

Advent Week 3 Devotion

Luke 1:26-33

“26 When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, 27 to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David’s house. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28 When the angel came to her, he said, “Rejoice, favored one! The Lord is with you!” 29 She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 The angel said, “Don’t be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. 31 Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. 32 He will be great and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. 33 He will rule over Jacob’s house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom.”

Joy is an incomprehensible gift.

Don’t confuse happiness with Joy. Happiness can come and go at a moment's notice but Joy is a choice.

To be joyful is a choice. God gave us the gift of joy to which no other human emotion can compare. The choice is this: we can choose to live fearful lives filled with resentments and regrets or we can choose to find joy in Jesus Christ and a daily walk with Him. God’s word certainly paints us a picture of what that joy looks like.

Joy is trusting when you want to doubt.

Isaiah 41:10 “Don’t fear, because I am with you; don’t be afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will surely help you; I will hold you with my righteous strong hand.” As disciples of Jesus Christ it is impossible for us to be everything for everybody. What we are called to do though is to trust in Jesus to provide us with the strength and let the heavy lifting up to Him. The most important part of following Christ is to have trust. Trust that on our own we can’t but in Him all things are possible. To trust like Mary in her response to the angel's message. 38 Then Mary said, “I am the Lord’s servant. Let it be with me just as you have said.” Then the angel left her.

Experiencing Joy is being able to accept what you want to reject.

Just imagine how it must have felt to be the inn keeper saying to Mary and Joseph there was no room for them. We can find the joy of Jesus in making room for people.

Consider these words found in Hebrews 13 2 “Don’t neglect to open up your homes to guests, because by doing this some have been hosts to angels without knowing it.”

Joy is being able to celebrate in the face of fear; the message of God is very clear. God is not trying to scare us into faith, in fact it is quite the opposite. God draws near to us to relieve our worries.

God wants us to have confidence that no matter what we face God is going to care for us. He wants us to trust that He is always with us. One of the names used for Jesus long before He became flesh was Emmanuel "God with us".

No matter what you go through in life even in your lowest lows or your highest highs you can say with confidence "Jesus is with me".

No matter what you go through we can whisper this simple truth.

Joy is a choice Share: Invite a family member or a friend to share one thing that they are placing in God's hands and trusting in Him.

Encourage: Let someone who is experiencing fear in their life know that you are praying for them to have courage.

Evaluate: Take time to reflect on what it is that brings you joy, recognizing that joy and happiness are very different.

Take time to be with others sharing your joy. Don't let the busyness of this season steal your Christmas joy.