

HOPE *in the* WAITING



ADVENT

*Therefore the Lord himself will
give you a sign: The virgin will
conceive and give birth to a son,
and will call him Immanuel.*

— ISAIAH 7:14 (NIV)

Wycliffe®
BibleTranslators



THE SEASON OF HOPE



When you see this icon, pause to celebrate — praise God for how He's making Himself known around the world through His Word, reaching people in the languages and formats they clearly understand.

The Christmas carol “O Holy Night” captures the heart of Advent: “A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices.” But what if hope feels distant? What if waiting has worn you down?

Advent is a season of anticipation — a time to prepare our hearts and celebrate the coming of Christ. It reminds us that hope isn't just wishful thinking; it's a confident expectation rooted in God's faithfulness.

In the Bible, the Hebrew *qavah* and *yachal* and the Greek *elpis* are words for “hope” that convey a sense of active, dynamic trust in God's promises.

Hope is anchored in God's character. The Hebrew word *qavah* means “to wait, look for, hope and expect.” Lamentations 3:25 (NIV) reflects this: “The LORD is good to those whose hope (*qavah*) is in him, to the one who seeks him.” Other translations focus on different meanings — the NKJV translates the phrase as, “those who wait for Him,” while The Message uses “passionately waits” and “quietly hope.” These variations reveal the deep connection between hope and waiting.

Biblical hope is not passive; it's active trust in God's faithfulness during our waiting.

The people of Israel understood waiting. For centuries, they longed for the Messiah. The Old Testament foretold Christ's coming, but between the prophet Malachi and the angel's announcement to Mary, 400 years of silence challenged their faith. Yet even in the waiting, God was working. Waiting is never wasted when it's rooted in trust. Advent reminds us that even in uncertainty, God is near. His faithfulness in the past gives us confidence for the future.

But without Scripture in your language, how would you be able to fully understand God's promises? This is the reality for millions of people around the world today.

Bible translation is about more than words — it's about bringing the hope of Jesus to people in a way they can understand so they too can experience the depth of God's hope.

As we journey through Advent, we'll reflect on those who witnessed Jesus' birth — their waiting, their trust and the hope they found in Him. Their stories remind us that hope is not found in perfect circumstances but in a faithful God.



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HOPE: WAITING ON GOD'S PROMISES — IMMANUEL



Mary's Faith, Trust and Hope

Read Luke 1:26-38

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.

— ISAIAH 7:14 (NIV)

ฉะนั้น พระผู้เป็นเจ้าจะเป็นผู้บัง
บอกเป็นเครื่องหมายให้ท่านเห็น
ดุเกิด พรหมจารีหนึ่งนางจะตั้ง
ครรภ์และให้กำเนิดบุตรชายผู้หนึ่ง
และจะตั้งชื่อบุตรว่า **อิมมานูเอล**.

— อิสยาห์ 7:14 (NIV) IN THAI

| THAILAND

*Cuz a dat, my Boss goin give
you guys one sign. Dis da sign:
goin get one young wahine dat
neva sleep wit one guy, but
layta she goin come hapai, an
bumbye dat wahine goin born
one boy. She goin call him
'Immanuel,' dat mean,
'God stay wit us guys.'*

— ISAIAH 7:14 (HPB) IN HAWAII

PIDGIN / HAWAII, U.S.

Waiting is hard. Whether it's waiting for direction, healing or an answer to prayer, the unknown can feel overwhelming. But Advent reminds us that waiting with hope is never wasted because God always fulfills His promises.

Mary's story is a powerful reminder of this truth. She was young, engaged and had a future planned when an angel appeared, telling her she would give birth to the Son of God. Confused and likely overwhelmed, she asked, "How can this happen?"

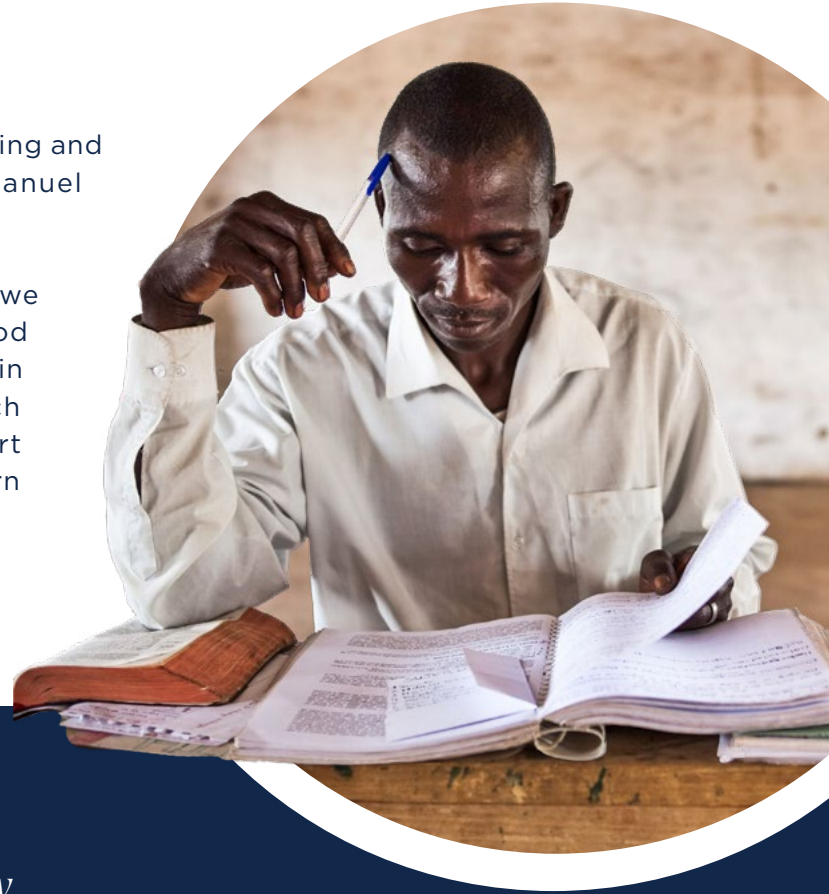
Yet despite the uncertainty, Mary responded in faith and said, "... I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true ..." (Luke 1:38 NLT).

Instead of resisting God's plan, Mary embraced it. Instead of fear, she chose faith. She responded with worship: "... Oh, how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my Savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed" (Luke 1:46-48, NLT). She was one of many people waiting for God to fulfill His promises, and when He did, she couldn't help but celebrate.

The promise of Immanuel, God with us, was being fulfilled. But Jesus didn't come the way people expected. He wasn't born into wealth or royalty but arrived in the most humble of circumstances, fully human, experiencing life as we do.

Jesus understands our struggles, our waiting and our longings firsthand. The name Immanuel encapsulates how Jesus is not distant.

He is with us regardless of the language we use or place we come from. Knowing God and being able to experience His Word in your language makes this truth so much more real. Carey recognized the comfort and belonging found in Christ being born among us and shared her story below.



Story Spotlight: A True Boy

How important was it that Jesus was actually born among us? That His mother didn't have prestigious medical care and the fancy palace rooms available to royalty when it was time for her to give birth?

Jesus' mother gave birth in the dark, dirty, less-than-sanitary conditions that all the other women in that country experienced. This was not a risk-free guaranteed birth for Jesus but a normal, uncomfortable way to enter our world.

In Southeast Asia, I am asked daily (even several times daily) where my boys were born. Before I had children, I never knew what a huge deal this was for the people here. When I was pregnant with our firstborn, it was definitely a step of bold faith to choose to give birth to him in our location. Most other Western missionaries we knew chose to fly to other countries with better medical care and facilities for their children's birth. But I knew God was calling me to stay put and experience childbirth like all the other women here experience it.



Now when strangers on the street ask me where our sons were born, what a joy it is to be able to say, "Right here!" What a blessing it is to see the happiness on people's faces as they exclaim, "Oh, he's a true boy from our country!" or "So that's why he can speak our language so well!" How much more do we long for these people to realize that Jesus Himself is a "true boy from our world" and that He can speak every language so perfectly well. May our sons be a picture of the incarnation and point people here in Southeast Asia to Jesus!

Questions for Reflection:

As you journey through this Advent season, take time each day to reflect on what it means to wait with hope and trust in God's promises. These daily prompts are designed to help you align your heart with God's heart, preparing you to celebrate the arrival of Christ with greater expectation and joy.

DAY 1 | Luke 1:46-47

Going into this Advent season, what does your worship and devotion reveal about your trust in God?

DAY 2 | Matthew 1:23

Reflect on the name "Immanuel," God with us. How does this name shape your view of Jesus and deepen your confidence in Him?

DAY 3 | Isaiah 41:10

How has fear or uncertainty influenced your choices? When fear overwhelms you, how can Mary's trust in God inspire your own faith?

DAY 4 | Psalm 27:14

God invites us to trust Him and His promises. Where might He be inviting you to take a step of faith right now, and how can worship lead your response?

DAY 5 | 1 John 4:9-11

Consider how you can reflect God's love to those around you. What legacy are you building through your choices?

DAY 6 | Psalm 40:1

We all go through different seasons and challenges in life. What are you waiting on from the Lord? How can remembering Immanuel, God with us, impact the season of waiting?

DAY 7 | Romans 10:14-15

Jesus entered our world and lived among us. Why is it important that people know this truth in their own language?

GOD WITH US: HOPE FULFILLED

Jesus is Immanuel, God with us. He is not distant or separate; He intentionally and humbly entered our world. He wasn't born in a palace but among the ordinary — among those waiting. He chose to be fully human, to understand our struggles, challenges and longings firsthand.

Mary was one of many people waiting on the Lord. When the angel showed up with shocking news, Mary responded with faith. She didn't know how Joseph would react. She didn't know what her community would say. But she trusted God anyway. Her worship wasn't just a song; it was a declaration of surrender.

Jesus came to be with us, to know our lives intimately. We are called to carry the message of Jesus to those still waiting to receive it in their own language. Through Bible translation, people can finally encounter the truth that God is with us!

Praise & Prayer

Lord, we praise You for Your faithfulness! You fulfilled Your promise through Mary, bringing salvation to the world through your Son, Jesus. Thank You for the gift of Your presence — Immanuel, God with us. Help us to trust You like Mary did. When we face uncertainty, may we remember Your faithfulness and find comfort in Your promises. Strengthen those still waiting to receive Your Word in their language, and use us to share Your hope this Advent season.

Amen.





HOPE: WAITING THROUGH SEASONS OF UNCERTAINTY — AFRAID



As he considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream. “Joseph, son of David,” the angel said, “do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit.”

— MATTHEW 1:20 (NLT)

Yá José iináidacatéwa imàacáanápíná íichawa úa, quéwa abéeri ángel Dios néeséeri yàanàaca José yàatalé. Yá ángel imàacaca yáawawa José iicácani yáamacani iricuise. Yá ángel iimaca José iri: “José, rey David itaquérinámi, picá cáalu peedáca María piacawéetúapínáca úara, udéericucáiná sùmai Espiritu Santo íiwitáise iyú.

— SAN MATEO 1:20 (PIO) IN
PIAPOCO | COLOMBIA

Joseph’s Courage in the Face of Fear

Read Matthew 1:18-25

Joseph’s world was anything but calm in the months leading up to Jesus’ birth. Faced with an unexpected and uncertain future, he had a choice: Would he give in to fear or trust God’s plan? At first, Joseph decided to quietly end his engagement to Mary, hoping to spare her from public shame. But in a dream, an angel spoke to him and confirmed that Mary’s pregnancy was from God: “Joseph, son of David ... do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife. For the child within her was conceived by the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 1:20b-c, NLT).

Joseph responded with obedience. He set aside fear, trusted God’s word and took Mary as his wife. His response shows us that our choices can shape our hearts and lives. Rather than reacting with anger, he chose compassion. He risked his reputation and responded with courage. And he believed God’s promise, even when it seemed impossible.

This story reminds us that hope doesn’t come from having all the answers. It comes from trusting the One who does. Joseph’s obedience didn’t remove all the unknowns from his life, but it did anchor him in God’s faithfulness. In the same

*Trusting God
with our present
gives us hope
for the future.*



*Dopa lao masoo kateamopa,
Kamongonya enjele mende
ipupala kombeame baa
lamaiyoo, “Dapita ikiningi
Josepe, Marianya inginya wane
pilyamo doko Oli Spiritame
maipyana, Maria baa embanya
enda jina lao lanyalanya paka
nakaeyape.*

— MATYU 1:20 (ENGA) IN ENGA |
PAPUA NEW GUINEA

way, when we surrender our fears to God, we step into a hope that’s stronger than our circumstances.

Trusting God with our present gives us hope for the future.

This Advent season, what might God be asking you to surrender to Him? What fears or obstacles could be keeping you from going “all in” in your walk with Him?

All around the world, many communities still face a major obstacle to experiencing faith in God: They don’t yet have access to His Word in their own language. Joseph’s faith allowed him to play a role in the fulfillment of God’s promise; we also have the opportunity to be part of God’s promise to bring His Word to every nation and language.

When a community receives Scripture, they often host celebrations to commemorate the event. Russ Hersman attended one of these celebrations for the Keliko people of South Sudan and was reminded of what it means to be all in for God.



Story Spotlight: I’m In, Lord

In a church in the world’s second-largest refugee settlement, the Keliko believers gave whatever they had — and more. Bidi Bidi is a sprawling refugee community in northern Uganda where more than 250,000 South Sudanese settled after fleeing ethnic violence in their country. We were there to witness the dedication and launch of the Keliko New Testament.

The Keliko church in Bidi Bidi invited us to worship with them in their sanctuary. Hundreds gathered inside and hundreds more gathered outside. They rejoiced and thanked God for the Scriptures now available in the Keliko language. In response to the offering, they poured down the aisle, dancing their way to a large basket that began to fill and overflow with their gifts. How did a refugee community who has so little develop such generosity? There were many who truly had no coin or bill in the basket. But still they put their hand into the basket. It was as if they were saying, “I’m in. I give myself to God as my offering of praise and sacrifice.”

I had a 10,000 Ugandan shilling note with me that day, worth about three dollars. As I placed it in the offering basket, I realized that my hand needed to follow the note. “I’m in, Lord.”



Questions for Reflection:

As you journey through this Advent season, take time each day to reflect on what it means to wait with hope and trust in God's promises. These daily prompts are designed to help you align your heart with God's heart, preparing you to celebrate the arrival of Christ with greater expectation and joy.

DAY 1 | Matthew 1:20-21

What emotions do you think Mary and Joseph felt when God revealed His plan to them? Consider their mix of fear, awe and trust. How do Joseph's responses encourage or challenge you in your circumstances?

DAY 2 | Isaiah 26:4

Joseph risked his reputation to follow God's direction. How can his obedience inspire you to act boldly, even when it's difficult?

DAY 3 | Lamentations 3:21-24

How can holding onto God's promises and meditating on His character give you assurance in uncertainty?

DAY 4 | Romans 15:13

How has God been faithful in your past? What does it look like to pause and recognize His faithfulness in your daily life?

DAY 5 | 2 Corinthians 1:3-4

Who in your life needs encouragement this season? How can you share the hope you've received with someone who needs to be reminded that God is near?

DAY 6 | Colossians 3:16-17

The Keliko believers waited years for Scripture in their own language. When it finally arrived, they responded with worship and surrender. What has God already done in your life that you can worship Him for today?

DAY 7 | Matthew 16:24-25

The Keliko church put their hands in the offering basket as a sign of full surrender. What would it look like for you to be "all in" with God? Is there an area of your life He is calling you to trust Him completely?

A RESPONSE OF FAITH

Bible translation helps people around the world understand the hope found in Christ. The Keliko celebration marked the result of years of prayer, hard work and steady faith in God's promises.

The community's response of putting their hands in the basket mirrored Joseph's surrender to God's plan. When we believe that God is faithful, our waiting turns into worship and our hope leads to action. Russ was convicted by the faith and celebration of the Keliko. When we surrender all of ourselves to God, He uses us in ways we couldn't have imagined. Think about it: Joseph's willingness to trust God allowed him to be part of God's plan of redemption for the whole world!

And that story of redemption continues today through the work of Bible translation. God is drawing people to Himself when they read, see or hear His Word in their language. Each new Scripture translation brings the Good News to people who have never had access to it before. Praise God for His faithfulness from generation to generation!



Praise & Prayer

Lord, we praise You for Your faithfulness! Thank You for the gift of Your presence. Help us to trust You in our own seasons of waiting and uncertainty. When fear rises, remind us of Your promises. When the future feels overwhelming, strengthen our faith. Fill our hearts with the hope that comes from knowing You are always working, even when we cannot see it. May we hold onto You, wait with expectation and share Your hope with those still longing to know You. Strengthen those still waiting for Your Word in their language, and use us to be part of bringing Your promises to those who need them.

Amen.



HOPE: WAITING AS AN INVITATION FOR FINDING JOY — ASTONISHED



All who heard the shepherds' story were **astonished**.

— LUKE 2:18 (NLT)

'Bá rī pi kâ tā 'bá kâbîlô úcé' bá rī pi ní ũlūú 'dīri yij', sē kōpi ní āyāngará.

— LUKĀ 2:18 (KBO)

IN KELIKO | SOUTH SUDAN

Kaneru etaynrim modo
aguehobyry idanipyry modo
toenzepa kehoem myakâwâm
âsewânilymo.

— LUCAS 2:18 (BKQ)

IN BAKAIRI | BRAZIL

The Excitement of Ordinary Shepherds

Read Luke 2:8-15

Have you ever felt unqualified for what God has called you to do? You're not alone. Throughout Scripture, God works through ordinary people — like the shepherds who first heard of Jesus' birth. On a quiet night outside Bethlehem, shepherds stood watch over their sheep. "Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified ..." (Luke 2:9, NLT).

These humble people became the first to hear history's greatest news: The Messiah was born! They rushed to see Jesus and couldn't keep the news to themselves. They boldly proclaimed Jesus' birth, and those who heard their story marveled at it (Luke 2:18).

For centuries, God's people had been waiting for the promised Savior. But that night, the waiting ended, and hope was fulfilled. The shepherds' joy was founded on the overwhelming realization that God had kept His promise.

Like the shepherds, you have been given the opportunity to share the Good News with others!

It's easy to assume God would only choose the qualified or powerful to be His messengers. Yet, He often works through those who feel unworthy. He called Moses, who doubted his speaking ability (Exodus 4:10). He honored a rejected woman who anointed Jesus (Luke 7). He transformed Paul, a former persecutor, into a messenger of the gospel (Acts 22). He welcomed children when others dismissed them (Matthew 19:14).



God equips those He calls who are faithful to answer. He is uniquely preparing you to share His Word and participate in the work He is doing around the world.

On that night, hope was no longer a distant promise for the shepherds — it had come to earth in the form of the Messiah. The shepherds responded right away; they went to see Jesus, and they couldn't keep the news to themselves. Their waiting turned into worship, and their ordinary lives were now filled with purpose.

You've been entrusted with the Good News. Even if you feel unqualified or unsure, God invites you to step forward in faith just like the shepherds did.

Bible translation brings the hope and joy of the gospel to people still waiting to receive it in their language.

Below, Elizabeth Pflederer shares her own experience with her husband, Sam, of learning to wait with hope, discovering the beauty of trusting God's timing — even when His answers feel delayed.

Like the shepherds, you have been given the opportunity to share the Good News with others!



Story Spotlight: In God's Timing

We found ourselves back in Africa, each Sunday standing in a different church. Sam would preach that sermon, the one about the widow who pestered the judge with her problem until she received the answer she wanted. He'd flip to Luke 18 and share the old Sunday school lesson: God gives one of three answers to our prayers — “yes,” “no” or “wait.” He might withhold the thing we ask for, but He will not keep putting us off. Our response must always be faith, a persistent reach for God, even when we don't have what we ask for.

No one knew that the truth Sam was preaching in public was the truth with which we were wrestling in secret. I listened to him say it six Sundays before I truly began to hear: “He delays, but He does not forget.” Because when you've badgered God and still come up empty, you can start to wonder, “How long, oh Lord? Have You forgotten to be gracious?”

One year as we approached Advent, Sam and I were full of expectation for our first child. We were even more full of the Christ child, given to us first and always. He is the child who changed everything — God's very best gift, millennia delayed. Messiah was guaranteed from the moment the whole “good” thing fell. The stain of sin was still spreading in the garden when God promised that the woman's offspring would crush the serpent's head. But in the span of ticking centuries and a promise long unfulfilled, God only said, “In its time, I will do it swiftly.” It is delay that creates anticipation, ache, expectation, hope.

And hope is always Him. Him coming. The assurance that whatever is hopeless is not the end, because Jesus' ending for this story is a very good one. We wait in hope — that is to say with expectation, with absolute confidence. Hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have?

Jesus, You are the child born to us. Let us surrender to your delay because You're the answer we've been waiting for. Our hope is in You.



Questions for Reflection:

As you journey through this Advent season, take time each day to reflect on what it means to wait with hope and trust in God's promises. These daily prompts are designed to help you align your heart with God's heart, preparing you to celebrate the arrival of Christ with greater expectation and joy.

DAY 1 | Exodus 4:10-12

God chooses ordinary people — shepherds, carpenters, fishermen and unlikely messengers — to carry His message. How can that knowledge give you hope in the midst of your own circumstances?

DAY 2 | Luke 2:10-11

The shepherds' initial response to the angel was fear, but it quickly turned to action and joy. How might God be calling you to overcome fears and step forward in faith?

DAY 3 | Romans 8:24-25

The waiting for the Messiah was over — He had come! Today there might be dreams that are delayed in your own life. How can the shepherds' response to Christ's birth encourage you to trust God right now?

DAY 4 | Matthew 28:19-20

The shepherds couldn't keep the good news of Jesus' birth to themselves; they boldly proclaimed it to everyone they met. How does knowing Christ inspire you to share His love with others?

DAY 5 | Acts 4:20

After waiting so long for the Messiah, the shepherds overflowed with passion and joy. Have you ever encountered someone with that same joy for sharing God's Word? How did their passion inspire or challenge you?

DAY 6 | Luke 2:10-12

Why do you think God chose this specific time, place and these shepherds to proclaim the news of Jesus' birth? What does this reveal about His heart for the world and the way He works?

DAY 7 | Matthew 5:14-16

Bible translation ensures that people around the world can know Jesus in a language that touches their hearts. How can you use your unique gifts to advocate for this work?

GOD IS HERE! PROMISES ARE FULFILLED AND JOY IS PROCLAIMED

The shepherds waited for the promised Messiah, and when He came, they couldn't contain their joy.

Elizabeth's story, too, reminds us that God never forgets His promises. Even when the waiting feels long, His timing is always perfect. Waiting is hard; it might feel like God has forgotten you. But in those seasons of longing and anticipation, we can recognize that God is working.

Like the shepherds, we're invited to respond to God's faithfulness with joy! Jesus is the fulfillment of every promise, and the good news of His birth is still changing lives today.



Praise & Prayer

Lord, we praise You for choosing the unexpected and ordinary people to carry Your extraordinary message. Just as You called the shepherds to proclaim Christ's birth, You call us to share Your hope with the world. Help us to trust in Your perfect timing, even when we feel unqualified or the timing feels delayed. Fill us with the same joy and urgency the shepherds had so that we may boldly share Your love with those still waiting for it. Strengthen those who are longing to receive Scripture in their language, and use us to bring the Good News to everyone waiting for it. In every season of waiting, let our hope be found in You alone.

Amen.





HOPE: WAITING FOR ANSWERS AND PRAISING GOD — GLORY



*“Glory to God in highest
heaven, and peace on
earth to those with whom
God is pleased.”*

— LUKE 2:14 (NLT)

*“Otuto dīrj Chineke n’ebe
kachasj elu nke eluigwe. Udo
n’elu ūwa nye ndj niile ihe ha dī
Chineke ezi mma.”*

— LUK 2:14 (BIU)

IN IGBO | NIGERIA

*Glory to God in the
highest, and on earth peace,
good will toward men.*

— LUKE 2:14 ASLV

IN AMERICAN SIGN LANGUAGE
VERSION | UNITED STATES

Praising God and Proclaiming His Name!

Read Luke 2:8-15

(Engage again with this passage, using a different Bible version this time.)

Have you ever gone caroling, lifting your voice to celebrate Jesus’ birth? In a way, that echoes what happened the night Christ was born, when a host of angels appeared to the shepherds, proclaiming: “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased” (Luke 2:14, NLT).

Throughout Scripture, angels serve God by praising Him, obeying His commands and delivering His messages. In the Christmas story, they reassured Mary, Joseph and the shepherds, reminding them that God was with them. Their words didn’t remove the challenges these individuals faced, but the angels gave them hope and strength to trust God’s plan.

The story of Jesus’ birth is filled with angelic encounters that reveal God’s love and faithfulness. Gabriel announced John the Baptist’s birth to Zechariah, preparing the way for Jesus (Luke 1:11-17). He then appeared to Mary, telling her she would bear the Son of God. Though afraid, she responded in faith, praising God for His promises (Luke 1:26-31, 46-55).

An angel reassured Joseph in a dream, urging him to take Mary as his wife. Joseph chose trust over fear, stepping into God’s plan (Matthew 1:20-21). A host of angels then proclaimed Christ’s birth to shepherds, and they became the first to share about the Messiah’s birth (Luke 2:8-14). Each person’s encounter with the angels reminds us that God works through ordinary people and does extraordinary things.

The angels' proclamation really is good news for us all: The gospel is for all people. Bible translation makes it possible for everyone to encounter Christ in a language that touches their heart.

When people experience the story of Jesus' birth in their language, it becomes real and life-changing. Christmas proves God keeps His promises and will return to complete His work. Until He comes back, we are invited to find our hope in Him in seasons of waiting and to share this hope with others. Supporting Bible translation advances Jesus' call to make His name known among all nations (Matthew 28:19).

Below, Belmar Vallecillo shares her story about how listening to the Holy Spirit led to an unexpected moment — and a powerful reminder that God is always at work.



Story Spotlight: Stop, Listen and Go

I was in Costa Rica leading a missions team made up of 16 teenagers. My days were filled with feeding hungry teenagers, coordinating our very busy schedule of traveling around the different cities, solving problems and making sure the kids stayed focused on what we were there to do (which is no easy task). It was great to see how the life-changing message of Jesus was changing the hearts of people every day.

One night we were visiting a local church that had given us the task of running their service. I was so involved in running around making sure that everything was in place that I was not seeing what God was doing.

I felt that God wanted me to just stand back and see Him work in the life of every single person who was in the room. I saw my teenagers out in the crowd praying over members of the congregation. The worship was on fire!

As I looked around the church, I noticed a young lady standing by herself. I immediately started trying to catch one of my team members' attention to go pray for her. But not one of them could see me. Then I felt it strong in my heart — God said, "I'm sending you to pray with her."

Without hesitation, I walked right up to her and laid my hand on her shoulder as I began to pray for her. Within seconds she turned around, hugged me tight and began to sob on my shoulder. I started to pray for her as if she were my own child.

After a few minutes, she looked into my eyes and told me that her mother had recently passed away, and she had been praying for God to allow her to feel her mother's touch just one more time. She told me, "When you touched my shoulders, I felt it was a mother's touch. And as you hugged me, I felt safe in a mother's arms. God sent you to me!" We hugged again as I told her that I would always cover her in prayer and reminded her that God's love is with her.

Always remember to stop and listen to where God wants to send you next, and be ready to go.



Questions for Reflection:

As you reflect on the angelic proclamations and the joy of Christ's coming, let these questions help you listen, respond and live with hope this Advent season.

DAY 1 | Luke 1:30-31

Think back to a time when God encouraged you in uncertainty. How has Scripture brought you peace and reminded you of God's presence?

DAY 2 | Isaiah 9:6

Like the angels, we're called to bring the hope of Christ to others. Who might need a reminder of God's promises in your life today?

DAY 3 | Psalm 103:1

How can you create space for God's voice in this season? Is there something you need to do — or not do — to better notice where He's at work?

DAY 4 | Acts 8:29-31

As we saw in Belmar's story, staying sensitive to the Holy Spirit often begins with small nudges. Where have you sensed God prompting you to act, speak or pray lately?

DAY 5 | Matthew 5:16

How can your words and actions this Advent bring praise to God and point others to Him?

DAY 6 | John 1:14

When people encounter the story of Jesus in their language, it becomes deeply personal to them. How does Bible translation help people not only know about Jesus but experience Him?

DAY 7 | Matthew 28:19-20

As this Advent comes to a close, what next step can you take to be God's messenger, sharing His love and Word with someone still waiting?

PROCLAIMING HOPE IN EVERY LANGUAGE

The angels praised God and proclaimed Jesus' birth with joy and urgency. They announced peace on earth and pointed people to the Savior.

Advent reminds us that because Jesus came, we have hope. And now we're called to share it.

We get the chance to be part of what God is doing around the world — through our prayers, action and advocacy — so others may know that Immanuel, God with us, has come. When people receive God's Word in their own language, the story of Jesus becomes personal to them and their lives are changed.

Belmar's story reminds us that God still sends His people today. Whether He's sending us across a room or across the world, our obedience can be the answer to someone's prayer.

As we celebrate Christ's arrival this Advent and look forward to His return, let's live like people who've been changed by this great news. May we respond with joy like the shepherds, trust God fully like Mary and Joseph, and praise God boldly like the angels. God is calling us all to be part of His global mission, so let's be ready to go wherever He leads us.



Praise & Prayer

Lord, we thank You for the wonder of Advent and the message of peace the angels proclaimed on the night of Jesus' birth. You broke the silence with good news — news that still brings light to a weary world. Thank You for entrusting ordinary people, like shepherds and us, with a message so extraordinary. Help us to praise You freely and follow You faithfully. As the angels declared Your glory, may we live in a way that points others to Your presence and peace. Teach us to listen for Your voice and trust Your leading. May our words and actions reflect the joy and hope found in Christ.

Amen.



UNTIL ALL NATIONS WORSHIP



This Advent, we've reflected on the hope found in Christ — the hope fulfilled at His birth and the hope we hold as we wait for His return. Advent invites us to wait with expectation, not passively but anchored in God's faithfulness. Even in weariness, He is near us and at work. Mary's example reminds us that hope is rooted in trust. Joseph shows us that surrendering our fear creates space for God's plan. The shepherds remind us that our waiting can turn to worship. And the angels call us to proclaim God's glory and join His mission to bring hope to every heart through His Word.

Yet millions of people are still waiting to experience that message in a language they understand. Communities like the Isnag in the Philippines have received all of God's Word, while others — like the Keliko of South Sudan — are still on the journey.

Let's keep sharing Scripture until no one is left waiting for the Good News and all may know the hope of Christ.

Praise & Prayer

God of all nations, thank You for the hope that was fulfilled in Jesus and is still unfolding through Your Word. You are faithful to every promise and invite us into Your global mission. Send us with boldness and love. Use our lives, prayers and gifts to bring Your Word to those still waiting. May the joy of Christ shape our hearts and overflow to others as we live for Your glory.

Amen.

