The Greatness of Jesus

It is usually little moments, experiences or phrases in the Christmas season that bring the biggest, most treasured spiritual insights. For me, they might come from a scene in a holiday film, a child’s discovery of Christmas, new insight from a carol, love shown to the needy, or some verse of the Bible that the Holy Spirit uses to shed new light on my soul.

Take Gabriel’s startling word to Mary in Nazareth which I just read this morning. In announcing Jesus’ birth, one of the first things he said to her is that she would bear a son and “he will be great” (Luke 1.32). Stop right there. As Steve Brown so often says —“now you think about that.” I have read that line hundreds of times, but this morning I paused to ponder about the greatness of Jesus. Do you realize how great a savior we have?

Think about the titles and phrases used to describe him in the traditional Christmas texts—he is the long promised savior, the seed of the woman from the line of Jesse, he is Immanuel—God with us, the ultimate king who will reign forever, the long awaited messiah, the logos, the word made flesh, the life and light of the world, the one who will save his people from their sins, the sunrise who visits us from on high. What amazing words! What extraordinary good news!

Think about the descriptive titles and phrases used in the Westminster Shorter Catechism. The Lord Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He is the redeemer of God’s elect. Think of his three offices for us. He is the prophet of prophets. The priest of priests. The king of kings. Think of his two states—the state of his humiliation, i.e. his descent for us, followed by his glorious exaltation. Ponder the implications of that!

Think about the episodes of his ministry. His incarnation is preceded by his ministry as the pre-incarnate Son. His enfleshment is breathtaking. His life is unsurpassed. His alien righteousness is what we desperately need. As the new Adam he shows us what we were meant to be. His willing substitutionary atonement makes our forgiveness, justification and adoption possible. His resurrection is our life giving hope. His ascension, intercession, sending of the Spirit, current reign, promised return and everlasting kingdom give us mind boggling, heart lifting, life empowering hope.

And finally think of his greatness in your own life. Recall the life and light he has brought to you and your family. What would you be without his presence and peace? Think of the grace of salvation, and the grace of his calling to you.

Yes, it is true. He will be great. And that’s just the first thing Gabriel said to Mary.

This Advent season, make sure you lift your head from the books to acknowledge his greatness. Occasionally stop studying the content and THINK about the person you are reading about. PRAY to him. WORSHIP him. EXPRESS your love and adoration. GET CAUGHT UP in the surpassing greatness, glory, and majesty of Jesus Christ. GET LOST in wonder, love and praise. And when the last paper is written and exam essay finished, make sure you have time to ponder his greatness in a family devotion, a personal reading, a mercy ministry outing, a carol sing, a Christmas concert, or in just basic quiet time in the Word. And by all means, don’t be ashamed to name his name and tell someone else just how great he is.

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