

Praise the Lord and Good Morning,

For all of those who may have been wondering what happened to their daily devotionals, I've been sick, sick, sick! For whatever reason, the cold I had last week has struck again with a vengeance and I've been too sick to sit at the computer, let alone do the devotional. But at the moment I'm feeling a little better so I thought I'd work on this now....

"Embrace the season" is the statement I read this morning on an email advertisement sent to me from my telephone carrier. Those three words hit my heart and I began to think about that...embracing the season. During the holidays many people stretch out and do things for the homeless and those less fortunate as a means of embracing the season. Others try and give elaborate gifts (while their dollars don't match) in an effort to embrace the season. For some the season only reminds them of loved ones no longer around, lost relationships, seasons of yesteryear when life was more kind.....but I go back to the birth of Jesus.

There was so much Joseph and Mary had gone through that year....having to embrace their season of receiving an awesome gift pretty much alone. Come on now, how many people could they tell (that would believe them - outside of her cousin Elizabeth who could relate because she too was in a strange situation -- too old to have a baby but pregnant nonetheless) that the baby she was carrying was from God and no, she and Joseph hadn't been in the barn fooling around and just made up an elaborate lie!

Can you imagine trying to explain and have people believe that an angel told Joseph not to have Mary put away.....that Mary (innocent Mary) is pregnant and this is how she got that way....the Holy Ghost made her pregnant?!! But it was true...she was even told that she had found favor with God!!

It wasn't an easy season to embrace but they did. The Bible says that Mary said "...be unto to me according to thy word." When it was time for her to have the baby, only to have to give birth to a baby in a barn because all of the rooms were booked....but that too was part of embracing the season.

I want to ask you today, are you embracing your season? Whatever the season is God has a reason for it. Do you really believe that? Everything that Joseph and Mary experienced during that time of preparation for Jesus' birth, it all was part of the season. Whatever your holiday is turning out to be, please don't lose sight of the fact that no matter how beautiful and lush or bare and barren....you, like Mary and Joseph, are just in that season....and there could be no real celebration of Jesus' birth if they hadn't embraced the season.

I've had some incredibly wonderful Christmas' and I've had some incredibly horrible Christmas'.....but I will admit this year is the first year that I am intentionally embracing my season as it is (highs and lows included)...

**Luke 1:26** And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, **27** To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. **28** And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. **29** And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. **30** And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. **31** And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. **32** He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: **33** And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. **34** Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? **35** And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. **36** And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. **37** For with God nothing shall be impossible. **38** And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.

In the Master's Service,

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Matt 11:28-29 Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.  
29 Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.