

Luke 1:26-38

Advent 4; December 24, 2017

“A Miracle Is About to Happen!”

Angels don't make a habit of appearing to people in the middle of nowhere. There are relatively few examples of it happening even in the bible. Jacob was visited by angels several times in his life. The Angel of the Lord appeared to Moses to tell him that he was going to rescue his people from Israel. One appeared to rescue the three men from the fiery furnace. Usually, when they did appear, it was at crucial moments in the history of the Israelites – when they needed God's assurance and protection. Therefore, when Luke starts out his Gospel account with a story of an angel appearing – both to Zechariah and then also to Mary, we know something special is about to take place – something that has never happened in the history of the world. Seemingly, out of nowhere, God was about to announce his eternal plans in specific detail to one young and insignificant lady living in a small town of Nazareth. A miracle is about to happen!

I want you to try to put yourself into the shoes of Mary. You are a fifteen or sixteen unwed girl, who has an angel in front of you. This angel says: **“Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you!”** Who wouldn't be scared? The angel continues: **“You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”**

Once you get past the who angel thing in front of you, there are a couple of things are shocking about this angel's message. You are going to have a baby. This baby is going to come into being in a way that has never happened before. This baby is going to live forever. Oh, by the way, this baby IS going to BE God. The angel makes it sound so simple. But this message is not simple at all. This angel is saying that THE GREATEST MIRACLE in the history of the world is about to happen. You are front and center. You get the grand prize.

I think we can understand why Mary might say: *Who? What? When?* **“How will this be since I am a virgin?”** Do you realize just how shocking that message of the angel is? You are going to have a baby and he is going to live like a king. Mary's mind had to be swirling around in all different directions.

Think about what this angel is saying to Mary. God is going to be your little baby. The God who made the heavens and the earth is going to be this helpless little baby in a manger. Look to what extent God is loving his people. He is going to get close to them. He is going to be one of them.

Why would God do that? Ever since Adam and Eve had fallen into sin thousands of years earlier, God had made a promise. He was going to rescue the people of this world. He was going to do something that they could not. God is making a promise to Mary and to you and me. God will become one of us. He will live. He will die. That is what it is going to take for God to save us. That is the extent of God's love. We might suffer in this world. But God will suffer more, so that we will suffer no more for an eternity. That's the shocking and beautiful message that this angel brings Mary and this world. That's the message that we will celebrate tonight and tomorrow. Prepare to meet your Savior.

How does Mary react to this message? She's troubled. She is confused. She's not sure if she should believe this angel. Mary is trying to connect the dots. She is questioning this. She's trying to add it up. I think, this also shows the human side of Mary. Have you ever felt like Mary? Have you ever tried to connect the dots in the circumstances that you find yourself in? Ever feel so alone? Ever wonder why does God let these things happen in my life? Then you feel guilty feeling like that? Well, you might be in some pretty big company.

Yet, what does Mary do? Ultimately, she says: **“I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled.”** Mary had to know what all this was going to mean for her. I'm sure that she is thinking about how people were going to be looking at her. It was not going to be easy for Mary and Joseph. All those challenges were not going to go away.

Imagine the sacrifice that this would take for Mary. She would have to subject her body to nine months of some probable sickness, weight gain and emotional highs and lows. She'd have to feed this baby. Whatever plans she may have had with Joseph would completely change. For even a perfect child would demand attention and care. She also had to consider her relationship with Joseph – what would he think of this? And what would she tell him? “God made me pregnant?” “Yeah, right,” Joseph would have said. He may have even question if Mary really knew what she was talking about. This whole miracle was beyond his understanding. There would be a lot for Mary to consider. Yet, look at her simple response: **“May your word be fulfilled.”** Finally, she says: **“I am the Lord’s servant.”** I don’t get this. This isn’t going to be easy. But I’m going to follow Jesus. I’m going to trust him.

May the Lord help all us to have that kind of trusting faith in Jesus. We are the Lord’s servant. May your word be fulfilled. Christmas is almost here. A miracle is about to happen. Amen.