

ADVENT: WEEK TWO

day 12

Christmas Prophecy (Elizabeth)

Luke 1:26-45



This meeting between Mary and Elizabeth is known as The Visitation, and the story of that meeting is to serve as a model for something the Holy Spirit is still seeking to do through us just as surely as He did it through Mary and Jesus, Elizabeth and John.

Mary, immediately after receiving the single-most shocking news in history, goes to visit Elizabeth. Can you imagine what their time together was like, these two great biblical women? How they must have consoled each another, shared their stories... how they must have given each other the gift of themselves in the midst of the new, in the midst of all the upheaval they were experiencing! But what can be overlooked is the fact that they prophesied to each other. In fact, it was the first thing they did after saying hello.

But they weren't the only ones who were involved in this prophetic ministry to one another, it's just that two of the major prophetic characters can't be seen or heard: Jesus and John the Baptist. Even before the two women embrace, John leaped for joy in his mother's womb, having recognized the presence of the Lord and Messiah in the womb of Mary. Elizabeth hears with the ears of the body, but John leaps for joy as the Holy Spirit in him responds to another member of the Holy Trinity walking into the room. Elizabeth is aware of Mary's presence, but John is aware of Jesus's presence in Mary.

This is so important! What a beautiful thing it is to be aware of the presence of God in another human being...to be able to see past, and hear past, the outward characteristics of another person...to go beyond what you already know about someone and see what God is doing inside them. John is the one who gave his mother the ability to do this. As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby inside Elizabeth leapt in her womb...and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. Wow! John's recognition of the presence of God in someone else, and his response to the presence of Jesus in that person, resulted in his mother being filled with the Holy Spirit.

What our sin-sick world needs is found only in the presence and work of the Holy Spirit. And YOU are tasked with recognizing and responding to the presence of God in people so that they will be open to an encounter with the Holy Spirit.

ADVENT: WEEK TWO



And while John is doing that, Mary is actively carrying the presence of Jesus into the lives and circumstances of other people. We know from vs. 35 that Mary was already filled with the Holy Spirit. She had already opened herself up to the fullness of the Holy Spirit at work in her life. If not for Mary, Jesus would not have been present in the lives of Elizabeth, Zechariah and John. But her surrender to the Word of the Lord, and her willingness to receive all the work of the Holy Spirit in her life... those things made her the catalyst for this beautiful time of prophetic ministry there with her kinswoman and the two mighty men of God growing inside them.

And that point of Mary's surrender to the WORD of God is central to this whole story. Elizabeth says to Mary, "You are blessed because you believed the WORD of the Lord." Mary encountered the Word of the Lord, and she made a choice to believe it. Prophecy is useless if you don't lay hold of what God says and choose to believe that He will fulfill what He has spoken. Because Mary believed and affirmed the Word of the Lord to her, she became one who both conceived and gave birth to the presence of God in her world.

And one more note...the famed Jewish historian, Josephus, says that after Elizabeth announced that she was pregnant, there was no movement in her womb. She had praised God for what He promised, but now there is no evidence to support the claim. There was no inner witness to the truth of God's Word. Ever been there? It's not pleasant, to say the least.

But when Elizabeth opens the door to Mary, something truly momentous took place...something that had been missing because Elizabeth wasn't hanging out with the right people. Sometimes the reason you feel like the Word of life the Lord spoke to you has become a stillborn baby in your spirit is because you are spending too much time with the wrong people. You keep listening to people who are not speaking life to the promises of God in your heart. And by the way, those "people" can be anchormen and women on your TV sets, people on Facebook, people at work, or even family. Be careful who you hang out with!

ADVENT: WEEK TWO



Find people who cause something to stir in your spiritual womb. When Elizabeth got in the right company, when she got with someone carrying the presence of Jesus,, that baby that hadn't stirred for 6 months started moving. The Bible says he jumped, and I have a sneaking suspicion that he came back to life. After all, he had just come into contact with the Resurrection and the Life! Sometimes you need to put yourself around some people who are carrying the presence of Jesus to such an extent that they breathe some of His life into the WORD of the Lord that has died in your spirit.

Among all the other important truths that the story of the Visitation teaches us, don't miss this one: when Christ is growing inside of us, we will be led to people, places and situations that we never dreamed of. We will bear words of consolation and hope and purpose and promise that are not our own. This is the prophetic life. It's a life of sharing the Christ Who is in you with others in a way that gives life to them and to the things God has birthed in them.

prayer:



Heavenly Father, I believe that some of the greatest miracles in my life haven't been seen yet because they need to be called forth by other Spirit-filled believers. Please help me to connect with people like that, and please help me be a person like that in the lives of others. I offer myself to be a carrier of the presence of Jesus into the world around me. In Jesus's name, amen.

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