



John & Eileen Sala Prison and Teaching Ministry

www.littlelambsinc.org



Little Lambs Inc.



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“For unto you is born in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ the Lord” Luke 2:11

Our newsletter devotion for December comes from a particularly sacred passage from the Gospel of Luke, Chapter 1. And as per usual, the back story sets the tone. We begin with a certain priest named Zacharias, and his wife, Elizabeth, who “were both righteous before God,” and both “well stricken in years” (Luke 1:6-7). And childless. Early one morning as Zacharias carried out his priestly duties, an angel of the Lord named Gabriel appeared to him with unexpected but troubling news “... thy prayer is heard; and thy wife Elizabeth shall bear thee a son...” (Luke 1:13).

At his age, it seems most unlikely that Zacharias would have been praying for a son *at that moment*. No. It is much more probable that Zacharias had prayed and prayed for a son many years before, during Elizabeth’s child-bearing years. And of course, God had heard those prayers so many years before. But in His infinite wisdom, He tucked them away, to be answered in His perfect timing. And so on this particular morning, Gabriel had the honor of the gender reveal!

This episode of Zacharias and Elizabeth and the birth of John the Baptist, although remarkable in its own right, is not the central focus of our Christmas devotion. But if you or someone you love has been praying and praying, seemingly with no answers, you can remind them of Zacharias and the importance of being patient and persistent in prayer.

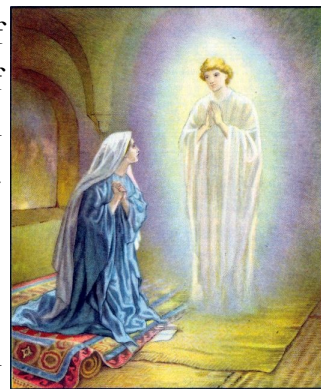
We now turn our attention to Mary, a young virgin girl in the city of Nazareth. The setting...well, we don’t really know much about the setting of Mary’s early life. A simple life, it would seem. No wealth or fame. Just an innocent young girl from a common Jewish home. But a young girl that had “...found favour with God” (Luke 1:30). And of course, that made all the difference.

One thing we do know for sure is that “...the angel Gabriel was sent from God...” (Luke 1:26). *Again.* Obviously it was a busy year for Gabriel, who now brought ‘unexpected but troubling news’ to Mary.

“And, behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call His name JESUS” (Luke 1:31). Now we do not know Mary’s age, but most Bible scholars say “about 14.” Which, if close, adds so much to the wonder of it all and especially to our utter amazement at her response to Gabriel’s stunning announcement. Consider this young girl, not even yet a woman. Upon hearing this news, she could have cried, or screamed, or fainted or thrown up. Or she could have bolted in sheer panic. But she did none of these things. Bumfoozled, perhaps. Stunned, for sure. Complained, not a word. But with immeasurable grace, did she embrace the plan with maturity beyond her years, empowered by the Holy Spirit? Absolutely!!

Partly because we have read and heard the Christmas story so many times, we might miss Mary’s initial response to Gabriel’s news she said: **“...be it unto me according to thy Word...(Luke 1:38).** Loosely translated into today’s jargon, Mary posted ‘Sounds like a plan. I’m all in. ..How shall this be indeed?’ *over*

We close our Christmas delight with an all-time, all-time favorite passage of Scripture. We are so privileged to be party of Luke's account, first of a confab of cousins, and then to witness this young girl absolutely pouring out her heart and soul before God's throne--**The Magnificat**. This sacred moment will be cherished forever. As she endorsed God's plan for our redemption, Mary opened her heart and prayed: **"My soul doth magnify the Lord, and my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour:** (Luke 2:46-47).



We shall forever call her name blessed. It should be noted that nothing in Scripture directs us to ever pray *to* Mary, although the Catholic Church persists to this day. But we cannot begin to comprehend the beauty and the depth of the Holy Spirit operating through this young girl, His willing servant.

So before you open the first gift this Christmas morning, may you also humble yourself and pray "My soul doth magnify the Lord!!" And then you can enjoy a truly blessed Christmas with your family

Blessings to all, Mike Rider-Volunteer

Little Lambs, (John and Eileen Sala) November 6, 2023

I want to say thank you for all that you do for anyone like me that wants to get a closer walk with Christ. I have learned or re-learned truths and doctrines that I did not know. Your Bible Study gets you into the word to search for the answer (no way to cheat) which I love. You are a special kind of people to take time out of your busy lives. You probably don't get very often a thank you and if you do I am just one more person that loves your study. I needed to know that there were people/Christians that haven't forgotten about others. I was raised in a Pentecostal household. My mother and her side of my family are all Christians and very much in church. We all went to church together with my grandparents. I was saved when I was 8 years old (now 48), When I got into my teens, I felt fake, phony, like I did not belong in church. I just went through the motions because it was a non-verbal expectation that I would attend church. Well, I got my own home when I got out of school, and dropped out of the 'Christian life'. My grandmother was especially hurt and confused. I stayed in 'rebellion' for years My grandmother would always ask me to go to church, I always had excuses. I figured that I had plenty of time to back to church.

Well time is one thing there is not much of anymore. In 2009, my grandmother got diagnosed with dementia. She was my prayer warrior. We had such a special bond, she asked me before she got sick to be her Power of Attorney. Speed ahead, I took care of her in my home and when she became to medially fragile, I put her in a nursing home that I used to work at. On one of her good days, she told me out of the blue, she took my hand in her small blue-tinged, wrinkled hand, looking me straight in the eyes and told me what she wants most was to see me again in heaven, that I needed to get right with God. She made me promise I would. She was there in the delivery room when I took my first breath, and I saw her take her last breath. Well, I kept getting a feeling I have not felt in years for about a year after she died. The feeling was the Holy Spirit convicting me. One day I just started crying and could not stop for awhile. Right then I asked God to forgive me and I loved him, but let my worldly flesh control my life and I needed his help to over come. That was in 2015, the road since has been a bumpy, rocky road but I never gave up on God. in February of this year I reaffirmed my faith and I have not look back. I am in my new body! Thanks to you all I am getting to the Word. Jason, SC

Dear Sirs: my name is Fred G., an inmate in a small jail in upstate New York. I just turned 50 in July and I have suffered in the grips of addiction to heroin and fentanyl for more years than I can even remember. I just can't seem to figure out why it has such a grip on me. I have always believed in God but that's always been on the back burner. Finally, one day I got down and prayed for help. I asked Jesus Christ to be my Lord and Savior and accepted Him into my heart and soul. After that I started noticing pamphlets and such. The first one saying: "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." Matthew 6:33, and it gave me chills and the hair stood up all over my body. Next, I happened across "I'm Not Coming Back" the John Sala Story, and I swear it was put there just for me. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. I always sought and desired love when I was young and the closest I got to it was when I was being beaten by my folks. I now believe that I found that love in substance abuse. I suddenly felt good all the time but little did I know it was destroying me. I believe that we build walls and create these other versions of ourselves to please society or our families in our cases, to please men or flesh. When all along, I should have been focused on pleasing God and spiritual health. When I read Chapter 25 of Ephesians and it tells me to give thanks always, and the book of Colossians 3-12, to be abounding in thanksgiving, and to clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Unfortunately all we have here are those little bibles from the Gideons that only have a few books in them. If we want anything more we have to purchase it through commissary and my family is all passed away and I'm left with no outside help but now I have Jesus Christ and I'm very thankful. I also read in your book on how you wrote all kinds of publishers and such for help with literature, so that's what I am doing. I have been trying so desperately to find a good bible, study bible, dictionary, etc. because I have a hard time understanding a lot of stuff. I spend all of my time studying scripture because you also have to buy radio or tv. Most of the time I will trade my tray and sacrifice my food to borrow some ones bible for a couple hours to study scripture and I am thankful for that opportunity as well.

Your book also taught me to forgive my parents for my terrible childhood. They are all passed but I wrote them letters and forgave them and that's behind me now and I feel so but better. I wanted you to know how much your book has done for me but so far all the addresses I have written to didn't even respond with a letter and they all say they help with bibles. I've been writing for a long, long time, but they are all in my prayers. The book of Galatians 6:2 says, "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ" just like John Sala did when he helped the hitchhiker and the thousands of other lives he has touched. Thank you so much for all you do. Your brother in faith, Fred, NY

We have partnered with International Prison Ministry to send John's book into prisons more often and it has been reaching so many with the gospel, like Fred here. We keep our word and our volunteers immediately within one week, send the letter writer a bible study and a bible if he asked for it. In our partnership with Thomas Nelson, we are sending larger print bibles that can actually be read without glasses and They are a huge blessing to inmates. Pray for Fred.

**For unto us a child is born, unto us
a son is given: and the government
shall be upon his shoulder: and his
name shall be called Wonderful,
Counsellor, The mighty God,
The everlasting Father,**

Hello, My name is Shawn. I'm an indigent inmate here at the Cummins Unit in Grady, AR. A friend of mine is taking this course. I have seen that his understanding and knowledge of the bible has improved a lot. However, I don't know much about Christianity or the bible but I'm willing to learn. He gave me the information to your ministry. The purpose of my letter is I'm trying to take this course that your ministry offers, if possible. He also told me you can help with the postage when it comes to sending my response back. Is this correct? May this letter find you safe and with good health. Thank you for any and all help. Shawn, AR *Yes, sending a postage paid envelope for return lessons has helped so many inmates. In some cases, prisons accept only an envelope that has the exact postage or more, so we compute that with our mail meter and send a metered mail envelope instead. God provides so well!*

Dear blessed Partners,

2023 is coming to a close, and we're waiting for what God has planned in 2024. Lots of changes for this past year. I have been getting good feedback about Mike's Devotionals in the newsletter. Maybe he has a new job! Tee hee! The biggest change, I think, has been my move into the ministry upstairs. I have been very blessed by Joey Engle and Steve Rawlings as they get the apartment ready for me. I want to thank those of you who have helped with the finances for this undertaking. I am somewhat better now, but it seems to require no lifting at all. Below is a picture of Joey, myself, and Jose after completing the work and helping me move in. About 6 young men from 2nd Chance Ministry also came to help with the heavy lifting. Chris Malave will be starting to work with us in the office after the New Year. My daughter, Julie, will be here on the first of December to help me finish up and prepare to sell. I will certainly be glad when this is over!

In cleaning out all the old stuff and getting rid of things I had clung to for too long, were several large boxes

of inmates letters through the years. Every time I would get down and discouraged, I would go back to my boxes and read the letters and would soon forget about all the problems and troubles and rejoice in the great work being done in their lives. David said he "encouraged himself in the Lord". I believe what he did was go back and read his psalms again and get his focus back. I hope that you enjoy the letters as much as we do, and that is why I always include them in the newsletter.

May all you precious friends enjoy a very blessed, peaceful and holy Christmas. Thank you for all you do for us and for the Little Lambs throughout the year.

Your servant, Eileen Sala



*Thank you
For
Your Christmas
Giving.
And
Throughout the year*