

## Unwrapping Joy

People without joy tend to be very short sighted and fixed only on the moment.

***26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."***

***29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 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, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."*** Luke 1:26-33

***34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"*** Luke 1:34

***35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Luke 1:35***

***Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly. Matthew 1:19***

***36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail."*** Luke 1:36

Sometimes God defers our individual blessing so he can do something that reveals a greater glory at a later time.

***6 Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. 7 Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. 1 Peter 5:6***

Before God will do something for us, he often wants to do something in us.

***38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.***

***39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, 40 where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. 41 When***

***Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. 42 In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!" Luke 1:39-45***

***46 And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord 47 and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, 48 for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, 49 for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name. 50 His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation. 51 He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts. 52 He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. 53 He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. 54 He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful 55 to Abraham and his descendants forever, just as he promised our ancestors." Luke 1:46-55***

**God most often gives us evidence of his plan in the midst of obedience not in advance of it.**

***"For the mouth speaks what the heart is full of." Matthew 12:34***

**Our joy will naturally go up as our trust and love for God increases.**

***My lips will shout for joy when I sing praise to you— I whom you have delivered. Psalm 71:23***

**Pride and joy live in complete opposition to one another. If you lack joy it is probably because you lack humility.**