

The Most Beautiful Gift in the World

Luke 2:4-14 - So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and the line of David. He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace to those on whom His favor rests."

Ask any parent...every birth of child is a miracle...every child is a gift from God! But nearly 20 centuries ago a truly miraculous birth took place...the Son of God born to Mary...a son...a helpless baby. Angels announced the joyous event and shepherds rushed to the manger. A young woman pledged to be married, gave birth to a child...wrapped him in cloths and put him in a manger because there was no room for them in the inn.

I often wonder did Mary and Joseph really understand the significance of the child they had just brought into the world. Did they feel overwhelmed that there was no room for them? Did they begin to feel that they had misunderstood the plan? And what about you and I....do we still hold our breath whenever we read the scripture regarding the birth of Jesus? Do we still hear the angels "bringing us great tidings of great joy, which shall be for all people"? Do we still feel the "miracle"?

God spoke to Mary in the everyday flow of her life. God spoke to the shepherds in the everyday flow of life. How is God speaking to you and I in our everyday flow of life? How has God taken "hopeless situations" for you and I and used them for good?

This is the season of rebirth and it begins with the celebration of the Birth of a Savior. I invite us to spend some time just absorbing...reading, listening, observing all that gives new birth to you this season. I invite you to join Mary in finding that precious event that God has done that you "treasure in your heart!!!" Matthew 1:23 Listen! The virgin shall conceive a child! She shall give birth to a Son and He shall be called "Emmanuel" (meaning, "God is with us"). This season may each of us experience Jesus as "Immanuel" in our lives.

Prayer: Gracious God, how we praise you for this season of Advent. Prepare our hearts with the joy and hope of the shepherds as we await the Birth of Christ once again. Help us to understand the angels bring the same message of hope and comfort to us as they did to the shepherds and give us the courage to respond as Mary did...praising God with a servant heart. Let us overflow with the message of the most precious gift available to all and to share it this season in our everydayness. Help us to "treasure in our hearts" all the blessings you have so richly bestowed upon us...and empower us to enrich the lives of others out of those blessings. For your forgiveness, grace and love, we give you thanks. Amen.