

The Road Less Travelled

*This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about:
His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph,
but before they came together,*

*she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. Because Joseph her husband
was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace,
he had in mind to divorce her quietly.*

Matthew 1:18-19 (NIV)

All we know of our Lord's legal father is that he was a righteous man, dearly loved Mary, and was submissive to God's "mysterious ways". We believe he was dead when our Lord was crucified because Jesus passed the care of Mary to the beloved disciple. Had this righteous man Joseph been alive he would certainly have had the responsibility of Mary's care.

Joseph was called on to become the legal father of the baby Mary was carrying. But before the angel came to him and explained what was happening to Mary, he seemed to have spent agonizing days pondering what to do.

He had the legal right to have Mary stoned for what appeared to be sin. His love for Mary fought his desire to see the law fulfilled in having her stoned. So he decided to quietly dismiss her and give her a writ of divorcement. We can hardly imagine the heartache he endured for days or weeks struggling with the scandal that was

apparent but not real.

So Joseph was gracious to Mary as he decided on the divorce route to solve the moral issue. It was then that an angel appeared to Joseph and told him that God was calling on him to walk a road less travelled. He was to take Mary as his wife and the baby as his son. Joseph obeyed and walked a different road to others as he obeyed the Lord.

Then the Lord was gracious to both of them as He arranged for the census from Rome that sent them to Bethlehem. They stayed there a couple of years and then fled to Egypt (Matthew 2:13-18) and spent time there until mad Herod the Great—who threatened the boy's life—died. Spending several years away from Nazareth would cause the gossip to die a natural death and allow the couple with their remarkable son to return.

So the parents of our Lord were given grace to cope with their situation that was different

from others. Such is the way of the Lord. When He calls on us to walk the road less travelled, He gives grace enough for the day we live (Deuteronomy 33:25). We are not given grace for tomorrow's problems—until tomorrow is today. Grace comes when needed, not when wanted. Satisfy yourself with the aid that meets today's need. When tomorrow's problem comes, the faithful God we serve has promised to meet with us and minister into our situation.

Calm yourself with the knowledge that the Good Shepherd is just a step ahead of you as you travel this different road. He shall supply all your need (Philippians 4:19) as promised. Keep your eyes focused on the Good Shepherd and not on the problem. You will never walk alone if your faith is in the crucified One.

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