

God with Us Brings Joy

Day 15 CHOSEN JOY

And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed.” (Luke 1:46-48)

Remember those cartoons and old movies where an army sergeant or leader asks for a volunteer? The mission is dangerous, sometimes ridiculously so. It will require a brave and true individual willing to put his or her life on the line. Will the bold volunteer please step forward? You know what happens. At the same second, in perfect coordination, the entire line steps backward, leaving the main character standing in front when the leader turns around. Forget volunteering – he is volunteered, whether he likes it or not.

Mary could have looked at her situation a little bit like that. She did not ask to be the mother of God’s Son. If she had been asked, she might have stepped backward. Luke 1:29 must be one of the biggest understatements in the Bible when it describes Mary’s reaction to the angel that appears and greets her as a highly favored one: “Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.” We might say it a little more like, “She was freaking out inside and could not move because there was a glowing angel that suddenly appeared and started talking to her.” Mary had a choice, and she chose to accept God’s will and assignment for her. Despite all the questions and confusion and fear that must have swirled inside her, Mary chose surrender and trust. As she did, she chose joy - an active joy that sang and testified to God’s goodness and faithfulness.

What situation are you facing that gives you a choice of fear or joy? In what tangible, active ways will you choose to express joy in this expectant season of Advent?