



Merry Christmas

Hello everyone. Welcome to “Notes from the Presence.” I am overwhelmed with the goodness of God and His most perfect plan of redemption.

Every aspect of the Christmas story is bathed in humility. Every time I read through the beginnings of Matthew, Luke, and also John, I am amazed at how God understates things. He also underplays His hand. God is not a showboat. In my own life, this has proven so true. God seldom sails up in a yacht and speaks over the loudspeaker. He is always subtle and quiet. He speaks with a still small voice. Even when God is dramatic, He is dramatic to a small audience - often even an audience of one. He doesn't broadcast His stuff over the entire radio spectrum. We, as earthlings, tend to over exaggerate, try to make things bigger than they appear, and capitalize on momentum. God simply doesn't think in these terms.

I am thankful to be currently working with a group of people who are humble and understated. It is a refreshing change from a lot of the environments I have found myself in over the years. If our perspective is Jesus, it will always be humble.

Today, I really only have one simple concept in mind. It is embedded in the Christmas story as recorded in Luke chapter 1. There are two angelic visitations mentioned. The first is when the angel appeared to Zacharias:

*Luke 1:11-12 And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him.*

A few verses later Zacharias asked the angel how he would know for certain if the angel was bringing a true message from God. At this point in time the angel told him that he would be unable to speak until the promised son, John, was born. I assume this might

have been to keep Zacharias from messing up the plan of God by speaking things into the environment that could have undermined God's purposes.

The second angelic visitation was to Mary:

*Luke 1:28-29 And coming in, he said to her, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.*

Then, a few verses later, Mary also asked the angel how these things could be.

It seems as if both Zacharias and Mary were perfectly in order when asking the angel for further confirmation of the word of the Lord to them. The angel did not rebuke either of them for seeking further information or a sign. In fact, subsequent clarification was given to both of them. There is, however, one difference between the reactions of the two. The bible says that Zacharias was "gripped with fear." By contrast Mary was perplexed; however, she did not react with fear. Instead, she pondered the word of the Lord as He gave it to her. In the end, the angel had to shut the mouth of Zacharias. Mary, on the other hand, was given a most beautiful explanation and a specific word that I would like to post today. It is a massive light beam of hope to anyone reading. Are you ready ...

*Luke 1:37 And nothing will be impossible with God.*

Mary then responded by saying:

*Luke 1:38 Behold the bond-salve of the Lord; may it be done for me according to your word.*

I am not one for formula, but I would like to take a brief moment to highlight a couple of things today if the Lord should speak to you.

First of all, no matter what He says, don't react with fear. It matters not whether He tells you something simple, or something grand, the correct way to respond is with an open and pondering heart.

Second, we are never out of line to ask for further confirmation. Often, I will say, "Lord, I think you have just spoken to me, but I need You to be faithful and confirm Your word to me." One place in the bible it even says God will confirm His word with signs following. This not a bad reaction. Once again, just stay away from the fear factor.

Third, realize that nothing is impossible with God. This rings especially true when God is bringing words of destiny and life into our hearts. Often, we think very small of ourselves. However, God's promises over us are not our problem. If God speaks, it is up to Him to bring it to pass.

Fourth, simply yield to the word of the Lord. Mary's answer was so beautiful - "be it unto me according to your word."

To conclude, I would like to pray a prayer over all of us today.

Thank you Father for placing destiny in each and every one of us. Thank you for Your word to us. God, we refuse to react with fear. Instead, we react with faith. Father, our hearts are open wombs for Your word to grow and produce the great and precious promises that You have spoken over us. No matter how small or great, we yield to the will of Your word to us. Lord God, nothing is impossible with You. Be it unto us according to Your word. Amen.

Thanks for reading today. Jesus is real and His Word is always true.