

THE
JOY
OF
CHRISTMAS STORIES

DR. BRIAN BENNETT, LEAD PASTOR



SERMON NOTES
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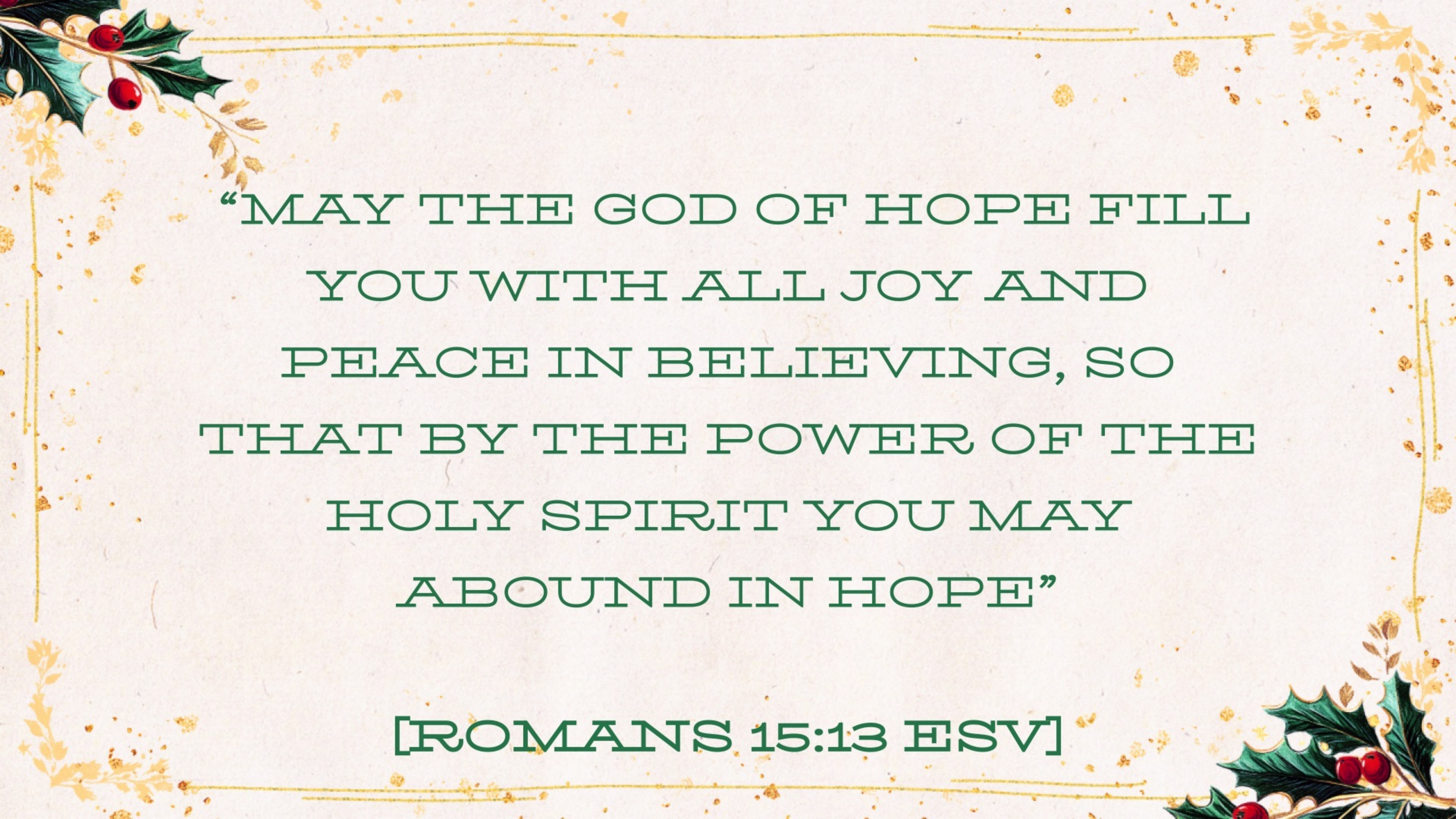
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“MAY THE GOD OF HOPE FILL
YOU WITH ALL JOY AND
PEACE IN BELIEVING, SO
THAT BY THE POWER OF THE
HOLY SPIRIT YOU MAY
ABOUND IN HOPE”

[ROMANS 15:13 ESV]





“INASMUCH AS MANY HAVE UNDERTAKEN TO
COMPILE A NARRATIVE OF THE THINGS THAT HAVE
BEEN ACCOMPLISHED AMONG US, **2** JUST AS THOSE
WHO FROM THE BEGINNING WERE EYEWITNESSES
AND MINISTERS OF THE WORD HAVE DELIVERED
THEM TO US, **3** IT SEEMED GOOD TO ME ALSO,
HAVING FOLLOWED ALL THINGS CLOSELY FOR SOME
TIME PAST, TO WRITE AN ORDERLY ACCOUNT FOR
YOU, MOST EXCELLENT THEOPHILUS, **4** THAT YOU
MAY HAVE CERTAINTY CONCERNING THE THINGS
YOU HAVE BEEN TAUGHT. “

[LUKE 1:1-4 ESV]





5 IN THE DAYS OF HEROD, KING OF JUDEA, THERE WAS A PRIEST NAMED ZECHARIAH, OF THE DIVISION OF ABIJAH. AND HE HAD A WIFE FROM THE DAUGHTERS OF AARON, AND HER NAME WAS ELIZABETH. **6** AND THEY WERE BOTH RIGHTEOUS BEFORE GOD, WALKING BLAMELESSLY IN ALL THE COMMANDMENTS AND STATUTES OF THE LORD. **7** BUT THEY HAD NO CHILD, BECAUSE ELIZABETH WAS BARREN, AND BOTH WERE ADVANCED IN YEARS. **8** NOW WHILE HE WAS SERVING AS PRIEST BEFORE GOD WHEN HIS DIVISION WAS ON DUTY,

[LUKE 1:5-17 ESV]





9 ACCORDING TO THE CUSTOM OF THE PRIESTHOOD, HE WAS CHOSEN BY LOT TO ENTER THE TEMPLE OF THE LORD AND BURN INCENSE. **10** AND THE WHOLE MULTITUDE OF THE PEOPLE WERE PRAYING OUTSIDE AT THE HOUR OF INCENSE. **11** AND THERE APPEARED TO HIM AN ANGEL OF THE LORD STANDING ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ALTAR OF INCENSE. **12** AND ZECHARIAH WAS TROUBLED WHEN HE SAW HIM, AND FEAR FELL UPON HIM. **13** BUT THE ANGEL SAID TO HIM, "DO NOT BE AFRAID ZECHARIAH, FOR YOUR PRAYER HAS BEEN HEARD,

[LUKE 1:1-4 ESV]



AND YOUR WIFE ELIZABETH WILL BEAR YOU A SON,
AND YOU SHALL CALL HIS NAME JOHN. **14** AND YOU
WILL HAVE JOY AND GLADNESS, AND MANY WILL
REJOICE AT HIS BIRTH, **15** FOR HE WILL BE GREAT
BEFORE THE LORD. AND HE MUST NOT DRINK WINE
OR STRONG DRINK, AND HE WILL BE FILLED WITH
THE HOLY SPIRIT, EVEN FROM HIS MOTHER'S
WOMB. **16** AND HE WILL TURN MANY OF THE
CHILDREN OF ISRAEL TO THE LORD THEIR GOD,

[LUKE 1:1-4 ESV]



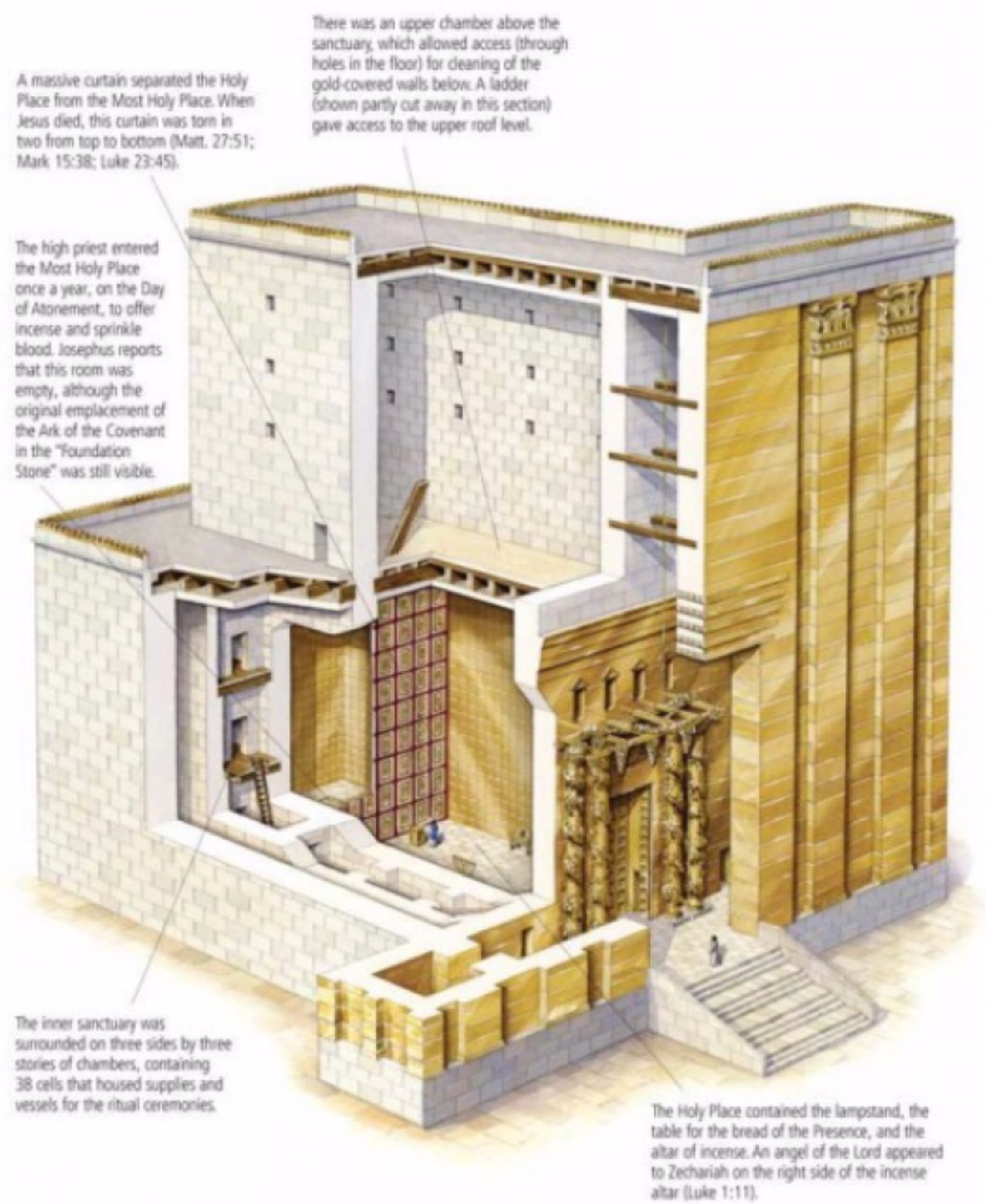
17 AND HE WILL GO BEFORE HIM IN THE SPIRIT AND
POWER OF ELIJAH, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE
FATHERS TO THE CHILDREN, AND THE
DISOBEDIENT TO THE WISDOM OF THE JUST, TO
MAKE READY FOR THE LORD A PEOPLE PREPARED”

[LUKE 1:1-4 ESV]



ORIGIN STORIES HELP US
REDISCOVER OUR WONDER AT
GOD'S PRESENCE.

[LUKE 1:1-25 ESV]



A massive curtain separated the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. When Jesus died, this curtain was torn in two from top to bottom (Matt. 27:51; Mark 15:38; Luke 23:45).

There was an upper chamber above the sanctuary which allowed access (through holes in the floor) for cleaning of the gold-covered walls below. A ladder (shown partly cut away in this section) gave access to the upper roof level.

The high priest entered the Most Holy Place once a year, on the Day of Atonement, to offer incense and sprinkle blood. Josephus reports that this room was empty, although the original emplacement of the Ark of the Covenant in the "Foundation Stone" was still visible.



The inner sanctuary was surrounded on three sides by three stories of chambers, containing 38 cells that housed supplies and vessels for the ritual ceremonies.

The Holy Place contained the lampstand, the table for the bread of the Presence, and the altar of incense. An angel of the Lord appeared to Zechariah on the right side of the incense altar (Luke 1:11).





THE INTERSECTION OF OUR
STORIES AND GOD'S PRESENCE IS
OFTEN ORDINARY LIFE.

[LUKE 1:1-25 ESV]





“GOD REGULARLY WORKS THROUGH
ORDINARY PEOPLE DOING WHAT
THEY NORMALLY DO, WHO, WITH A
MIXTURE OF HALF-FAITH AND
DEVOTION, ARE HOLDING
THEMSELVES READY FOR WHAT
GOD HAS IN MIND”

- N.T. WRIGHT





“18 AND ZECHARIAH SAID TO THE ANGEL, “HOW SHALL I KNOW THIS? FOR I AM AN OLD MAN, AND MY WIFE IS ADVANCED IN YEARS.” **19** AND THE ANGEL ANSWERED HIM, “I AM GABRIEL. I STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF GOD, AND I WAS SENT TO SPEAK TO YOU AND TO BRING YOU THIS GOOD NEWS. **20** AND BEHOLD, YOU WILL BE SILENT AND UNABLE TO SPEAK UNTIL THE DAY THAT THESE THINGS TAKE PLACE, BECAUSE YOU DID NOT BELIEVE MY WORDS, WHICH WILL BE FULFILLED IN THEIR TIME.”

[LUKE 1:18-25 ESV]



21 AND THE PEOPLE WERE WAITING FOR ZECHARIAH, AND THEY WERE WONDERING AT HIS DELAY IN THE TEMPLE. **22** AND WHEN HE CAME OUT, HE WAS UNABLE TO SPEAK TO THEM, AND THEY REALIZED THAT HE HAD SEEN A VISION IN THE TEMPLE. AND HE KEPT MAKING SIGNS TO THEM AND REMAINED MUTE. **23** AND WHEN HIS TIME OF SERVICE WAS ENDED, HE WENT TO HIS HOME.

[LUKE 1:18-25 ESV]





24 AFTER THESE DAYS HIS WIFE ELIZABETH
CONCEIVED, AND FOR FIVE MONTHS SHE KEPT
HERSELF HIDDEN, SAYING, **25** “THUS THE LORD HAS
DONE FOR ME IN THE DAYS WHEN HE LOOKED ON
ME, TO TAKE AWAY MY REPROACH AMONG PEOPLE.”

[LUKE 1:18-25 ESV]





**RESPONDING WITHOUT FAITH:
“HOW SHALL I KNOW THIS?”**





“16 AND HE WILL TURN MANY OF THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL TO THE LORD THEIR GOD, 17 AND HE WILL GO BEFORE HIM IN THE SPIRIT AND POWER OF ELIJAH, TO TURN THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS TO THE CHILDREN, AND THE DISOBEDIENT TO THE WISDOM OF THE JUST, TO MAKE READY FOR THE LORD A PEOPLE PREPARED”

[LUKE 1:16-17 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!”

[LUKE 1:26-31 ESV]



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.”

[LUKE 1:26-31 ESV]





GOD'S PRESENCE WILL ALWAYS
TURN US TOWARDS JESUS.

[LUKE 1:26-34 ESV]



WE ARE TO BE A PEOPLE THAT
TAKES OUR FIRST STEP
FORWARD TOWARDS 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?”

[LUKE 1:32-34 ESV]



RESPONDING WITH FAITH:
“HOW WILL THIS BE?”



“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.”

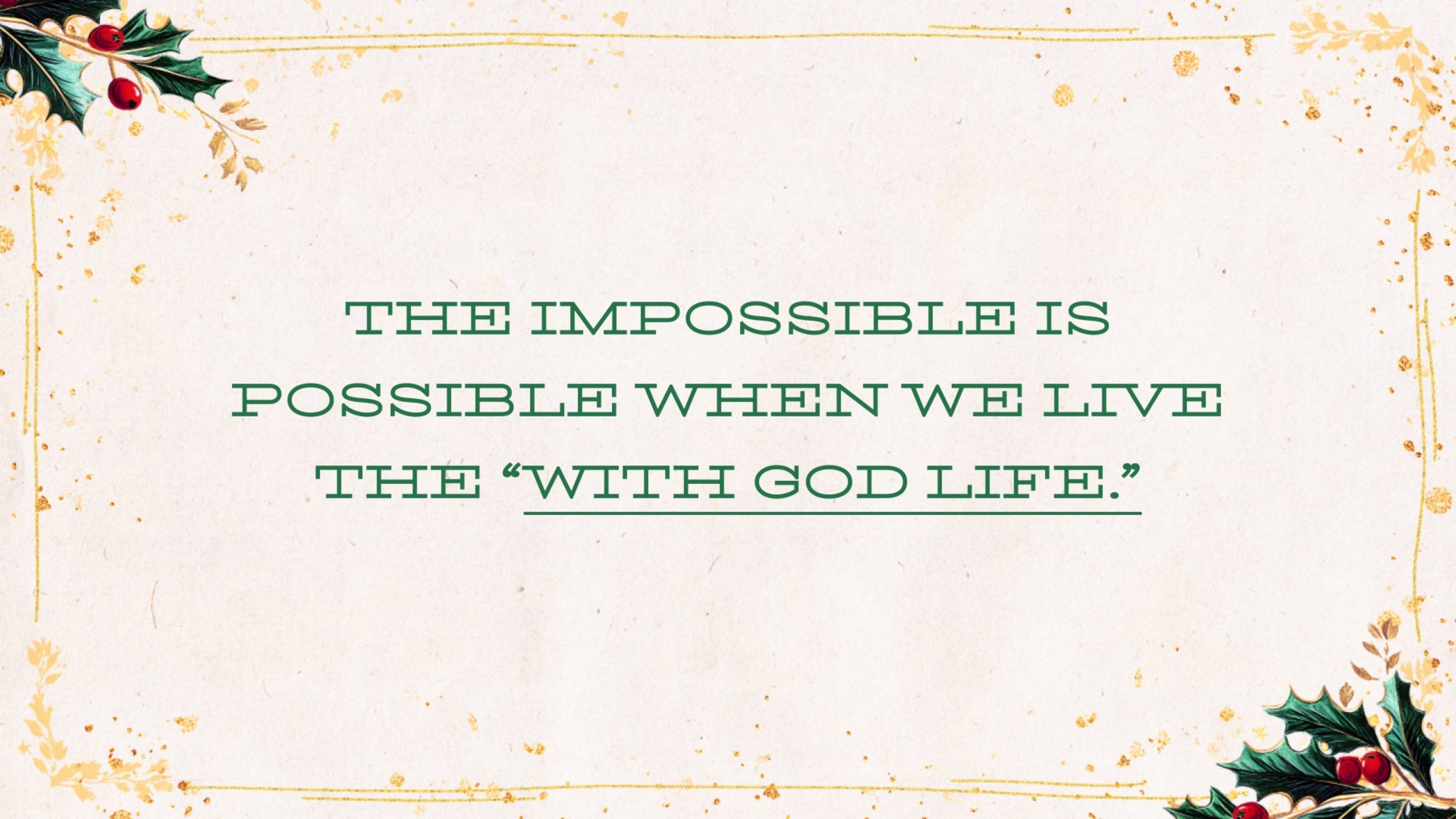
[LUKE 1:35-38 ESV]



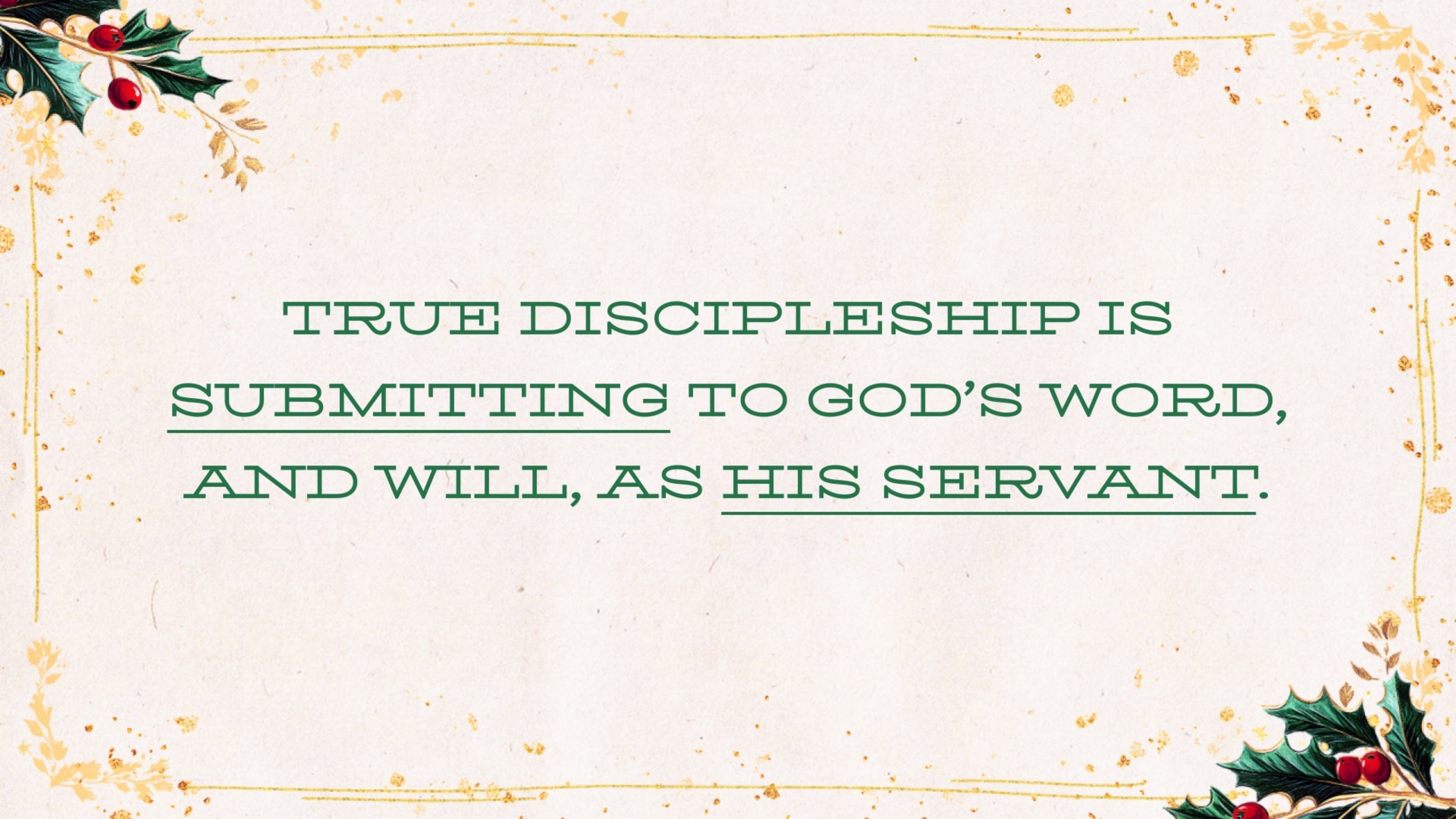


GOD'S PRESENCE PROVIDES
EVERYTHING WE NEED AS WE
TRUST AND OBEY.

[LUKE 1:35-38 ESV]



THE IMPOSSIBLE IS
POSSIBLE WHEN WE LIVE
THE “WITH GOD LIFE.”



TRUE DISCIPLESHIP IS
SUBMITTING TO GOD'S WORD,
AND WILL, AS HIS SERVANT.



NEXT STEP
QUESTIONS:

WILL YOU TURN TOWARDS JESUS
TODAY AND DECIDE TO FOLLOW HIM?

Say Yes to Jesus • Get Baptized • Tell Your story

I HAVE DECIDED

PATHWAYVB.COM/DECIDED





NEXT STEP
QUESTIONS:

HOW CAN YOU TAKE TIME TO BE IN HIS
PRESENCE AND DO LIFE “WITH GOD”?



NEXT STEP
QUESTIONS:

WILL YOU MAKE TIME TO COME
INTO HIS PRESENCE AND SAY, "LET
IT BE TO ME"?



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