



MAKING ROOM
in Advent

25 DEVOTIONS FOR A
SEASON OF WONDER

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DAY ONE

Making Room for a Story



NOTICE

Let your eyes move through the painting. What catches your eye? Focus on that portion of the work and sit with it for a while.

READ

Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. —LUKE 1:1-4

There is a saying in the creative world: “Show me, don’t tell me.” It means that the truth is revealed better through incarnation than explanation.

As a skilled creator, when Luke writes his Gospel, he too reveals the truth by showing rather than telling. The word for “account” used in Luke 1:4 is also translated “narrative.” Luke is authoring a story. He doesn’t just tell us who God is. He shows us—through the deeply personal stories of ordinary people like Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, the shepherds, Simeon, and Anna, who all had doubts, longings, and a life barren until he made his entrance.

Luke shows us how God’s Word not only takes on flesh in the person of Jesus, but also in the lives of his people. God’s message of hope is communicated through the waiting and ache of Zechariah and Elizabeth, who were barren and then surprised by pregnancy. His message of favor is embodied in the womb of a once ordinary virgin. His announcement of joy for all people is illuminated to lowly shepherds on the margins. The revelation of Jesus’ birth takes on melody through the voices of Zechariah, Mary, and Simeon, who all grapple for words to describe its surpassing beauty.

This is how Luke draws on the authenticity of Jesus as the Son of God—through the way his divinity is manifested in the stories of flesh and blood people. As each character stretches to make room for the Savior King, we see God fulfill his promise of redemption.

God rescues them in their distress and revolutionizes who they are becoming. He transforms them, bringing them from despair to hope. From those who wait to those who receive. From the darkness of sin to the dawn of forgiveness. From lowly insignificance to radiating with God's purpose. And from a people oppressed in the kingdoms of this world to freedom in the kingdom of God.

These characters in the first few chapters of Luke are like signposts pointing to God's salvation for the people of Israel. Through them, we see a glimpse of what God was getting ready to do for all nations, and his plan of redemption continues to unfold today.

And so, like any good story, as I read about Zechariah, Elizabeth, Mary, and the others, I find myself. I see myself in Mary when she asks Gabriel, "How will this be?" because I know what it is like to wonder, "How?" in the face of God's call on my life. I ache with Elizabeth, because I know what it is like to ask God to answer my prayers and yet remain barren and waiting. And I moan alongside Zechariah, because I know what it is like to be silenced by God in my need for control and certainty.

But I am also inspired by the characters in Luke, because I see the ways their lives and communities are changed when they receive Jesus. I see how they arise into their truest selves when they encounter him. I watch them discover the expansiveness of God's kingdom that stretches to the margins. I witness how their souls are awakened by the wonder of God and how they respond by aligning themselves with his purposes. And, as the characters in this story are transformed by God's salvation, I am challenged with them to receive his salvation in similar ways.

Like with the characters in Luke, God's message is working its way out through you. Through your humanity, your yearnings and longings and his presence in the midst of them. So lean in and listen to what he is saying through your story. Make room for him, and as he dwells within you, the world will see Jesus in the flesh.

*God comes into the world by becoming flesh.
We make room for him by embodying his Word.*

PONDER

How might God be clothing his message in your flesh?

PRAY

Inhale: Your word . . .

Exhale: . . . becomes flesh in me.

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