

# Meditations of the Heart - Reflections on the Scriptures

Psalm 19:14 *Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.*

Pastor Matt Cadora

Week of December 6, 2009

*Advent: Week 2*

## **Luke 1:26-45 (ESV)**

**26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, 27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" 29 But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. 30 And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. 31 And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."**

**34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. 36 And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. 39 In those days Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country, to a town in Judah, 40 and she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. 41 And when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit, 42 and she exclaimed with a loud cry, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! 43 And why is this granted to me that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. 45 And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord."**

As I mentioned last week, much of what you will see in our Meditations of the Heart this Advent season is coming from Dr. Jim Houston's Letters of Faith Through The Seasons – A Treasury of Great Christian Correspondences. When I studied under Dr. Houston this past spring in Vancouver, he gave me a copy of this two-volume book and encouraged me to share some of these letters with you.

To that end, our Meditation of the Heart this week comes from one of the most influential Christians who have ever lived, Ambrose, bishop of Milan. Ambrose (who lived from 339-393) mentored Augustine of Hippo following Augustine's conversion. The following is Ambrose's meditation on Luke 1.

*'As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting the child leapt in her womb and she was filled with the Holy Spirit. Notice the choice of words and the meaning of each one. Elizabeth was the first to hear Mary's voice, but John was the first to be aware of grace. She heard with the ears of the body; he leapt for joy because of the mystery. She was aware of Mary's presence, he of the Lord's. The woman perceived the presence of a woman, the child that of the child. The women spoke of God's grace while the children gave effect to it within them, revealing to their mothers the mystery of love, and by a double miracle the mothers prophesied under the inspiration of their sons.'*

*'The child leapt in the womb; the mother was filled with the Holy Spirit. The mother was not filled before her son, but once he had been filled with the Holy Spirit, he filled his mother too. John leapt for joy and so did the spirit of Mary. When John leapt, Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit... We do not learn that Mary was then filled with the Holy Spirit, but only that her spirit rejoiced. Her son, who is beyond understanding, was active in his mother in a way beyond our understanding. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit after conceiving a son; Mary was filled before. You are blessed, said Elizabeth, because you have believed.'*<sup>2</sup>

#### Prayer

*'Come, O Lord, in much mercy down into my soul, and take possession and dwell there. A homely mansion for so glorious a majesty.'*<sup>3</sup>

- Augustine of Hippo

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<sup>1</sup> Houston, James M, Letters of Faith Through The Seasons, Colorado Springs, CO: Cook Communications Ministries, 2006, p. 48-49. Reprinted by permission.

<sup>2</sup> Houston, p. 49.