Joseph

Introduction:

Expectations and reality are often at odds. If Joseph were here, he'd respond to that statement with one word, "truth." Our two lessons go hand-in-glove. The Isaiah text is one of the prophecies that tell about Jesus long before his birth. The Matthew text is how that prophecy was fulfilled.

When we look at the Isaiah text, it should be noted that this prophecy was to be fulfilled twice. Once within the lifetime of King Ahaz. However, it's deeper meaning for all people of all time would be fulfilled hundreds of years later with the birth of Jesus. His birth would be a miracle, an intervention of God into the normal ways of life.

This intervention from God, was to Joseph an interruption of what he expected in life. His fiancé is pregnant. At first Joseph took this to be a betrayal. He wanted to be kind, but he was struggling, and he decided to dismiss Mary. This is when God intervenes once more. He sends the angel to comfort and explain. Joseph listens, changes, and responds to his call.

Read Your Bible

- Isaiah 7:13-15
- Matthew 1:18-25

Apply God's Word to Your Life:

1. When have your expectations been disrupted by reality?
2. How did God work through the disruption? (This isn't to say God necessarily caused the disruption)
3. What did you have to let go of in that disruption?
4. What, if anything, did you gain?
5. When Joseph gave us his expectations what did you gain?
6. Why is obedience important?
7. How is God calling you to greater obedience in sharing the story of Jesus?

Reflecting on the text:

1. What have you learned about God?
2. What have you learned about the world?
3. What have you learned about yourself?

Pray
Thank you, Father, for your servant Joseph. Thank you for his obedience to your calling. And we thank you most of all for Jesus and his promise poured out on the cross and made manifest through the empty tomb. May we listen to you as Joseph listened; and may we follow as he followed, so that all people will know your salvation in Jesus. Amen.