

Christmas Devotional: Dec. 22-25, 2019

Breath Of Heaven

*Breath of Heaven, Hold me together
Be forever near me, Breath of Heaven
Breath of Heaven, Light my darkness
Pour over me, your holiness, For you're holy
Breath of Heaven*

The LORD is my light and salvation – whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life – of whom shall I be afraid?

Psalm 27:1 NIV

So many of us hold Mary, the mother of Jesus, in a very high esteem because she was chosen by God to carry His Son and bring Him into the world. It was the greatest task anyone has ever been given. Even though we hold Mary in high esteem, it's important to remember that she was a normal person just like us. In fact, she probably battled fear as much if not more so than most people. She was an unmarried teenager that found herself miraculously pregnant after an angel told her she would give birth to the Messiah. She was probably afraid of the great task that God had given her and dealt with fear from the backlash she and Joseph received because of the unique pregnancy. She was probably battled fear on their long journey to Jerusalem as she was nine months pregnant and taking a long journey on a donkey. Despite her fear, however, she remained faithful to God and the task they were given.

The song Breath of Heaven gives us a prayer that Mary most likely prayed asking God to hold her together, be near her, and to light her darkness. How many times have you prayed a similar prayer? Christmas is a joyous time, but the reality is that for many of us, it's hard to experience that joy in the midst of all the turmoil and trials that are happening around us. Just as God protected and guided Mary through a difficult time, allow Him to guide you this Christmas. Pray and share with Him what troubles your spirit and allow Him to restore the joy of Christmas within you by holding you together, being forever near you, and lighting your darkness.

Questions:

What trials are you enduring currently that 's robbing you of the joy of Christmas?

What are some things you can do to reclaim joy and hope in your life?

Angels From The Realms Of Glory

*Angels from the realms of glory,
Wing your flight o'er all the earth;
Ye who sang creation's story,
Now proclaim Messiah's birth:
Come and worship,
Come and worship,
Worship Christ, the newborn King!*

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, "Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.

Luke 2:13-14 NIV

The actions of the angels are one of the most exciting aspects of the Christmas story from Luke 2. First you have the angel who suddenly appears to the shepherds to tell them the good news of Jesus birth (Luke 2:9). Then, as if the shepherds haven't had enough, there is a whole multitude of angels suddenly appearing in full concert to finish it off (Luke 2:13). This is such an epic celebration like nothing ever seen in the Bible, and it was displayed not for the government officials, the upper class of the city, or the spiritual elite, but for the lowly shepherds. What a beautiful tension and a perfect picture of the power of Christmas. It is the biggest news that mankind could ever know, its celebration is led by the very angels who hang out in the perfect presence of an all-powerful God, and the message is meant for the lowly and broken.

This old carol is such a simple but powerful reminder of all who have been invited to celebrate and to worship Jesus. Jesus is the most amazing gift given to us. God loved us so much that He sent His only son to enter humanity so that ultimately we could have the chance to be right before a holy God. That is the power of Christmas, and the angels understood it. The shepherds experienced it first-hand. The wise men believed it. They not only joined the worship celebration, but their excitement and worship inspired others to do the same. This Christmas, let our worship would be so authentic and exciting that we would draw others to "Come and worship; come and worship; Worship Christ the newborn King!"

Questions:

How can you celebrate and worship Jesus throughout this Christmas season?

How can you inspire others to do the same?

Silent Night

Glories stream from heaven afar. Heavenly hosts sing Hallelujah!
Christ the Savior is born! Christ the Savior is born!

The days are coming," declares the LORD, "when I will raise up for David a righteous Branch, a King who will reign wisely and do what is just and right in the land. In his days Judah will be saved and Israel will live in safety. This is the name by which he will be called: The LORD Our Righteous Savior."

Jeremiah 23:5-6 NIV

When I was a child, we were poor. We rarely bought anything other than necessities throughout the year. About two months before Christmas, my parents asked me to write a list of all the things I wanted. I would pour through catalogs, to stores (before the internet) and dream about all the things I could possibly enjoy for the coming year. After my list was complete, I waited anxiously anticipating the gifts under the tree. The waiting felt like years, but it was worth the wait. Christmas morning was the best day! I spent the rest of the year enjoying my new toys!

God's children, for hundreds of years, had anticipated the arrival of their Savior. Parents told their children of the coming King: The one who would save them all. Their kids told their kids. Everyone was anxiously awaiting the One they had heard about. The arrival of Jesus, their Savior, was a holy night. The heavens rejoiced. Angels sang. Shepherds quaked at the sight. At Christmas, we remember this day that heaven came to earth! The day God fulfilled His promise! The day God became man to redeem his children from a broken world. Your savior is here. He is present! You don't have to anticipate something you already have. Celebrate. Enjoy the gift you have received!

Questions:

In what areas of your life are you waiting and anticipating God's presence?

O Come, All Ye Faithful

*Come and behold Him,
Born the King of Angels;
O come, let us adore Him*

Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father

Philippians 2:9-11 (NIV)

Adoration is a word that we love to use during the Christmas season thanks largely to the classic carol O Come, All Ye Faithful as we sing, "O come, let us adore Him." So many of us during the Christmas season spend more time thinking about Christ and giving Him adoration than any other time of the year. Think about it for a moment. More people go to church during Christmas than any other time of the year. We also tend to find ourselves singing and listening to songs about Jesus more during the Christmas season than any other time of year. As a result, Christmas is a time when we love to praise Him, honor Him, and adore Him much in the way Philippians 2:9-11 describes.

While it's great that Christ earns so much of our attention and adoration during Christmas, it's important to remember that we should pay that same amount of attention to Him 12 months a year instead of just one. Sure, it's easier to get caught up in all the Christmas hype and spend more time thinking, singing, praying, and adoring Christ during December, but in order to have a true relationship with Christ we must adore and spend time with Him daily and not just during Christmas. This year as you move out of the Christmas season and back into the normalcy of life, strive to find a way to capture that Christmas spirit that will enable you to adore Him and grow with Him every day of your life.

Questions:

What things keep you from adoring and spending time with Christ on a daily basis?

What steps will you take to ensure that you spend time daily with Christ?