



TODAY'S READING:

Luke 1:39-45:

At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

Matthew 1:21-23:

She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").

THE POWER OF BELIEF

Something powerful happens when we trust God enough to not only hear what He says, but *believe* it. If you believe what God says is true and that His plan for

you will lead to the best possible outcome, that trust results in peace and blessing. After Mary encountered the angel and submitted to God's plan for her life, she visited her cousin Elizabeth, who was also miraculously pregnant after experiencing infertility for years. When Elizabeth heard Mary's incredible news, she was filled with the Holy Spirit and declared, "Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises to her!"

Mary believed God when He said she would give birth to the long-awaited Messiah, and He blessed her with peace when she could have been full of anxiety. She was confident that the birth of the Savior of the world—*her* Savior—would be worth any trial she would face along the way. Mary trusted God's plan and moved forward believing His promises would be fulfilled in her life.

As we draw closer to Christmas, think about the incredible result of Mary's belief: The Son of God was born! What has God spoken over your life that you need to believe today? Trust His plan, receive His peace knowing He knows best, and look forward to the blessing to come!

Prayer: Father, as I focus on the blessing of Jesus' birth, help me to become more like Mary. Help me grow in my trust and belief in Your promises. I know Your plan for my life leads to the best possible outcome. Help me identify any areas of unbelief in my life, and give me faith that You're working in ways I can't see. I choose to trust You today!