

WEEKLY REFLECTION

How often do we remember that the story of the Bible is the story of God? It is not just the story of David and Goliath, or Moses and the Ten Commandments. It is the story of God in three Persons: God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Yet A.W. Tozer, famed author and pastor, had this to say: "If the Holy Spirit was withdrawn from the church today, 95 percent of what we do would go on and no one would know the difference. If the Holy Spirit had been withdrawn from the New Testament church, 95 percent of what they did would stop, and everybody would know the difference."

As we begin our Advent journey of longing for Jesus' return, let us not forget that our God is three in one. He is God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who was present during the moment of creation (Gen. 1:2); when empowering certain individuals in the Old Testament, e.g. Joshua (Num. 27:18), Gideon and Samson (Jud. 6:34; 13:25), Saul and David (1 Sam. 10:9-10; 2 Sam. 23:2), and the prophets etc. (Isa. 11:1-5; Eze. 2:2). He was present in the conception of Jesus within His mother Mary (Luke 1:35), and He filled Jesus' cousin John (the Baptist) even from his mother's womb (v.15).

From our passage of Luke 1:1-38 this week, we can be reminded of these three key functions that the Holy Spirit performs: (1) He illuminates our prayers and intercedes for us in accordance with the Father's will (Rom. 8:26-27); (2) He works to fulfill the Father's will; (3) and lastly, He works in all believers, male and female, young and old. Nothing can stop the Spirit from working, not even conditions impossible to us, or our own fear and doubt. How, then, will you respond as you reflect on the work and the Person of the Holy Spirit today?

QUESTIONS

QUESTION ONE:

As you go through the passage of Luke 1:1-38, consider that there had been “400 years of silence” prior to the birth of Jesus. During these 400 years, God spoke no prophetic words, psalms, or encouragement to His people.

Have you encountered God’s silence? How did you feel, and how did you respond?

How do you think Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary might have felt at the sudden arrival of the angel Gabriel and his message from God?

QUESTION TWO:

What was impossible about Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary’s situations? How did the Holy Spirit work to illuminate their prayers, fulfill the Father’s will, and just generally work in all three of them, despite the different stages of life and faith they were at?

Moreover, Gabriel’s response to Zechariah and Mary’s doubt has often been compared as well. He is seen to be punishing Zechariah for his unbelief, and affirming Mary for her faith. But what if each response is exactly what they need for the good news to take hold in their hearts?

QUESTION THREE:

As you reflect on the Person and the work of the Holy Spirit, think about His response to you in your daily life. How is He working? Is it through silence or conversation and dialogue? How is He illuminating your prayers and rooting the good news of Jesus Christ in your heart?

Remember too that Zechariah, Elizabeth, and Mary were just ordinary people who were called to do extraordinary things. How is the Holy Spirit working in you, to prepare the way for Jesus in the places and people around you?