

PP Mary's Christmas Adventure

Text **Luke 1:26-38**

12/3-4/2016

The Christian life is an adventure and the Christmas Advent ideally reminds us of this fact
But what do I mean by adventure?

PP 'Advent' is a word that means the arrival of a notable person, thing or event, and the
Christmas Advent is the celebration of the coming of Jesus born as a baby

PP I found it interesting to note that the word advent forms the root for our word '**adventure**',
which means something that is about to happen

This sermon series is about four adventures brought about by angelic visits, that prepared them
for the coming of the Messiah, Jesus Christ

And in each of the 4 we look at, we're going to see that in many ways, their adventure is our
adventure

But there will be a second coming of Jesus, a second Advent, and we, Christian brother and sister
are on a mission to ready the world for His return

And there is no better time than Christmas to remember, and focus on our own *adventure*

Last week we looked at Zechariah, and today we'll look at a young Jewish girl named Mary
***"In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named
Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of
David. And the virgin's name was Mary."* 1:26-27**

PP 1-God's adventures are for humble people

All four of these Adventure messages will center on people who had nothing special about
themselves and that is the way God works

The greatest event in the history of humanity began with the humblest of people

We looked at a country priest by the name of Zechariah last week

In the 6th month of his wife's pregnancy, God sent Gabriel His angel to a town in Galilee

To the devout Jewish mind, Gabriel's visit to Galilee was in itself surprising

The world at that time was filled with prejudice, and Israel was certainly no exception

Galilee was up north in Israel's territory, and was considered the mongrel section of Israel, filled
with Gentiles living among the Jews

The southern region Jews of Judea looked with disdain on their northern, liberal brothers,
making sense of Nathaniel's comment about Jesus: ***"Can anything good come out of
Nazareth?"* John 1:46**

PP (Map) Nazareth was a little town SW of the Sea of Galilee, and it was close to no trade
routes, no major roads, no Jewish culture centers

And living there was a girl named Mary, a Jewish girl very likely between 12 and 14 years old
She was a '**virgin**', never having had sexual relations, and she was '**betrothed**'

Jewish girls were usually engaged by 12-13 where they entered a one-year betrothal period

Marriage was a contract arranged by the parents, and only death or divorce could sever it

If death did happen to the man, the girl would be considered a widow

During the year, the girl was to prove her faithfulness and purity, and the husband was to get a
home prepared for his bride to be

The year would culminate in a Jewish wedding of 7 days, after which they began their life together and consummated their marriage
 Mary was betrothed to **‘Joseph’**, a descendant of the Old Testament David
 And though she too was a descendant of David, there was nothing special about her that made her stand out in a crowd

In fact, there was nothing at all notable about Mary; she was a no-name girl, in a no-visit town in the middle of nowhere

In fact, later in this chapter she wrote, ***“My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for He has looked on the humble estate of his servant.” 1:46-48***

The word *estate* is the net worth of a person at any point in time alive or dead

It is the attitude of coming to God knowing that you have little to nothing or worth to offer Him other than your praise and adoration

It is not low self-esteem, it is little self-regard, and there is a big difference

Mary recognized her low net worth, that there was nothing in her that deserved this calling

And this realization made her praise God all the more, and serve all the more

PP ***“God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; God chose what is low and despised in the world, even things that are not, to bring to nothing things that are, so that no human being might boast in the presence of God.” 1 Corinthians 1:27-29***

All through the bible God has done great things through normal, indistinguishable people
 Christian, do you see yourself as little to offer God?

Then you are the perfect person for the adventure, the mission of preparing this world to receive the King of kings

Be encouraged and stay humble, and live the life of **‘His servant’**

PP 2-God’s adventures come with a sense of His favor

“And he came to her and said, ‘Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!’ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be” 1:28-29

Many of you have come to our church having grown up in a Catholic church

If so, you’re familiar with the Catholic view of Immaculate Conception, established in 1864 by Pope Pius IX

It is the doctrine that Mary was preserved in God’s grace from original sin, or in other words, she was born perfectly holy and never sinned in her life

She has been called the God-bearer, the Second Eve, the Queen of Heaven, the Madonna, Notre Dame, the Woman for All Seasons

She has been sung about in choirs, portrayed in art more than any other woman in history

She has been called the Virgin of Guadalupe and symbolizes the entire body and soul of Mexico

What gave rise to this is a seriously mistaken understanding of the greeting of Gabriel

The *Ave Maria*, the Hail Mary prayer goes ***“Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee”***

Hail here means to greet with enthusiastic approval or to summon by calling

The false premise of this prayer is the belief that Mary has been granted the fullness of grace which she bestows on others

Yet, despite many elevating Mary, we cannot lower her below that which scripture says
‘Greeting’ was the common Greek word for saying hello, in Hebrew it was the word Shalom
‘O favored one’ is Gabriel’s assurance that Mary had found favor in God’s sight
‘the Lord is with you’ promises that God will give her His help for the task He is assigns her
 Out of billions of women to have ever lived, Mary was chosen to carry and raise God’s child
 Knowing God’s favor is the great safety net, the airbag, the bubble suit for the Christian to
 overcome fear and do amazing things for God

To know that God has set His favor on us, simply because He has chosen to do so, is
 empowering, liberating and freeing and fear-conquering

PP *“What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?”*

Romans 8:31

‘But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.’ 29

PP The phrase **‘greatly troubled’** occurs only here in the bible, describing something that is
 thoroughly stirred up and confusing

But her response was to **‘discern’**, to try and understand the meaning of Gabriel’s greeting

In fact, the tense is that she kept meditating on this, seeking understanding

Mary was a thinker even as a young girl, not letting emotions rule, but taking captive her mind

Gabriel further graciously puts her at ease, saying to her, **‘Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.’ 1:30**

God will always give us all we need to do all He asks us to do

And what we need are His presence and His favor

PP 3-God’s adventures focus on His Son, Jesus Christ

If you are living life in a career or pursuit that doesn’t have Christ as your ultimate aim, you are
 not yet living God’s *adventure* for you

That certainly doesn’t mean that everyone has to go into full-time ministry, but it does mean that
 your job, your sports, your hobbies, your pursuits must centrally be about exalting the
 Son of God

And Gabriel is about to make that clear to Mary

“And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus.” 1:3

PP Is there any name more wonderful, and beautiful than **‘Jesus’** which is the Greek form of
 Joshua, a name that meant *Jehovah is salvation*

PP Matthew, in his gospel, makes this clear, **“you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins.” Matthew 1:21**

The central reason God was born a man was to bring salvation to believing sinners

But Gabriel goes on: **‘He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High’ 1:32**

The Most High is an Old Testament title of God, El Elyon, He will be called the Son of God

He will be born on humanity, and will be at the same time God of over all

PP Jesus is what Paul wrote: **“To them belong the patriarchs, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.” Romans 9:5**

That right to rule is Gabriel's description of Mary's baby: ***"And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."*** 1:32-33

PP 4-God's adventures require faith and obedience

And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" 1:34

She is not doubting like Zechariah, or asking for a sign of confirmation, she simply does not understand, and asks for clarity, so Gabriel offers some further explanation

"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." 1:35

Just as the ***'Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters'*** and brought about creation by exerting His mighty power, the Spirit of God would hover over, overshadow Mary and produce a baby within her

PP It's the same word in **Luke 9:34**, ***"As He was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud."*** Luke 9:34

He is ***'holy'*** the only human ever born to be without sin

An angel's job was to be a message bearer for God, and Gabriel's position in God's court was as His servant at His beck and call

What Gabriel says are the words of God so notice with me how compassionate God is with Mary

"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." 36-37

God knows what is about to happen is completely outside hers or anyone else's experience

She grew up hearing the stories of Israel, but nothing like this: God born as a human baby

So He graciously strengthens her faith by telling her of the miracle of Elizabeth's pregnancy

Then Gabriel promises her, ***"nothing will be impossible with God."*** 1:37

Is what God is calling you to do seem too difficult, too beyond what is possible?

He can strengthen your faith to help you trust Him, and respond in the same way as Mary

"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 1:34-38

Notice that she saw herself as a servant of the Lord: ***"Behold, I am the servant of the Lord"***

She believed that the Lord as having the right to do what He wanted: ***"the servant of the Lord"***

And she wanted nothing more than to be in His will: ***"let it be to me according to your word."***

God's adventures are for the humble, not those great in the eyes of the world

They come to us with a clear sense of His favor

His adventures will focus on Jesus Christ

And finally, we learned from Mary, that our response must be one of trust and obedience

Amen?

Pray

