

# miracle

## "I Need Some Courage"

Miracle, Part 3

Tic Long, Executive Pastor ♦ December 19 & 21, 2014

### First, a bit about Joseph

*But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."*

Matthew 1:20–21

Courage is all over the Christmas Story.

- Courage is not pretending you are not afraid, it is saying "yes" in spite of fear.
- Courage is letting go of control, of outcomes.
- Life demands Courage.

### Two Christmas Switches

- First Christmas Switch:  
From specific expectations to a sense of expectancy
- Second Christmas Switch:  
From Presents to Presence

Courage comes from Presence.

*"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel" (which means "God with us").*

Matthew 1:23

God is all about Presence and it's personal.

### Finding Courage

1. Living in his presence
2. Remembering his activity in our lives
3. Embracing God's heart towards us

ADVENT  
DEVOTIONAL

The Fourth Sunday of Advent: Love  
Sunday, December 21

*"I choose the appointed time; it is I who judge uprightly." (Psalm 75:2)*

The appearance of angels during the Nativity of Jesus is extraordinary. Let's chronicle this activity of angels:

- |  |                 |
|--|-----------------|
| 1) Zechariah and a named angel                         | Luke 1:5-22     |
| 2) Mary and a named angel                              | Luke 1:26-38    |
| 3) Joseph, a dream, and a slight angelic clarification | Matthew 1:18-24 |
| 4) Shepherds and angels                                | Luke 2:9-14     |
| 5) Magi and dreams                                     | Matthew 2:1-12  |
| 6) Joseph, a dream, and an angelic warning             | Matthew 2:13-15 |
| 7) Joseph, more dreams. And an angelic "green light"   | Matthew 2:19-23 |

The word *angel* (ἄγγελος or angelos) means messenger. As we have seen, angelic messengers are pivotal in the Nativity story. Everyone focuses on the appearance of the angels to the shepherds. The myriad of angels who join the initial messenger praising God is astonishing, unique in the nativity story. During the appearance to Mary and Zachariah, we learn the name of the angel Gabriel and a little about his duties and authority. We also know that angels are genderless beings although we'd never refer to one as "it."

The angel appearing to Joseph is often overlooked. The first message brought to Joseph stops him from making a decision which will be hard to walk back, and it encourages him to take steps for Mary's protection. We are told that Joseph is a righteous man and he acts the part. Joseph shows himself to be a regular guy, who works hard and is a person of trust.

Think about it, Mary and Joseph must go to his ancestral home in Judea to register. As we learned in the devotional for the second Sunday, *The Bethlehem Candle*, it is Bethlehem where messiah is to be born. Joseph is warned by the angel after the wise men leave to escape the rage of Herod by fleeing to Egypt. When Herod dies the family returns to Israel; the angel again helps Joseph locate a safe place to live. Joseph learns to depend upon the angel's direction and takes steps so that the family is preserved.

As Advent comes to a close, it is important, as Christ followers to remember what kind of people are we to be—as light in a dark place. The Holy Spirit is in us to help us live righteous lives as we anticipate Jesus' second coming. Peter tells us, "You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming." (2 Peter 3:11-12; John 14:16-17)

Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it. (Hebrews 13:1-2)

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\_\_\_\_\_ is all over the Christmas Story.

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- Courage is letting \_\_\_\_\_.
- Life \_\_\_\_\_.

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Courage comes \_\_\_\_\_.

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Matthew 1:23

God is all about Presence and \_\_\_\_\_.

### Finding Courage

1. Living \_\_\_\_\_
2. Remembering \_\_\_\_\_
3. Embracing \_\_\_\_\_