

# Fresh Oil



December 2018 (reprise from 2011)

Dear Fellow Servants,

Something that I have been thinking about a lot this year as we enjoy the Christmas season is getting back to the “awe” and “wonder” of it all. In all of our preparations and busyness, do we ever stop to take it all in? Has the familiarity of the Christmas story that we read each year dulled our sense of “first love” when it comes to the celebration of our Saviour’s birth?

Let’s consider the response of Mary as she attempted to process the events of the birth of her firstborn Son. First of all, we read in Luke 1:29 (Amplified Bible) that the angel Gabriel said she was favoured of the Lord. Mary’s response:

***“...and kept revolving in her mind what such a greeting might mean.”***

I realize this was a first impression for her and we, instead, are dealing with years and years of hearing this same account. However, there is something proactive about her response that should get our attention. When we read the Scriptures, any Scriptures and not just the familiar birth account, do we do what Mary did? Do we mull the text over and give careful attention to what it is saying, or do we hurry through in order to get our devotions done and be able to say that we did it? The frenetic pace of the Christmas season can force us into a drive-through mode where we quickly pick up verses on the run as we hurry to our next holiday-oriented task. This superficial reading of the Bible can effectively kill the wonder and awe of the message we are reading.

After the birth of Jesus, Luke once again records for us the response of Mary in Luke 2:19 (Amplified Bible). While everyone around her were in a stupor, caught up with the events of the moment, Mary was taking a different stance:

***“But Mary was keeping within herself all these, weighing and pondering them in her heart.”***

We might use a modern axiom and say that she “stopped to smell the roses.” Are we doing that this Christmas? Folks, it’s a *virgin birth!* The needle on your normal meter should be buried in the red zone! Instead we read it and say, Yeah, that’s cool, now when is the turkey dinner going to be ready?”

Don’t let another day of this current Christmas season go by without taking a time out, finding your Bible and a favourite chair, and re-reading Luke 2:1-20 slowly and thoughtfully. Before you do, however, ask the Holy Spirit to awaken your spiritual senses to the wonder and awe of the birth of your Saviour. You just might find something you’ve never noticed before.

Christmas blessings to you, my friend!

*Pastor Brian*

*... I have been anointed with fresh oil*

PSALM 92:10

