

Simply Christmas – Part 3

December 18th, 2022

“How to Not Lose Yourself this Christmas...”

Intro:

- Hey Church... It's coming!!! We are literally 7 days away from Xmas morning, what?!?
 - Promote Christmas Eve – So many are Questioning Right Now...
- ? What is it about the Christmas Season that makes us “Lose Ourselves”?
 - ? Have you noticed that about yourself?
 - ? About your spouse??? – *“Whenever you get around your aunt / cousins / mother / siblings, you become a different person!”*
 - Anybody said that to a Spouse... ever? (Altars are Open!!!)
- When I read & reflect on that 1st Christmas, Mary had every reason & right to “Lose Herself,” but she didn't!
 - After all, she got some pretty Crazy News, right?!?
 - As we head into Christmas week, I think we can all learn some things from Mary about...

How Not to Lose Ourselves this Christmas:

PRAY

Luke 1:26-27 “In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary.

V. 28-30 “The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.” Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.”

1. Be True to your Heart.

A. Mary was “Greatly Troubled” when she heard what “Christmas” was going to look like for her. – She was “Stressed Out!!!”

- God said to her: “Mary, do not be afraid.”

B. Church – ? What Condition is your Heart in this Christmas?

- As we said a few weeks ago, it is Kindness to tend to our Heart & Emotions this Christmas.

- We’ve been through a lot in the last 3 months & so we may not have all the emotional capacities that we’ve had in years past.

- Some of us may be Extra Sad/ On Edge this year!

- A little more Melancholy / Anxious / Up tight.

- A little (or a lot) more Tired.

- That’s. Okay!!!

C. MIP: A Few Thoughts that Might be Helpful:

1) Begin & End each day taking an Emotional Assessment.

- Am I Anxious? Nervous? Uptight? Upset? Angry? Worried? Afraid? Overwhelmed?

- Freedom Book – Page

- Most of us just RUN thru a Season like this & all that bottles up until we explode or implode!!!

2) Pre-Forgive.

- MWK – I’ve had to do this a time or two already! ☺

- Forgive / Offer Grace / Forgive yourself!

3) Monitor your Heart & Emotions in the Moment.

- If you need to walk outside, it’s okay.

- Go for a walk & pray & re-connect w/ Jesus!

4) Be Grateful! – Let’s Practice Gratitude EVERYDAY of this Xmas!

- Mary stayed true to her own Heart & Emotions!

v. 34-35 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.

v. 36-38 “Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail.” “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.”

2. Be True to your Obedience.

A. When Mary heard what God was going to do through her, her response was, “Amen. Yes Lord. I’ll do it. No matter what!”

- This Xmas, one of the ways we don’t “Lose Ourselves” is by staying in Step with the Holy Spirit & being Obedient to what He has commanded us to do!

B. One of the easiest places for our Obedience to slip is in our Finances.

- After all, we’ve been through a hard season, it’s Xmas, there’s bills to pay, presents to buy, etc.
- & yet, God wants us to Keep Him as #1 in our lives.

C. A Few Thoughts:

1) Are we being Obedient w/ the Tithe?

- Bringing God the 1st 10% of all our Increase?

Malachi 3:10 “Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that there will not be room enough to store it.”

2) Today is our HFTH Offering, & I believe God has spoken to 100’s of us about what He wants us to do.

- MWK – God has been making it so real to me lately that it’s ALL about what we do for eternity!!!
 - This world is fading away!
 - But EVERYTHING we do to build God’s Kingdom will last forever!!!

D. MIP: ? Is there some other area where you know God has spoken to you, but you aren't being Obedient?

- SLEEPING W/ YOUR BOY/GIRLFRIEND – MOVING OUT
- STOP DRINKING - SMOKING MARIJUANA
- DON'T GIVE IN TO PRESSURE FROM YOUR FRIENDS/FAMILY

v. 39-40 “At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth.”

3. Be True to Yourself.

A. I believe it was strategic that Mary went to her cousin's house.

- She knew she needed to get away from all the craziness for a little while & be able to concentrate on taking care of herself!

B. MIP: Church Family - So must we!!!

1) Don't neglect your Daily Disciplines & Routines.

- Just b/c there are “Obligations!”
- You know what you need, to feel like you! Prioritize that!
- Exercise / Sleep / SOAP / SOAK / SEEKing Him.
 - MWK – Reading / Writing / Working Out
- Doesn't take too many days b/f I start not feeling like myself!

2) Don't neglect Rest.

- 52 WEEKS OF THE YEAR IS A MARATHON
 - Xmas needs to be a Water Stop for you!
- The worst thing that could happen is to go all the way through Xmas, Please everyone else & come back exhausted!

- So they go to Bethlehem / No room in the Inn / Jesus is born in a barn / Shepherds show up / It's a Crazy Christmas!

- But look what it says about Mary...

v. 2:19 “But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.”

4. Be True to your Heart.

A. Church – This is going to be a Great Christmas!!!

- There are going to be memories & moments that last a Lifetime!
- Enjoy them! Ponder them! Capture them in your Heart!

B. Put your Phone Down!!!

- Don't be so busy "Capturing the Moment" for Instagram that you Miss the Moment as it's happening!
- Let all the editing & filters go, just be in the moment!!!

C. In fact, what if you didn't Scroll at all Christmas Day?!?

- What if you put your phone in your Car for like 2 hours? Or 6?
- Don't "Lose Yourself" in your Phone or your Devices!!!

D. Be in the Moment / Be Present / Listen / Ask Good Questions!

- *"What's Exciting you right now?"*
- *"What's Exhausting you right now?"*
- *"What's a Moment you don't want to forget from this past year?"*
- *"What are you Looking forward to in 2023?"*

- So, church, Mary didn't "Lose Herself" that 1st Christmas & neither do we!
- In fact, we can be very present when we focus on "Simply Christmas!"

TIME OF PRAYER

? What do you need to Pre-Decide right now?

? Where are you already Feeling "Anxious" about it all?

? Where do you need to Repent for already Losing Yourself in some way?

SALVATION