



REVEILLE'S GPS WEEKLY SCRIPTURE GUIDE

Explore scriptures and daily devotionals that reflect on this Sunday's sermon message. Sign up to receive the daily devotional email at www.bit.ly/devotional-rumc.

December 16-22, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Advent

**Sermon Title: *Voice of the Angels IV: "For Nothing Will Be Impossible with God"*
by Rev. Dr. Pete Moon**

Use the space below to reflect on the questions in this week's devotionals, make class and sermon notes, and write down prayers and concerns.

Questions for small groups and individual reflection:

1. What would you do if the angel Gabriel suddenly appeared and started speaking with you?
2. Two times, Gabriel speaks of how Mary is "favored." What does that mean?
3. The immediate context of the impossible is that Mary, as a virgin, will become pregnant through the Holy Spirit. She of course famously wonders "How will this be?" The sermon also speaks of the other part of the impossibility. God will save the world and will save us through her weakness and not her strength. God works through her, not despite her poor estate but because of it. Name some other places in the Bible where God works through weakness and not through innate strength.
4. Mary also says, "He has filled the hungry with God's things but has sent the rich away empty." Relative to the worldwide population, most of us are "rich." How do we avoid being sent away empty?

Monday, December 16: Read Luke 1:26-45

This week, we prepare for a sermon that gathers around the words angel Gabriel spoke to an unmarried, poor, and powerless young girl: "For nothing will be impossible with God." Mary certainly had a hard time wrapping her arms around the news Gabriel brought to her, and as inconceivable as it sounded (pun intended), she hadn't seen anything yet. God was about to change the world through her obedience, doing the seemingly impossible, including lifting up the poor and humbling the powerful. The needs of today's world seem impossible, too. We may be facing obstacles that seem insurmountable. As we read this week's scriptures in our fourth week of Advent, let us faithfully anticipate the work of a Savior who is cosmically more than we often envision.

- **Relationship Opportunity:** *Discuss with others if you believe there is hope today for the impossible from the same God who reminded Mary long ago. Why or why not?*

Tuesday, December 17: Read Luke 1:46-55

In today's beautiful scripture passage, a baby yet to be born leaps in his mother's womb as he feels the presence of the Christ child, and two mothers facing challenging pregnancies and childbirths celebrate all the good things to come...before they have arrived. What lesson is there for us in this today? Notice also how in our Advent study we have now read how both Elizabeth and Mary rejoiced in God "remembering" them; or as said in the fabulous line of Mary's song, "He has been mindful of the humble state of his servant..." Mindfulness is a popular topic these days, with the reminder that we are to be mentally engaged with others, and aware of the circumstances around us. Are we also recognizing the places in our lives where God is "mindful" of us?

- **Relationship Opportunity:** *Share a time when you felt God's presence and "mindfulness" in your life. What did it feel like? What enabled you to recognize it?*

Wednesday, December 18: Read Ezekiel 6:24-27

The prophet Ezekiel spoke to the ancient Jews at a time when things seemed their very lowest: the Babylonian exile. The temple in Jerusalem was destroyed, countless Jews were slaughtered, and most of those remaining were forced out of their homeland and forbidden to practice their faith. Yet the words of Ezekiel prophesy a return; a "cleansing" where all impurity will be washed away and a new Spirit will reawaken a people, a faith, and a future. These words seem impossible, yet we know from history that they came to fruition. Nothing was impossible for God. Nothing is impossible today.

- **Study Opportunity:** *Brush up on your history of the Babylonian Exile and the Jewish people's return.*

Thursday, December 19: Read Ephesians 3:14-21

When things start going well, we tend to downplay or even dismiss God's role in it all. We use terms like "lucky" or "fortunate," sometimes believing that somehow we deserved the positive turn of events due to our own merit. Paul's words to the church in Ephesus remind us of our need to be humble, for not only can God do infinitely more than we can do, but God does "immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine..." (Ephesians 3:20). If we were given the power to snap our fingers and have our greatest wishes materialize, the world would be a hot mess. Today let us give humble thanks to a God who sees beyond our wishes and desires and creates something so much more beautiful, sustainable, loving, and infinite.

- **Discipleship Opportunity:** *Go on a mindfulness walk today, seeing the awe behind what has become mundane and taken for granted. Ask yourself if you could have conceived of a single blade of grass on your own.*

Friday, December 20: Read Isaiah 53:1-6

We recognize Jesus in these prophetic Old Testament words describing a savior who, like Mary, saves the world through humble obedience rather than earthly power and status. While the earth looked for a mighty warrior king born of a royal family, God worked through those who "had no beauty or majesty to attract us" to them. Instead of gathering power and glory, they offered sacrifice. Let us read today's words slowly, seeing ourselves in the sheep who have gone astray and often turn our faces away from Jesus. Let us hear the voice of the angels calling us to repent, rejoice, and remember the Lord is with us.

- **Discipleship Opportunity:** *Where do you need God to work through your weakness, rather than your strength? Take time to pray for God to work through you and despite you to do the impossible.*

Saturday, December 21: SCRIPTURE MEMORIZATION: Ephesians 3:20-21

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

Sunday, December 22: Let us prepare our hearts and minds for worship by praying our Prayer of Common Confession: *Holy and loving God, this morning we confess, that unlike Mary, we celebrate and depend upon our own strength. You are not that impressed with us. You are mindful of our humble state, but in pride, we celebrate our human achievement and ability. In your grace, forgive our dependence upon everything but you. In our weakness, gather us in, filled with your power instead of our own, for this we ask in the name of Jesus. Amen.*