

Christmas!

An Invitation to Walk in the Favor and Power of God (Luke 1:26-45)

- I. **All favor and power from God start with receiving Jesus by faith.**
 - A. The Bible is a promise book full of invitations for those who believe.
 1. “‘I am the Lord’s servant,’ Mary answered. ‘May Your word to me be fulfilled’” (Luke 1:38).
 2. This is the miracle of faith. Mary foreshadowed the experience of all who receive God’s Son by faith (Romans 5:1-2).
 - B. “We boast in the hope of the glory of God” (Romans 5:2). As with Mary, it all starts with believing in the promises God offers to us. “Blessed is she who believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises to her” (Luke 1:45).
 1. Mary understood by faith what was about to happen to her (Luke 1:46-50).
 2. Could it be that every believer has a book of promises and destiny waiting to be fulfilled by faith?

- II. **We cannot let pain and disappointment get in the way of the miracles God wants to do in our lives.**
 - A. Personal pain and disappointment can cause our hearts to harden so that we don’t recognize the invitations God is giving us. Zachariah’s heart was hardened when he received his Christmas invitation (Luke 1:11-20).
 - B. Joseph’s heart, however, stayed soft long enough to let God’s plan unfold. He became a mighty man of dreams and visions, able to hear God’s voice (Matthew 1:18-21, 24-25; 2:13, 19-23).
 - C. In contrast, when Jesus came, the nation of Israel was in pain and strangely hardened to hearing God’s voice (Matthew 13:15-17; Luke 19:41-44).

- III. **The Christmas story helps us understand how to flow in God’s miracle culture.**
 - A. God gives grace to the humble (James 4:5-6). We see in the Christmas story a stable, shepherds, and a young peasant girl who believed (Luke 1:38, 43-55).
 - B. God also responds to the hungry of heart (e.g., the Magi—Matthew 2:1-12, Simeon and Anna—Luke 2:25-32, 36-38).
 - C. God hangs out with anyone: shepherds, Magi, tax collectors and sinners (Matthew 11:18-19), the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame (Luke 14:21-24).
 - D. We can get personally acquainted with the Holy Spirit. He brings unusual phenomena with His Presence and likes surprises (Luke 1:34-35; John 3:5-8; Acts 1:5-8; 2:1-4).
 - E. We live by revelation—not “on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4, e.g., the Christmas characters).
 - F. In God there is always great joy and expectancy even when times are very difficult (Luke 1:13-14, 43-47; 2:13-14, 20).