



A BLESSING IN DISGUISE

We are approaching Christmas again - the “most wonderful time of the year” - as they sing in a popular Christmas carol. In most people’s minds Christmas is the season of harmony, joy and happiness but sadly for many the reality of it is quite different from this polished fairytale world. Many lives are marked by sickness, death of a loved one, broken relationships, loss of a job, addictions to battle and tragedies alike. I think most of us can say that this past year has been a year like no other, and for some of us it has meant overwhelming challenges and even hardships that have interrupted our plans and taken us to the unknown. And maybe this Christmas, you’re not feeling happy or at peace because something in your life has been interrupted. But did you know that the first Christmas was no different? At least not for Mary and Joseph. For them, it meant a complete change of plan that took them to a new direction.

Today, I would like to take a look at the Christmas story from Joseph’s point of view. When a brutal interruption happened in Joseph’s life, he was a young man, in love and engaged to his fiancée, excited about marriage and a life together with the woman of his dreams, whose name was Mary. Like all young men in his days who were about to be married, Joseph was busy preparing their future home and dreaming of all the wonderful years they as a family would have ahead. But one day something happened that interrupted everything and dashed Joseph’s world into pieces. Mary had something to share. She was pregnant! And she claimed the baby to be the Son of God! No wonder, Joseph was devastated and many thoughts were racing through his mind. Just like anyone in their right mind, he was convinced that she was expecting a baby for another man and just trying to cover it all up with a nice story. He felt deeply hurt and humiliated and began to devise a plan of how to best get rid of Mary. In his time and culture, Joseph would have had the legal right to have Mary stoned for unfaithfulness. But because he was an upright and compassionate man, he decided to rather divorce her in secret in order to avoid embarrassing her. This was Joseph’s rational, plain human reaction to the paralyzing interruption in his life.

Two years ago, just before Christmas, my life got suddenly interrupted. The company where I had worked for four years, had reached a point where they no longer could pay their staff and had to lay everyone off – including me. My Pre-Christmas season was now overshadowed with a cloud of uncertainty and worry over the future was trying to get a hold on me. Just like Joseph, I came to a crossroads in my life, where I had a big choice to make. Should I go the way that seems right to the natural mind or should I inquire of God’s way?

Times of interruption are powerful and they work in our lives either for good or for bad, depending on the choices we make. If we don’t watch out, our response to them can quickly take us down the wrong path. Joseph nearly made the wrong move and what a mistake would that have been! When we are facing interruption in our lives it is important not to allow worries or emotions to steer us but to go to God and ask for His perspective of things.

Thank God, Joseph changed his mind after an angel appeared to him in a dream and said “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins.” (Matt. 1:20,21). When Joseph woke up the next morning, his mind was totally renewed because he suddenly saw and understood that the plan of God in this painful season of interruption held a precious blessing in disguise.

When I faced my time of interruption, I asked God for His plan, decided to trust Him, put my confidence in Him and let Him lead me His perfect way. And as a result, Awake the Nations was born and the rest is history.

When we take the “God approach”, our interruptions can eventually turn into a blessing. This happened to Joseph and Mary. Their interruption gave them the privilege of being the human parents to the Savior of the world, Jesus Christ.

What an amazing task and calling! The direction their life took through this interruption was not their plan, but it was God's plan since the beginning of times, making it far better than their own. Their interruption turned into a blessing for the whole mankind. Today, because of their choice to accept it and go with God's plan, people like you and I can have access to a personal relationship with God, forgiveness of sins, freedom of guilt and condemnation, and eternal salvation. My interruption also turned into a pool of blessings that now by God's grace overflows into the lives of countless individuals and peoples in different nations of the world.

Whatever interruption you have experienced this year, maybe due to COVID 19 or some other reason, please remember that God wants to use it to redirect you and take you to the next phase of your life, where unexpected blessings flow. He wants to bless both you and others through your season of wrestling that eventually brings about something new and fresh. With all this in mind, how about taking a new, hope-filled look at your situation and saying to God right now, "Lord, show me how you want to use this and what you want to do in and through me right now."

My prayer for you this Christmas is that despite your interruptions, whether in the past, present or future, you will always experience the steadfast love, everlasting hope and deep peace that Jesus came to give us. May you personally experience His wonderful presence during this Christmas season as you celebrate His birthday!

*"For unto us a Child is born, Unto us a Son is given;
And the government will be upon His shoulder.
And His name will be called
Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace."*

Isaiah 9:6



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