

EXPERIENCING the POWER of “ONE ACCORD”

“...they lifted up their voice to God with one accord...And when they had prayed, the place was shaken where they were assembled together; and they were all filled with the Holy Ghost, and they spake the word of God with boldness. And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common. And with great power gave the apostles witness of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus: and great grace was upon them all.” Acts 4:24, 31-33 (KJV)



This Week’s Thought – December 25, 2016 ***MERRY CHRISTMAS!***

“You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end”... “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.”” Luke 1:31-33,38 (NIV)

One of the favorite Christmas hymns sung around this time of year is ‘*O Little Town of Bethlehem,*’ and while in some ways it is a simple and childlike song, I am always struck by the depth and beauty of its message. In the final verse, having reflected upon the mystery and wonder of the birth of Jesus, King of Kings and Lord of Lords, the words then look to the present, inviting Jesus to enter into our lives in this very moment.

‘O holy Child of Bethlehem, descend to us, we pray; Cast out our sin, and enter in, be born in us today.’

This single line provides for us a treasure chest of insight. Most significantly, we are reminded of one of the central themes of the preparatory season of Advent. As we look back to the birth of Jesus in a lowly manger, we must ask if we are open and ready, like Mary centuries ago, to receive the Lord into our lives today.

The Virgin Mary is, in this season, a picture for us of what a faithful response to God looks like. The angel brings news of great joy, saying that in the birth of Jesus, God is drawing near to fulfill all of His promises and to reign forever; and as confusing or perplexing as this news may

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have been to Mary, she responds with great faith, saying, “*May your word to me be fulfilled.*” It is for this reason that she is often referred to as the first disciple, offering us a picture of how we too must respond to God as he draws near.

Though the birth of Jesus in the town of Bethlehem is an unrepeatable, miraculous event, by the work of His Spirit in the world today, God still desires to have His life born within each of us. The story of Christmas isn’t just sentimentality or an interesting bit of history. It is, at its core, an invitation. God in Jesus has drawn near and continues to draw near this very moment. The question that we must answer is this: Are we ready and willing to receive Him into our lives this Christmas season?

May we on this Christmas day greet the Lord’s birth with hearts full of faith and hope, trusting that He will bear His own life within us as we do! **Wishing you and all those close to you a Merry Christmas, and Joyous Holiday Season.**

Words from the Master during your time of reflection this week: “Try to imagine what I gave up when I came into your world as a baby. I set aside My Glory so that I could identify with you and mankind. I accepted the limitations of infancy under the most appalling conditions---a filthy stable. That was a dark night for Me, even though angels lit up the sky proclaiming, “Glory!” to awestruck shepherds. When you sit quietly with Me, the process I went through is reversed in your experience. As you identify with Me, heaven’s views open up before you---granting you glimpses of My Glory. I became poor so that you might become rich. **Glory Hallelujah!**” (2 Corinthians 4:6; Philippians 2:6-7; Luke 2:13-14; 2 Corinthians 8:9)

“And then God answered: "Write this. Write what you see. Write it out in big block letters so that it can be read on the run. This vision-message is a witness pointing to what's coming. It aches for the coming—it can hardly wait! And it doesn't lie. If it seems slow in coming, wait. It's on its way. It will come right on time.” Habakkuk 2:2-3 (MSG)

Yours in Christ, Pastor King