

Christmas at the Movies Advent Devotion –Week 4

Scripture: Luke 1:46-55 (NRSV)

And Mary said,

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,
for he has looked with favor on the lowly state of his servant.
Surely from now on all generations will call me blessed,
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name;
indeed, his mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation."

Theme: Love

Movie: White Christmas

Movie Song Lyrics: "If you're worried and you can't sleep, just count your blessings instead of sheep and you'll fall asleep counting your blessings."

Reflection: In White Christmas, entertainers Bob and Phil help sisters Betty and Judy escape a tough situation by getting them quickly to a train. Bob willingly helps until he finds out Phil gave their sleeper car tickets to the ladies. Bob laments the loss of his cozy, warm bed for the night, but two things change his attitude – Betty and singing. When Betty smiles at Bob, he is smitten. Then, in classic musical fashion, they break into song about their Vermont destination and the hope of SNOW. It is a silly, catchy song that stays in your mind bringing you into the dream of a snow-covered white Christmas.

It amazes me how love and grateful singing can change your perspective. When God's angel came to Mary saying she was chosen to be the mother of the Messiah, she could easily have become overwhelmed and speechless. Yet, she said, "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word" (Luke 1:38). She sang her thanksgiving for God seeing her value and giving her such blessing. She named God's faithfulness, power and mercy. She praised God for the gift of Immanuel coming into the world to love and liberate all people. God loved her to her core, and this love overcame her fear. She sang with her whole being.

When worry and anxiety arise this season, count your blessings to lift the burden. When you feel pessimistic or depressed, pick a song to praise God for never leaving you. For those of you disgruntled by the snow coming, maybe you can change your perspective by thinking of it as God's grace covering the world. The gift of Jesus is a

reminder that love has come to the earth and never leaves. Let divine love soak into your spirit to give you peaceful rest and energy to celebrate Christmas fully.

Questions:

- What anxiety and worries can you ask God to help you release?
- How many blessings can you list today in 5 minutes?
- What negative thoughts can you ask God to help you change into a loving and hopeful perspective?

Songs:

Contemporary – Miracle of Love, Chris Tomlin,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvZOQ5eZCQQ>

Traditional – Love Came Down at Christmas,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ssKkP78kFiM>

Prayer:

God,

Please ease our anxieties and worries with your merciful care. Empower us to count our blessings and see how you work in our lives. Help us get out of our way and allow you to embrace us fully with your extravagant love.

In Christ's love, amen.