# HUMBLE PIE:

**A CHRISTMAS DESSERT**

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ow’s your chance to replay a sliver of your youth by singing the “Brady Bunch” theme, but with new lyrics. Ready?

“Here’s the story of a man named Joseph

Who was told he’d be the earthly dad to God.”

Joseph knows “humble,” being smitten by “the most blessed of all women” whom God’s Spirit impregnates *before* he can get her down the aisle! What’s more, *his* fortune cookie reads, “You’ll be God’s parent!” **Slip into Joe’s sandals and read Matthew 1:17-2:23 (p. 10, MSG) and Luke 1:26-38 and 2:1-52 (p. 120, MSG).**

A God-fearing, hard-working guy is hurled into history’s headlines, risking income, good name, and family ties over this Messiah.

Jesus knows humility too, sent from heaven to be confined in skin, treated like a subversive, lashed and hung naked between crooks (Philippians 2:5-11). “Peace on earth, good will toward men,” huh?

**DISCUSS: What’s humbled you lately? Describe its impact.**

###### *Joseph Is 4-F*

1. ***Fitted For A Special Future***

Twenty-six generations from Israel’s King David, an obscure carpenter in out-of-the-way Nazareth near the Sea of Galilee awaits his historic destiny –- credit his unlikely, royal lineage.

In tapping Mary to be Jesus’ Mom, God chooses Joe to rear the King of Kings under his simple roof. Now angels are even calling him! Like the everyday clay pot Paul describes in 2 Corinthians 4, his ordinary life is suddenly to contain God’s richest Treasure -- the “God-with-us” foretold seven hundred years earlier (Isaiah 7:14).

Genealogy was critical in that day since land rights were dished out by family. Jobs like priest or king were passed down, dad to son.

Joseph’s family tree is traced from Abraham through David and his son, King Solomon (Genesis 12:1-3; 1 Chronicles 17:11-14; Matthew 1:1-17). Mary’s family, starting with Adam, goes through David’s son Nathan (Luke 3:23-28; 2 Samuel 7:16).

Jesus’ upstream lineage features prostitutes Tamar and Rahab, a foreigner (Ruth), and Bathsheba and David who dallianced with the stars. God even uses flawed folks, like us, to make room for Jesus.

1. ***Faithful To Obey God***

It rocks Joe’s yarmulke to hear that his innocent Mary is “with” Someone else’s child, so the wedding’s off. To avoid disgracing her, he opts to "quietly divorce" Mary. Well, it’s that or stone her to death, which is how they dealt with fornicators and adulterers.

An angel comes to Joe in the first of four dreams, saying don’t trash Mary; you’ll name her baby Jesus (“the Lord saves”). Joe obeys God and braces to explain marrying a 14-16 year-old who’d “slept” with God! Da boyz at the carpenters’ local will love hearing that Messiah (“anointed One”) is in diapers in a feeding trough! *This* is the Liberator they’d been counting on to end Roman occupation?!!

Joe closes shop to hustle Mary to Bethlehem for this irksome census ordered by Caesar Augustus (born Octavian, Rome’s first emperor, responsible for *Pax Romana*). Imagine walking from Bellingham to Seattle, leaving all your possessions behind.

**DISCUSS: How have you been blind-sided this year?**

After Jesus is born (the exact spot foretold seven centuries earlier in Micah 5:2), the angel returns, warning of danger. King Herod’s massacre of all baby boys targets the One born under that Hallmark star. Joe & Co. scurry south to Egypt to hide Palestine’s “Most Wanted.” With no job, Joe can now hock the wise men’s gold, frankincense and myrrh. (P.S. God funds what He calls us to do.)

**DISCUSS: Ever had to relocate not to your liking? How so?**

Joe, Mary and the Baby hole up in Egypt ‘til 4 BC when the angel delivers Herod’s obit. “Coast is clear!” They head north for Nazareth whose demo today is 70% Israeli Arabs. He rehangs his shingle, brings his step-Son into the family business, and he and Mary add four biological sons: James, Joses, Simon and Judas (not THAT Judas) plus at least two daughters (Matthew 12:46-50 and 13:53-57; Mark 3:31-35 and 6:3; Luke 8:19-21).

1. ***Familiar With The Facts Of His Faith***

We have no record of anything Joe says, but the Bible reports he’s committed to do the right thing, practicing his Jewish religion, e.g., feasts, offerings, fastings, Sabbaths, etc. He’s studied the Old Testament and knows what agonies and death Jesus will soon endure if He’s to “save people from their sins” (Isaiah 53:1-12).

He’s a good, loving, God-fearing stepfather who lives by the Law of Moses, responsive to God. If he hadn’t, where would you and I be now? He takes his family up to Jerusalem every year for Passover. That’s a big sacrifice for a working man because when he lays down his hammer, checks stop showing up (Matthew 2:41-52).

1. ***Focused On His Eternal Purpose***

It’d be easy for Joe to be depressed by (a) his nation’s political turmoil, (b) by the disruption in his career, (c) by being misunderstood about his fiancée’s strange pregnancy, and (d) by the daunting duty of raising a step-son who is literally the Creator!

Yet, Mary and Joseph live in humble submission to God, allowing His Son to taste the trials and joys we humans face, and much more, then to shoulder *all* of our sins so that we could be *totally forgiven*.

**DISCUSS: If you’re facing financial and health issues, what hope can you draw from Joseph’s life?**

###### *Tips From Joseph*

• We’re not called to save the world, just to obey God, humbly willing to swap our goals for His.

**•** Dream big dreams. If God authors them, nothing’s impossible.

• Know what God’s up to; it’s all there in His Word. Then prepare your children to be part of God’s big plans for them.

• Live life for the greater good by putting God first.

**DISCUSS: What would you risk, like Joseph, if you were called to bring the Savior into someone else’s world?**

### “Unto you is born a Savior, Christ the Lord”

***O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray.***

***Cast out our sin and enter in. Be born in us today.***

You may not hear from Joe’s angel, but God craves to be tight with you. When life is sunny or when a tsunami threatens to swamp you, God wants to guide, protect, comfort and provide for you. The wise men and shepherds ended their search when they came to Jesus. Why not do that now by praying something like:

“Dear God, thank You for sending Your Son Jesus to trade His life for *all* my sin so that I can have Your *total* forgiveness. I believe You’ve prepared me all my life for this moment, so I now give myself to You because You gave Your Son for me. Amen!”

His Deal

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