>Protects, Kind, No record wrongs, Hopes</i> |
| • Birth: | <u>No Family:</u> (His: not take them in?) |
| | Innkeeper: Shepherds Came to celebrate with them |
| | <i>Hopes: Glorifying and Praising God, Trusts</i> |
| • Temple Dedication: | Simeon and Anna |
| | Welcoming, Believing, Hoping, Trusting in the Promise of God |
| • Flight to Egypt: | <u>Herod: Trying to kill the Christ Child...</u> |
| | Wise Men Arrived and provided the funds and encouragement! |

EVERY STEP ON THE PATH GOD HAD SOMEONE PREPARED TO ENCOURAGE, BUILD UP AND LOVE THEM

CONCL:

**You and I have a choice to make every day. It is the choice between being available to God and others, or simply living for self
There are people all around us that are living the story of Mary and Joseph. They are overwhelmed, stressed out, at wits end**

- **That mom with the child that is having a meltdown...may not be saying no because she doesn't want to buy the toy
She cant pay her bills. Husband left, electricity about to be turned off, no idea where to go for help**
- **Man that is so rude may have just found out that his job has been downsized....or his wife has left him,**
- **Teenager that is being so disrespectful may have just discovered college isn't option, parents split up**
- **Family that seems so together on the outside may have just learned that business is bankrupt...have nothing**

You see, you don't know what the people are going through that you encounter every day.

You have a choice to make every day. It is a choice to love people...the way God would.

1 Cor Kind of Love: Patient, kind, not rude, self seeking, not easily angered, no record of wrongs, protects, trusts, hopes

God,

I know there are people in hurting all around me,

People quietly wondering if anyone sees them, or anyone cares.

I ask you to show them to me.

I ask you to give me the courage to go...and LOOK for them.

I ask you to give me the words to speak, and the actions to take that make your love clear to them

God, give me the courage to walk across the room...to people that are hurting.

With all my heart I say to you Here I am, send me.

And God when you speak...I will be quick to hear...and quick to go.

And quick to demonstrate your Love.

Amen