

Last Christmas

2025-12-21 • PASTOR MATT ROSE



Matthew 1:18-25

FOR THE LEADER

These questions help you run the conversation. They are not your study. Get into the passage yourself first, because your group needs what God taught you, not just a list of questions. These also lean on Sunday's message, so a few will not land for anyone who missed it. Watch it before you lead.

WHAT THE MESSAGE WAS ABOUT

Mary and Joseph were ordinary people handed an assignment that made their lives messier, not tidier. A pregnancy nobody would believe. A wedding under a cloud. And they obeyed anyway, without getting the full picture up front. Pastor Matt was honest that following God sometimes increases the mess before it blesses, and that God often plants a calling in you privately, long before anyone around you understands it. His challenge sits in the title: make this the last Christmas the gift stays wrapped and Jesus stays off to the side.

To get started

- What is something in your life that got messier before it got better?

Looking back at the message

He was candid about feeling exposed. That vulnerability is the door in.

- 1 Pastor Matt said following God can increase the mess before it blesses. Where has that matched your life?
- 2 Pastor Matt said God often plants a calling in you privately, long before anyone around you understands it. What have you carried like that?
- 3 Pastor Matt admitted that preaching this message honestly left him feeling exposed. What did his saying so add for you? OPTIONAL

Looking at the passage

Read Matthew 1:18-25 aloud. Notice how little Joseph is told.

- 4 Read Matthew 1:18-19. What is Joseph's plan before the dream, and what does verse 19 say about the kind of man he was?
- 5 In verses 20-21, what is Joseph told, and what is he not told?
- 6 Verse 24 records what Joseph did. How much time does the text put between the message and the obedience?
- 7 What did obeying cost Mary and Joseph with the people around them? OPTIONAL

Bringing it home

Flakiness was his word, and he softened it. Keep it non-condemning.

- 8 Pastor Matt used the word flaky for how we treat God: interested, then gone, then interested again. How fair is that word for you?
- 9 Where have you held back from a step because of how it would look to people around you?
- 10 If you woke up tomorrow certain God had called you to something, how would you live differently? And what is stopping you from living that way today?
- 11 What gift from God have you received and never really opened? OPTIONAL

The group together

Mary and Joseph were not believed. A group can be the people who do believe.

- 12 The people around Mary did not believe her. What does that tell you about what a group like this is for?
- 13 How do we support someone in a season that looks, from the outside, like a mistake?
- 14 Who here is in the middle of something messy that we could stand beside instead of judge?

BEFORE YOU FINISH

What has God given you that you have kept off to the side, and what would it look like to take it up?

You might pray about

- For those whose obedience currently looks like a mistake
- For faith without full disclosure
- For the mess that comes before the blessing
- For a Christmas that changes something rather than repeating