



So, today, Joseph gets brought front-and-center. His story is rather...complicated, to say the least, not just in the sense of his relationship with Mary, but what exactly is he supposed to do with this child, this Messiah, this Savior of the world. He isn't the father biologically-speaking, and yet he is brought front-and-center to be some kind of earthly example for this eternal-altering boy. Joseph doesn't have to make him into God Incarnate; that's already taken care of long before Joseph comes around. And yet, the church calls Joseph the "Guardian of Jesus," a most important caretaker in shaping this Emmanuel during the younger years of his life that we do not know much about. Regardless, Joseph's story is...complicated, to say the least.

And yet, it is rather fitting that such a story comes front-and-center for this week ahead with so many gatherings to celebrate a holiday, not just in church sanctuaries, but workplaces, and family homes as well. Except, inside some of those houses, will not be the traditional biological relations of father and mother to sons and daughters. Instead, in some of those living rooms will be children who were adopted, some currently in foster care. In fact, around so many evergreen trees will be rather...complicated stories, to say the least. Nevertheless, in the very midst of those complications can be some of the most moving stories of love.

One of those stories is about a man named Marc Hadden, who serves as a firefighter in South Carolina. Oddly enough, for such first responders, they are often called into some of the most intense human complications, some of which have to be met with unimaginable courage, lest someone lose their very life. However, just over ten years ago, a different form of Hadden's courage was brought to fruition that would change a young girl's life forever.

*It was a surprisingly slow day for one of the busiest fire stations [around]...Hadden had spent the day training and [passing] time cleaning engines.*

*When he finally sat down with his crew to eat dinner in the middle of his 24-hour shift, the phone rang — and he had to hop into an ambulance to make an emergency call. When he arrived on scene, he and his partner found a pregnant woman in labor. As soon as they helped her into the ambulance, she was ready to give birth.*

*It was the first time Hadden took charge during a delivery in his two decades of working. "I was tasked with everything to do with [the baby]...I helped her take her first breath."*

*The team then called for backup and rushed to the hospital to drop off the mother and child.*

*While filling out routine paperwork at the hospital, Hadden overheard nurses say the new mom requested the baby girl be put up for adoption...*

*"Throw my name in the hat..." Hadden said jokingly. But he wasn't actually kidding. Due to medical complications, Hadden and his wife, Rebecca, weren't able to have any more children after they had their second son.*

*The nurses turned to Hadden and said, "You need to go talk to this mom." [With some hesitation], Hadden walked into the woman's hospital room to introduce himself. He explained that he has two [children], his wife's a schoolteacher and they want to have more children, but [are not] able to. After a friendly chat, Hadden swung by the nursery and sent his wife a picture of the smiley little girl.*

*[Soon enough, that smiley little girl became part of the Hadden family.] [She] loves playing with her brothers and dressing up with her mom, but she especially loves hearing the story of how her “daddy” delivered her in the back of an ambulance.*

*“Our bond is extremely tight. She’s a part of the family, and we love her more than life,” Hadden said. “We wouldn’t change anything. We would do it all again if we could.”*

It is in that story of complications that love is brought front-and-center. And yes, in Joseph’s incredibly complicated situation, not only is his love brought forth, but God’s love for him, for Mary, for the world then and now. And for this week ahead, when so many complications may be brought into sanctuaries and living and dining rooms, some complications known, some not so much: in spite of it all, God’s love will still show up. After all, long ago, Bethlehem, nor the rest of the world was in a perfect state, to put it mildly. There were complications galore in families and amongst empires, but God went in anyway.

And for some of those families today, whose stories are not the standard biological father and mother with son and daughter, it just may be there is just as much love and grace and joy as with anywhere else. As if no complication that can happen in this life to separate us from the love of God brought to life in Jesus Christ; a grace not for the perfect circumstances, but for all us with any baggage we may bring along with us wherever we go. Nothing will ever separate us from the love brought front-and-center in Jesus Christ this week ahead, and every day throughout our lives. So, for that Greatest News of all, we most certainly give thanks to God, indeed! Amen!

*Source: [“It was meant to be”: Firefighter adopts baby he delivered on emergency call - CBS News](#)*