

# HOLY MOMENTS (WHEN IT'S HARD TO OBEY)

## INTRO

I'm Bill Small, Worship Pastor for Woodlawn. Our Pastor, Joe Lay will be back with us next week. We want to welcome all of you watching online as well.

1. we're starting a new message series called "Holy Moments",
2. We're looking at four specific holy moments in the story of the birth of our savior Jesus Christ.
3. Today, we're going to look at a very powerful moment of obedience with one key thought. And the moment you hear it, might be the moment God starts to do a work in you.
4. If you have your Bible or Bible App, go to Matthew 1:18-24

## Let us pray

- I. **LIFE IS MEASURED IN THE PASSING OF TIME, BUT TRUE MARKERS IN LIFE ARE MEASURED BY MOMENTS - Slide**

Life is not always measured by time. It's often measured by moments. Here are some moments that come to mind for me:

1. Holding Will for the first time
2. Watching Will graduate both from high school and from college
3. The time Sylvia and I eloped
4. Sylvia getting diagnosed with Cancer in 2015 and again this year at the beginning of 2024
5. Finding out Sylvia has no cancer markers in her blood last month
6. Leading a person back to her faith through prayer a few weeks ago
7. Having quiet time with God in the early morning by the fire while on vacation
8. Watching my mother and grandmother take their last breath on this earth

**Ecclesiastes 3:1-8 NIV- Slide**  
**A time for everything**

3 There is a time for everything,  
and a season for every activity under the heavens:

2 a time to be born and a time to die,  
a time to plant and a time to uproot,

3 a time to kill and a time to heal,  
a time to tear down and a time to build,

4 a time to weep and a time to laugh,  
a time to mourn and a time to dance,

5 a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them,  
a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,

6 a time to search and a time to give up,  
a time to keep and a time to throw away,

7 a time to tear and a time to mend,  
a time to be silent and a time to speak,

8 a time to love and a time to hate,  
a time for war and a time for peace.

## II. YOU HAVE NO IDEA WHAT GOD CAN DO THROUGH **ONE** **MOMENT OF OBEDIENCE.** – **Slide**

So, Let's talk about Joseph...

1. Rather than Mary, Joseph is the subject of our scripture reading today
2. There's not much we know about Joseph
3. We do know that he was a carpenter.
4. We do know that he was a righteous and a faithful man.
5. We do know that he was the descendant of David.
6. We do know that he was Mary's husband, and we know that he was Jesus's earthly father.
7. We do know if you remember he lived to at least when Jesus was 12  
– Jesus teach in the Temple
8. We do know that one moment of obedience helped bring about a change that impacts all of us, even today.

### Matthew 1:18-19 NLT - Slide

**18** This is how Jesus the Messiah was born. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. But before the marriage took place, while she was still a virgin, she became pregnant through the power of the Holy Spirit. **19** Joseph, to whom she was engaged, was a righteous man and did not want to disgrace her publicly, so he decided to break the engagement<sup>[a]</sup> quietly.

We need to understand the culture then –

1. Engagement was a contract – basically marriage without consummation
2. Joseph had the legal right to break the contract even before they were married
3. Was this a low moment for Joseph? It seemed to be
4. He was a righteous man and therefore didn't want harm to come to Mary
5. This was not just a moment, it was a **Holy Moment**

### Matthew 1:20 - 21 NLT - Slide

**20** As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit. **21** And she will have a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.”

### **III. YOU DON'T HAVE TO UNDERSTAND COMPLETELY TO OBEY IMMEDIATELY. - Slide**

How I came to be on staff at Woodlawn

1. I was not very obedient in my former church
2. I have a “Justice” gene
3. God visited me through a prophet named Dave
4. I chose obedience over justice
5. Cameron's conversation

6. I had a job ready and waiting with more pay and benefits, but declined
7. Woodlawn interview process
8. Steve's phone call
9. Choosing obedience paid off January 1, 2007

**Matthew 1:24 NLT - Slide**

**22 All of this occurred to fulfill the Lord's message through his prophet:**

**23 "Look! The virgin will conceive a child!**

**She will give birth to a son,  
and they will call him Immanuel,<sup>[a]</sup>  
which means 'God is with us.'"**

**24 When Joseph woke up, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded and took Mary as his wife.**

#### **IV. OBEDIENCE IS OUR RESPONSIBILITY—THE OUTCOME IS GOD'S. - Slide**

##### **The Chosen Video Clip – Mary and Joseph on the road to Bethlehem**

For a moment, I want to speak to those who are hurting.

Christmas reminds us that God came near to His people. That means there is hope for the world. That's the good news of Christmas. Even in the midst of sadness and loss and the difficulty that it brings to our lives we all need to be reminded that because of Jesus there is hope beyond our current circumstances. It doesn't mean every moment is happy. We walk with God in our sadness, and He cares deeply about it. It does mean this life is not all there is.

Christmas isn't always as clean and happy as portrayed in our culture. Christmas can be messy. For those who are hurting and distressed, things may not look the way they've always looked. But here's what's beautiful about Christmas: Jesus came into a very messy manger. And He came for the very purpose of bringing hope out of darkness.

I want to share with you some lyrics of a song Cameron is going to sing in a bit. The song is called “Labor of Love” by Andrew Peterson.

#### Verse 1

It was not a silent night  
There was blood on the ground  
You could hear a woman cry  
In the alleyway that night  
On the streets of David's town

#### Chorus

It was a labor of pain  
It was a cold sky above  
But for the girl  
On the ground in the dark  
With every beat of her beautiful heart  
It was a labor of love

Now, today you may be the person who isn't hurting or sad, but you know someone who is.

What is God calling you to do?

#### Publix example of hospitality

I caught a person from traditional showing a person how to get to contemporary worship

Remember if God is calling you the responsibility is yours, but the outcome is His. You're not necessarily called to solve the problem, but you can be a beacon of light for we as followers of Jesus are light bearers.

Philippians 2:12-16 NKJV - Slide

#### **Light Bearers**

<sup>12</sup> Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own

salvation with fear and trembling; <sup>13</sup> for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure.

<sup>14</sup> Do all things without <sup>[a]</sup>complaining and disputing, <sup>[b]</sup> <sup>15</sup> that you may become blameless and <sup>[c]</sup>harmless, children of God without fault in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world, <sup>16</sup> holding fast the word of life, so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ that I have not run in vain or labored in vain.

Our obedience is achieved when we become light bearers for Jesus. Do you want to be a light bearer this season?

Don't just send someone to a ministry by telling them about it, show them where it is and attend with them!

What is God calling you to do this Christmas season?

***Let us pray (closing prayer to sermon)***

***Communion (Prayer of Confession) - Slide***