

A Good Surprise

Many people like a good surprise. For others of us, the anticipation of knowing what is coming is far superior to a surprise.

Joseph may have been one who liked anticipation better than a true surprise. However, God surprised him in a large way with the announcement that Mary, his beloved and betrothed, was pregnant. Pregnant without having ever known a man. *And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit"* (Matthew 1:19-20).

Joseph was a just man. He desired to see justice done, but also loved his soon-to-be wife. He desired not to put her to shame. He wanted to show her respect, and honor God. God used an angel to confirm the surprise was in fact true.

There are surprises we receive that we would much rather NOT have: a surprise diagnosis, a loss of a loved one, a large bill, or an accident. What if in the midst of your less than joyful surprise God showed up? He sent an angel to tell you how things would work out, and how He would use this event for His glory. It would be a tremendous relief, wouldn't it?

Thankfully, we have access to God's Word where He speaks directly to us with words of comfort such as, *"Whatever you ask in my name, this I will do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask me anything in my name, I will do it. If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Yet a little while and the world will see me no more, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live"* (John 14:13-19).

In the verses just prior in John 14, Jesus talks about going to prepare a place for us, returning, hearing our prayers, answering them, and even sending the Helper, that is the Holy Spirit, to guide us. Regardless of our surprises, we can be like Joseph after his dream with an angel where we have peace and confidence in the goodness of God.

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Published by LWML Texas District Christian Life Committee, 2022
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