

ADVENT: WEEK FOUR

day 24

*Holy Spirit at Christmas*

Luke 1:35-37



We encourage one another all through the Advent season to LOOK FOR JESUS, to expect to encounter His presence in places in your life where you wouldn't normally expect Him to show up. And one of the best ways to do that is to focus on an aspect of the Christmas story that is often ignored...the person and work of the HOLY SPIRIT. People talk about getting in the Christmas spirit. In fact, the HOLY SPIRIT is the original CHRISTMAS SPIRIT, and He is as present in the Christmas story as Jesus is Himself!

When the angel appeared to Mary, he says things about her son that could legally ONLY be said about the emperor, Caesar Augustus. Gabriel was predicting a major upheaval in the status quo, but was also making powerful prophetic declarations of hope. Statements like "he will reign on David's throne" and "he will be called the Son of the Most High" made Mary's Jewish heart start pounding. Those were promises that she had longed to receive...but they also presented her with reason for great fear. It was SCARY and FULL of PROMISE.

You probably have things in your life right now that are scary and full of promise. After all, most things in your life that are full of promise and potential are not guaranteed to be nothing but good. And the message of Gabriel was loaded with potential; this was going to change everything! This was going to set things back on the right course...was going to usher in the plan of God! But, some obvious obstacles remain...

34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" That's the million dollar question. The angel just told her that this amazing thing is coming to you, this thing that will set right things that had been wrong as far back as anyone could remember. The angel has opened her up to the idea that tremendous change is available to her, sweeping redemption and restoration. But...what is to be the AGENT of this amazing change? Mary is saying, "I hear you...but I know for a fact that I do not have what it takes for this change to happen. I have part of it...but I don't have everything required to make this POTENTIAL change become REAL change. And I don't have any way to get it. Someone else has to bring that to the equation. You're telling me that all this potential is now in play...but what's going to make this change ACTUALLY take place?"

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Go back and read the angel's answer in today's text...

Enter the Holy Spirit. The angel tells her that the Holy Spirit is about to show up in her life. What He does is going to be amazing. And, oh, how we need to see this! The angel brings Mary this promise of staggering potential, of long-desired change, and then he tells her what that MISSING PIECE is, what the AGENT of that change will be: THE PRESENCE AND WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT. The potential becomes reality through interaction with, and an infilling of, the REAL Christmas Spirit...the HOLY SPIRIT!

Gabriel says, "The Holy Spirit is about to show up in your life, Mary. I know you're hearing all this amazing stuff, these promises are rumbling around in your spirit, and you sense the amazing possibilities for true change that are so close to being real... but you KNOW that you don't have what it takes for something to literally be birthed in and through you. You are willing for that to happen, you're offering yourself, but you don't have what it takes. So the Holy Spirit is going to come into your life and do what only He can do. He will bring to you what only He can bring." So often Christians reference the words of Gabriel, "Nothing is impossible with God." In times of pain and confusion they got a glimpse of the potential in the shared life of God, but they've never experienced it. They came to the conclusion that it's not possible for them. But so often they leave out the context of his statement: The Holy Spirit had just showed up! Many Christians who feel like God's promises are really just pipe dreams are closed down to the abiding presence and work of the Holy Spirit in their lives. That's why we MUST understand this: you don't get the ultimate miracle of the break through of Jesus into your life and circumstances until you surrender to the work of the Holy Spirit in your life. You don't get the breaking in of the life and redemption and light and grace of Jesus SEPARATE FROM the Holy Spirit, but THROUGH the abiding presence of the Holy Spirit.

Listen to Gabriel: it's the presence of the Holy Spirit that makes the IMPOSSIBLE become POSSIBLE. What would have happened if Mary had said, "Yes! I want everything you said, Gabriel! But...the part about the Holy Spirit overshadowing me..."

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I don't want that." If you don't want THAT, then God can't do all the rest of it. The Holy Spirit is the AGENT for all of that change. The Holy Spirit brings that part of the work of God in your life that can ONLY come from God. You can never come up with it on your own. You can't get it through willpower. You can only get it through the work of the Holy Spirit, through open-ended partnership with the Holy Spirit. HE brings to you what you could never develop or supply on your own. Gabriel starts his statement with, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you..." and he ends with. "...nothing is impossible with God." You can't lay claim to the LAST part if you don't open yourself up to the FIRST part!

prayer:



***Dear Father, Jesus said that You love to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask for Him. I am asking You to fill me fresh with Your Holy Spirit. I surrender to the work and presence of Holy Spirit in all parts of my life. Holy Spirit, You are welcome to overshadow me, to bring to my life anything that You know is best for me. I yield fully to Your ministry to and through me for the glory of Jesus. In Jesus's name, amen.***

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