



E-Worship 4:23

An online resource for officers and worship leaders in the 21st century

"A time is coming...when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks." - John 4:23

Invisibly visible... God!



When God came, he didn't appear to a pastor or a priest, or to the most learned of Bible scholars.

Instead, He revealed Himself through an ordinary teenage girl, who was probably illiterate and certainly had very little voice in society: A girl to whom the world paid little attention to, and yet a girl who obviously had extraordinary faith. As one reads the Christmas accounts in both Matthew and Luke, the calmness with which Mary accepts her destiny is noticeably acute. But isn't it usually the young who have the profoundest faith?

Mary was betrothed to a good man, a simple honest hard-working man, a man of character, who genuinely loved Mary, as demonstrated by the way he reacted to her unplanned pregnancy. In attempting to divorce her quietly he shows us how much he valued her life and her reputation.

Two ordinary people of faith, chosen by God as instruments for an extraordinary occurrence.

Yet the day of Christ's birth was anything but that. It was hard. It was painful. Not an easy journey for a young girl nine months pregnant. Jesus was not born into comfortable surroundings. Mary and Joseph were all alone: There was no family, no doctor, no midwife. It involved the pain of labour with all its blood and contractions and hours of discomfort. And afterwards Jesus would not have been cleaned with the most sterile of water sources, nor wrapped in the most luxurious of towels, nor laid in the most comfortable of cribs. He was most likely, like all of us, born crying, wrinkled and writhing in purplish skin.

And all the while the rest of the village slept obliviously, resting after a typical ordinary day.

And even when the angels came, they did not appear to the pious, in a temple or a busy marketplace... but only to a handful of shepherds living out the monotony of their vocation... Extraordinary events, and no one to see it but these sheep-herders... inconspicuous people whose lives and opinions weren't the least bit newsworthy to those around them.

And in days to come, while the citizens of Judea and Nazareth struggled on with daily drudgery, they occasionally wondered where was God in all of this... in all of the toil and grind, did He care that their country was occupied by foreigners? Did He notice their struggle and their poverty? God seemed, so often, so far away, conspicuously absent.

And all the while Jesus was in the midst of them... watching, waiting, growing... playing with their kids, visiting in their homes. God was right there, though very few knew it or saw it...

It has only been hindsight that has caused us to recognize the significance of this ordinary day, and the ordinary few whose lives were affected by it in the moment.

And here we are, 2000 years later, often within our own circumstances secretly pondering the pervasive silence of God, as we perpetually tackle sickness and finances, family conflict and unexpected mishaps, and as we strain to comprehend the world we live in: A world still filled with war and terrorism and occupation; poverty, injustice and corruption, and as we pray for glimpses of an invisible God in the midst of it all...

And just maybe, as in that first Christmas, He is actually less invisible than we perceive... and that in the most ordinary of days, through the most ordinary of people, God continues to brew up something extraordinary.

Do you think?

E-Worship 4:23 is a product of the Music and Gospel Arts section of Corps Ministries The Salvation Army Canada and Bermuda Territory
2 Overlea Blvd. Toronto Ontario, M4H 1P4
Phone: 416-422-6108 Fax: 416-422-6133
E-mail: Kim_Garreffa@can.salvationarmy.org





Questions to ponder...

1. Are you currently experiencing the silence of God in your life personally?
2. How does God tend to speak to you?
3. Compare your faith to the faith of Mary and Joseph. How does it measure up?
4. Have there been circumstances where you only saw God's hand in the situation in hindsight, and not while you were going through it?
5. Where else in scripture can you find instances of God working "behind the scenes", unnoticed by the very people who claim to worship Him?

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up, do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert, and streams in the wasteland." — Isaiah 43:19

"He was in the world, and though the world was made through Him, the world did not recognize Him. He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him." — John 1:10,11

"Then Jesus told Him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'" - John 20:29

I give you praise, O Great Invisible God,
for the moon in the space of a dark night,
for the smile on a face in the sunlight.

I give you praise, O Great Invisible God,
for the sound of the storm on the window,
for the morning adorned with a new snow,
for the tears on the face of the old man
made clean by the grace of the good Lamb.

And oh, I long to see your face,
Invisible, Invisible God.
All the works that you have made
are clearly seen and plain as day,
so mighty and tender.
O Lord, let me remember,
your power eternal, your nature divine.
All creation tells the tale
that Love is real and so alive.
I feel you, I hear you,
Great God Unseen, I see you.

"Invisible God" - written by Andrew Peterson

We wander through this world in disbelief,
Shake our heads at every tear,
Searching endlessly for some relief
Has He left us dying here?

But we've forgotten all His words,
Pretend we never heard;
We take our hearts and turn away...

But He is not silent,
He is not whispering;
We are not quiet,
We are not listening.
He sends a lifeline,
We keep resisting Him;
He is not silent,
We are not listening...
No, we are not listening.

"He is not silent" - written by Scott & Christine Dente

If God had a face, what would it look like?
And would you want to see,
If seeing meant
that you would have to believe?...

What if God was one of us,
Just a slob like one of us,
Just a stranger on the bus
Trying to make his way home?

- "One of us", written by Joan Osbourne