Week 3 December 13, 2026 – At Home for Christmas Joseph "The Nightmare Before Christmas" Matthew 1:18-25

1. Dreams and nightmares: Louis Zamperini looked like he was living the dream on the outside, but he was tormented inside. When have you seen, or felt, a gap between how a life looks and how it feels?

2. The American dream: Brad Pitt said that having everything "doesn't help you sleep any better." Why do you think success and possessions so often leave us feeling empty? What do you chase that might be too small?

3. Joseph's dilemma: Joseph was caught between his head (the law's judgment) and his heart (compassion and mercy). How do you decide when justice and mercy seem to pull in opposite directions?

4. Righteousness: The sermon says Joseph's righteousness included compassion as well as obedience to the law. How does that change your view of what it means to be a "righteous" person?

5. Fear: The angel told Joseph, "Do not be afraid to take Mary home." What fears might have been behind Joseph's plan to leave quietly? What fears keep you from obeying God?

6. A different kind of Savior: Joseph expected a Savior from Rome, poverty or disease, but the angel promised one who would save people from their sins. How does that shape the way you understand Christmas?

7. God's dream vs. ours: The sermon says "Serving God means following His dreams, not ours." Where has God's dream for you been different from your own plans? What happened?

8. Pride and fear: The sermon says pride and fear "give birth to nightmares" and push us toward fight or flight. Where do you see this in your own life or relationships?

9. Serving those in need: The sermon invites us to give Jesus a birthday gift by serving the poor, the needy and the hurting. What dream might Jesus be giving you this Christmas, and what is one step you could take?

10. Transformation and forgiveness: After Louie surrendered his life to Christ, his nightmares stopped and he was able to forgive "the Bird." What do you think made that forgiveness possible? Is there a nightmare in your life that you need to bring to God?