

Sunday – December 1, 2024 – First Sunday of Advent



"Peace Within Myself" *Luke 1:26-38*

Peace. It is a common word, a longed-for concept we all want, for ourselves, our families and our world. Unfortunately for most, the kind of peace we settle for is more like a ceasefire than the life changing peace God can provide. Before we can find peace with others, we need to find peace within ourselves with the identity God has given to each of us.

KEY VERSE: *Therefore, my people will know my name; therefore, in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it. Yes, it is I." How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!" (Isaiah 52:6-7).*

As we begin our journey through Advent this year, we start with Mary's story. Read *Luke 1:26-38*. Write down any words, phrases that stand out to you as you read this account this year.

Read *Isaiah 26:12*. The prophet says that God established peace for us. How often have I tried to establish my own peace? How has that usually worked out and for how long?

Read *John 14:27*. God's peace is equated with wholeness in my life and is promised. Where and how have you seen that at work in your life? Where do you need it today?

Mary's life is on a programmed path, until God interrupts. Read *Luke 1:26-30*. How would God's promise to Mary be an encouragement to her? To you?

After God speaks, Mary steps into the identity God gives her. (*Luke 1:38*). Here are some verses to look up. Read them and write down the identity God has given to you. (*Eph 2:19, 2 Cor 9:8, 1 John 3:1, Zeph 3:17, Eph 2:10, 2 Cor 5:17, 1 Peter 2:9*).

Mary takes God's identity for her to heart. Read *Luke 1:46-50*. How can I be encouraged by her response to God and how can that help me in my life? _____

God's peace, Christmas peace starts with finding peace within myself by knowing my identity with God, and who He has called me to be.

This week's Christmas truth:

God has said, in Jesus, with Jesus you are loved, you are mine, I can be at peace.