When Love Comes Down: Confronting Conflicts
Matthew 1:18-25
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Matthew 1:18-25 [18] This is how the birth of Jesus Christ came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be with child through the Holy Spirit. [19] 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. [20] But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. [21] She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." [22] All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: [23] "The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"--which means, "God with us." [24] When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. [25] But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. (NIV)

Our Vision: Connect with Christ, Church and Community

1. _____ by conflict

_____ Future: Mary was engaged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together it was discovered that she was with child! (The child was from the Holy Spirit, but Joseph did not believe this. Mary was just lying to him; he suspected it was a long-time acquaintance, Levi . . . .)
Matthew 1:18 (JOT)

_____ expectation: Joseph wanted to do the right thing for God, as well as his family and friends. He did not want to make a public spectacle of her because everyone would be embarrassed by the scandal. He was going to send her away secretly, and hope all of this would go away with her . . . . Matthew 1:19 (JOT)

_____: While he was feeling fearful and considering all of the options, he fell asleep . . . . Matthew 1:20a (JOT)

2. _____ to strength to overcome fractures

_____ to listen: But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit." Matthew 1:20 (NRSV)

_____resistance: If you do not believe then you cannot understand . . . Listen to me King Ahaz, it is one thing for you to struggle with me, but will you refuse God's offer for a sign? Despite your resistance and disbelief, God will give you this sign: Behold a virgin will conceive . . . . Isaiah 7:9-10,13 (JOT)

_____ your best: Then Joseph woke up. He did exactly what God's angel commanded in the dream: He married Mary. But he did not consummate the marriage until she had the baby. He named the baby Jesus. Matthew 1:24-25 (MSG)

3. _____ to overcome our broken lives

_____ renew: So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him.
Romans 12:1 (MSG)

Spiritual Action Step:
During this season, will you accept that Christ comes to love you completely? Do you want your life to be different than it is today? Jesus said, "I came so they can have real and eternal life, more and better life than they ever dreamed of" (John 10:10 (MSG)). Allow God to replace your worn and tired existence with new life in Jesus Christ. Leave your indecision and believe in Jesus Christ as your Savior. Use Isaiah 7 and John 10 to allow God's voice to share with you his love and strength!

Translations: NIV: New International Version; JOT: Jon's Own Translation; NRSV: New Revised Standard Version; MSG: The Message