**Scripture Readings:** Exodus 20:1-17 and Matthew 1

**Singing:** 424:1-2 – 123:1 – 327:1-4 – 240:1,3, 5 – 91:1-3, 5

Intro: What is the *true meaning of Christ’s birth* spiritually*?*

* Let’s seek the answers from how Joseph experienced this event!
* What Joseph learned is common to all whom God’s Spirit teaches!

**Joseph’ Dark Night Turned Light**

I. Who was Joseph II. What was his dark night

III. How was it turned into Light

**I. Who was Joseph?**

A. Holy Spirit described Joseph as a *just man* or *righteous man* (Luke 1:6)

 1. Description of his saving faith and obedient walk as fruit of grace

B. He was prospective husband looking forward to marriage with Mary

 1. “Espoused” is engaged but in Jewish law as binding as marriage

**II. What was Joseph’s dark night?**

A. God often brings *life-defining* moments in His people’s live

 1. It can be a tragedy – sickness – injustice

 2. For Joseph it was a *scandal* (vs. 18)

B. Joseph’s intended solution is portrait of God’s grace in his life

 1. What his action would do is not how it would be understood!

 2. Joseph belongs to a minority in the Kingdom of grace!

C. God often uses **dark nights** as preludes to great lights

 1. God allows circumstances and situations to develop to prepare the

 stage to reveal His full glory

 a. this explains the Creation – Fall story

 b. this is true for every journeyGod takes sinners on

 2. Notice how God rearranged Joseph’s life to have a *new focus*

 3. Take courage if God brings a crisis: *it is His way to prepare!*

**III. How did God turn Joseph’s dark night into light?**

A. God brought Him the message of Jesus

 1. What was the message?

 a. first he brought earthly comfort

 b. secondly, he brought spiritual comfort: *Immanuel*

B. What is the comforting message in the angel’s words?

 1. God took measures to be *with us (sinners)*

 a. Are you exercised with the question: *How can I be reconciled?*

 b. If you struggle with these realities, ***you face a dark night*!**

 2. God’s measure is *God honoring and sinner satisfying*

 a. Ponder the depth of this Child’s name

 3. How does Jesus save?

a. Jesus saves by *assuming guilt – sins of His people*

 b. Jesus saves by *changing hearts* (the Mighty God!)

**Reflection:** *Did the Spirit lead you to the depth of the Child of Bethlehem?*

A. If you keep staring into your darkness, you will never see the light!

B. If you wonder, is there hope for me?

C. Will you be wise or foolish?