

Well, here we are, **one** week away from Christmas morning.
Jesus is coming, whether we are **ready** or **not**.

We hear Gabriel's announcement to Mary that,

- **Despite** her initial **protests**, she **will** give birth
- To the child whose **kingdom** will have **no** end.

Through this **humble young girl**

- God **chose** to come among us,
- That we might **know** his love.

I don't know what is more **startling** here,

- The **magnitude** of **God's love** for us
- Or the **strange manner**
- In which God chose **to accomplish his task**.

The **church word** for this is "**Incarnation**".

- But, you will not find the word "**incarnation**"
- In **Luke's gospel** and the phrase
- May **confuse** more than it **clarifies**.

Incarnation means that God **became a human being**;

- That God **became flesh and blood**
- That God, who seemed to stand **outside** of **time**,
- **Enters** into time;

That God who is **all-powerful** becomes **all-vulnerable**;

- All for **our** sake

How can **we be afraid of a God** who wants to be **God-with-us?**"

- That is what **Emmanuel** means- "**God with us.**"

But this **beautiful passage**, that so **impacts** our **theology** of **God's goodness**,

- Has other **big implications** for **us** as well.

The question here that **no one seems to be asking** is:

- "What happened to **Mary's life?**"

I would describe what happened here like this:

- **Mary's life**, as she knew it, was **interrupted**.

I don't know **what Mary was up to**;

- Maybe she was **planning her wedding**,
- But I think its safe to say that **the Annunciation**
- Came as an **interruption**-
- Something that was **not** part of **her life plan**.

Mary's **interruption**, significantly, was **a child** –

- And a child, of course, is **synonymous** with **interruption**.

Mary responds to this **interruption** with a line

- That is repeated in the church as a **prayer**.
- **“Let it be to me according to your will.”**

Because of this response – many hold Mary up

- As be **a model of the Christian life-**
- Someone who **heard God’s word** and **submitted to it.**

I have wondered what

- **I would have said** in **Mary’s shoes.**

I guess the first question really should be

- “Would we even **hear** or **be aware** of God **communicating** with us?”

Knowing how we cling to **our plans,**

- One answer might be **“Excuse me?”** or
- **“UM, thank you, but no thank you.”**

The fact is that most of us **are not real keen**

- On having our **plans interrupted** by **anybody,**
- Including **God.**

Even **small interruptions** –

- Say, the knock of an **unannounced visitor**
- During a time when one **is intent**
- On getting **something done-**

- Can be **irksome**.

When these **interruptions** turn out to **bear fruit**,

- **They can** give us **glimmers** of **self-awareness**.

They can show us that being a **prideful control freaks**

- Who **dare to think** that **whatever I've got on tap**
- For the day is **supremely important**,
- Is not **really a good way to live**.

But what about those **big huge life interruptions**,

- Those times when the **whole master plan**
- Gets thrown **out the window?**

I'm talking about

- **Births, deaths, unexpected career changes,**
- **Major illnesses, geographical moves,**
- Really **any life-shaking** events
- That were **not in the cards**.

How is God involved in these things?

- **Is God involved** in the **good** the **bad** and the **ugly?**

And when these unscripted events happen

Most of us don't feel like

- We have been **properly consulted**

- **Prior** to these **interruptions** as was Mary.

Without that **consultation pre- interruption**,

- How can we be **sure** God is involved?

Many of you have heard me **repeat**

- **Paula D'Arcy's** wonderful line-
- **"God comes to us disguised as our life."**

How else could God come to us?

Well that **bit of truth** applies

- To **life's interruptions as well.**
- So whether we feel like God
- Has **consulted with us** or not,
- We'd better be on **the lookout** for God **in all things**,
- Including those often **unpleasant interruptions.**

I read a book a few years ago that speaks **to life interruptions.**

It tells the **true story**

- Of **young men** whose plane crashed in the Andes, stranding them for **75 days at 13,000** feet **during winter.**
- Needless to say these guys **suffered tremendously** and were reduced to doing the **unthinkable** to survive.

The writer **lost his Mother and sister** in the crash

- Tells of **constantly thinking**
- **“What kind of God could be so cruel**
- **To put us through such an ordeal?”**

Stranded on that mountain by an **interruption**

- Of the most **horrid** kind,
- He had an understandably bad case
- Of the **coulda- woulda- shouldas**.

He found himself **speculating wildly** about what **should** have been.

- “Somewhere out there the woman I **should marry** was living her life, moving toward the time when our future **should** have begun. But now when she reached that point, **I would not be there**. Our children would **never** be born.”

He **could not help but feel**

- That the **accident** and the **mountains**
- Had **stolen his life from him**.

Even **after he was rescued** and back home,

- For a long time, he could not shake the feeling
- That his life-plan had not **only been interrupted**,
- But **destroyed**.

The awesome part of the book is when

- He realizes that the **disaster of which he was a part**
- Was not a singularly a **horrible mistake of fate**
- Or an **unscripted deviation**
- From the **happy story** that he felt **he was owed**.

He began to understand that his **ordeal in the Andes**

- **Was not** an “**interruption of his true destiny**, or a **perversion** of what **his life was supposed to be.**”

“It simply was his life,” nothing **more**, nothing **less**.

It simply was his life.

And the future that was **available**

- To him was the **only future available**.

To **hide** from this fact

- Was to **live** in **bitterness** and **anger**,
- **Keeping him** from **having** a life **at all**.

And this is true for all of us:

- **Life’s interruptions-** both large and small-
- They **are what they are**.
- We don’t get **do-overs** in life.
- We can either accept **life’s interruptions**

- And try to **make the best of them-**
- **Even find God in them.**
- **Or,** we can **retreat** into the **misery**
- Of the **coulda-woulda-shouldas.**

God interrupted Mary's life and ours as well

- Coming to **us inconveniently**
- Coming to us **in the messy form of flesh and blood**
- That we might **know** and **appreciate God's love**

I don't know if God is **causing** it all.

- But I do know that God is **using** it all-
- **Even** those **dreaded interruptions.**

Remember-

- "God comes to us **disguised** as **our life.**"

May you **find God this Christmas**

- In **all things,**
- **Especially** in that **most holiest** of **interruptions-**
- The **birth of Jesus** our **Christ.**

Amen.