

## Hope Bumper

Welcome

I hope everyone had an amazing Thanksgiving. We have so much to be thankful for.

Would you agree that the Christmas season is in full swing?

I saw Christmas trees in department stores as early as late September, and now everywhere you look it is hard to forget that Christmas is coming.

I want to talk to you today about this upcoming season. There is something that we need to receive in this season that is so much more important than...

The world needs more than these things. I hope you will agree that

**H1 1this world needs HOPE.**

You see how we are at each other's throats on social media.

You see the violence in our streets... or worse the violence at the mall.

More people than ever take medication for depression.

Although we live in the richest nation many are hungry and doing without.

Many people are going to miss the point of this entire season and instead go into credit card debt to pay for gifts that most people don't really need or want.

**H1 1this world needs HOPE**

Author Hal Lindsey said "Man can live about forty days without food, about three days without water, about eight minutes without air...but only for one second without hope."

Let's make this season a time when we remember that **H1 2HOPE**  
**SHOWED UP.**

Hope was born of a virgin.

Hope was born in a manger.

Hope was worshipped by shepherds and Magi.

Hope was incarnate. Everyone needs to know about the hope of the incarnation. God put on a bod and came to earth. The creator became the created and dwelt among us in love.

Hope has a name. It is Jesus! Hope showed up!

You can have a Christmas Tree and miss this.

You can sing carols and miss this.

You can buy gifts and decorate your house and still miss this.

Jesus is Hope Showing up!

## **H1 3Hope was inside Mary**

Mary was a young girl who was engaged to a man named Joseph. Like most young girls awaiting their wedding day, Mary no doubt had dreams about the ceremony and the life that would follow. She probably had designs formulated on how she was going to run her house and raise her children. She probably thought of special ways to leave her mark on the world. Her life was filled with hope of the life to come.

It is great to be filled with hope for the future... but what happens when that pictured future is no longer the same.

All of Mary's hopeful dreams changed when an Angel sent from God came to Mary.

## Luke 1:27-38

to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

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.

You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.

He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David,

and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon 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.

Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.

For nothing is impossible with God."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.(NIV)

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There are two women mentioned in our passage, Mary & Elizabeth. We will talk about Elizabeth in a moment, but for now let's focus on Mary.

The Angel says she is honored, favored, chosen.

Mary was blessed. But let's get real... Mary was also really burdened.

She had never been with a man, but now she was going to be pregnant outside of her marriage. How would she explain this to Joseph? What would her family think? Would anyone ever believe that she was visited by an angel? (This was during a time when God had not spoken to Israel in 400 years)

The Bible says Mary was BLESSED... But often **H1 4 a blessing can be a burden.**

When Mary felt people give her looks and talk behind her back... she might not have felt blessed.

Doing the right thing would cost Mary what she dreamed of always having... she didn't feel highly favored.

**True blessings don't always look like blessings. God's blessing doesn't always fit our designs & dreams. Mary had these hopeful dreams and designs, yet it appeared this "blessing" was going to mess all of that up.**

When your hopeful dream is altered or completely dies, you won't feel blessed or hopeful.

**We say we want the blessing of God, but can we bear the burden of the blessing? What if His blessing changes your plans?**

**Could it be that we can't bear the blessing God would like to give us?**

This young girl full of hope for a storybook fairytale wedding, was now hoping to simply survive this blessing of God.

Even though her world was being effected by the world's most unexpected pregnancy, there were more reasons to worry than to hope it seems.

But when God calls you blessed...

When God calls you blessed, you don't look to the changing world around you... You look to God.

The angel said "the Lord is with you." I don't know what you are facing, but will you receive this blessed message? THE LORD IS WITH YOU! You have hope!

Mary, have hope. This child would be the hope of everyone everywhere.

- This child was the hope of Adam & Eve.
- This child was the hope of Abraham & Isaac.
- This child is your hope and mine.
- This child was Mary & Joseph's hope.

The Christ child carried real hope in the face of hopeless circumstance. And Mary carried the Christ Child.

People might sin against Mary thinking her to have been unfaithful..

Yet there is hope. This child would save His people from their sins and she carried within her the true FAITHFUL ONE.

People would say things and do things to Mary that would cause her hurt. Hurt is not easy to get past. Words wound. Joseph her love that she was about to marry, said and did things that communicated he thought she was a liar.

Yet there is hope. This child would bring healing. He would open blind eyes. The crippled would rise and walk. The dead would come out of graves. There is no wound that Jesus cannot mend.

Hundreds of years early the prophecy spoke this..

### Isaiah 53:5

But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.(NIV)

People might put Mary to death. She and her baby faced the threat of dying at the hands of angry people. Under old testament law Joseph

could have had her stoned for being pregnant outside of their marriage. She faced death and destruction.

Yet there is Hope! This child would defeat our curse of death, hell, and the grave.

Although Mary was surrounded by great burden, she was **h1 5 Filled with hope**. She literally carried hope within her.

I am talking about a hope that is both natural and supernatural. I am talking about a hope that can change the world.

I am not talking about a cheap hope that is only present when things are going right, when you are surrounded by friends, when you have a job and money in the bank. **God's hope works even when your plans don't work.**

**Mary was filled with a hope that was stronger than the hopeless circumstance around her.**

This hope inside Mary was strong enough to change the outside world.

## **H1 6 Elizabeth also carried a baby.**

Mary had a cousin who also was also pregnant. Her name was Elizabeth and she was old in age. The babies name was to be a world changer named John who would prepare the way for the Lord. You know him as John the Baptist.

Elizabeth had been barren and was unable to give her family a child. Her husband was a priest and it looked as though the lineage would end. It was a hopeless situation... until an Angel showed up in their life with news of a miracle. They were now both old in age and suddenly Elizabeth became pregnant.

What a blessed moment. Elizabeth would have her child. She carried within her a dream. She would have her child and the priest may have his heir. She thought this dream would never happen, but like the Angel told Mary, "God can do all things."

But we are told of a problem in the pregnancy. A well noted 1<sup>st</sup> century historian named Josephus wrote that Elizabeth had not ever felt the

baby move. These are not the days of ultrasound where you can go see the baby, count its toes and see its heart beat. In the ancient world the only way to know there was life inside of you was to feel the baby move. It was the 6<sup>th</sup> month of pregnancy yet Elizabeth had not felt the baby move.

## **H1 7Elizabeth had not felt the baby move.**

This was devastating. It meant that she carried within her a dead child. This once hopeful dream turned into a stillborn burden.

What do you do when the dream you are carrying seems to die. Maybe you haven't felt the dream inside you move in a while.

Mary goes to visit Elizabeth.

Luke 1:39 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea,(NIV)

Luke 1:40 where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth.(NIV)

Luke 1:41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.(NIV)

Elizabeth carried a dead baby within her. But Mary carried a baby who is THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE. (John 11:25) Mary's baby would one day call Lazarus out of a tomb.

When the hope that Mary carried within her came into contact with the hopeless of Elizabeth something happened! THE BABY LEAPED and Elizabeth had an encounter with God's Holy Spirit!

Suddenly the Hopeless Elizabeth preaches a 3 fold blessing!

Mary you are Blessed!

Luke 1:42 In a loud voice she(Elizabeth) exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!(NIV)

I am Blessed!

Luke 1:43 But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?(NIV)

Luke 1:44 As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.(NIV)

Anyone who believes what the Lord has said to Mary will be blessed!

Luke 1:45 Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"(NIV)

Anyone who comes in contact with the Hope inside of Mary is going to be blessed.

## **H1 3 Hope was inside Mary**

Mary and Elizabeth were both were experiencing a loss of hope. Mary was losing hope around her. Elizabeth was losing hope within her. Jesus brought them REAL TRANSFORMING HOPE!

Hope was in Mary. The story could end here and be worthy of celebration every December... but this is not where the story ends.

Elizabeth's son grows up to be John the Baptist. He declares that Mary's son, Jesus, is the Lamb of God who has come to take away the sin of the world. (John 1:29) He declares that Jesus will baptize us with the Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:11) – the same Spirit His mother encountered and caused John to leap into life.

You can encounter the same Spirit and have Jesus leap within you also.

Colossians 1:27 Christ in you, the hope of glory.(NIV)

## **H1 8 Christ in you is hope**

You are to carry Christ in you. You are to carry Hope in you.

This is the HOPE that we need this season.

The incarnation is God taking residence inside a human body. God wants to incarnate today. He wants to take residence inside of you and me.

This is the HOPE that we need this season.

Just like the Hope inside Mary caused life to leap inside of Elizabeth... You too can have the Hope inside of you cause someone to leap to new life.



This is the HOPE that we need this season.

We are going to spend the next moments talking to God. I am going to ask you to come pray. I want you to focus on these 3 thoughts.

**H1 9 There is hope**

**You need this hope in you**

**You need to be a source of hope**