

Our Mission:

To share Christ with the world
and grow disciples for Jesus



Loving God and Loving Neighbor as Ourselves

Background:

This is Luke's reporting of the annunciation, an account only to be found in Luke. The angel Gabriel shares what he believes to be Good News but leaves Mary feeling troubled. Yet Mary in humility says, 'yes' to God's plan. This in turn, however, results in her needing to leave her hometown to stay with her relatives, Zechariah and Elizabeth. Elizabeth, filled with the Holy Spirit (a key theme throughout Luke's Gospel), does not question but offers Mary and the child a blessing.

Theology Connection:

Martin Luther wrote that there are three miracles taking place at the annunciation. The first is that a virgin would become pregnant. The second was that God the infinite would choose to become human and finite. The third, however, he considered to be the greatest of all.... That Mary would believe God had chosen her to be his instrument of grace!

Application:

There is a saying, 'Never drive faster than your guardian angel can fly.' We can be so busy preparing for Christmas that our angel is always chasing after us. Our agenda can distract us and we fail to hear the quiet whisper, 'You have found favor with God.' Yet there is still time to set aside time to 'wait upon the Lord.' The best gift of the season awaits us! God has not simply chosen Mary; God has chosen us to bear forth his love in the world. Merry Christmas!

The Text: Luke 1: 26-45

²⁶ In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,

²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

³² 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, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So, the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth.

⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear!

⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

ADULT

We often talk about Christmas being about the kids, and certainly, if there are kids around, we want them to feel like this is a special time of the year. Yet, what gifts are we looking for in this season? If we are looking for deeper relationships, or a stronger sense of God's Spirit in our lives, are there changes we need to make? Perhaps we can take a few moments to evaluate how we would wish our lives to be different in 2021 and make some plans to implement them.

YOUTH

Please read Luke 1: 26-45

I found it interesting that Mary does not ask for a confirmation or a sign but only asks how God will accomplish this wonder of giving a virgin his son. I found it comforting that Mary was so trusting right away and embarked on her 50-mile journey with no reservation to tell Elizabeth the news. This shows how faithful and serving Mary was.

Why do you think the unborn child is referred to in this story as the "holy one"?

Could it be because of the connection with the Holy Spirit or because Jesus will live a life of purity... or both...

Let us pray:

Dear God, we give thanks to you for all your miracles you have and will perform. Please help us to be faithful and trust in you the way Mary trusted in your in this passage. In your son's holy name, we pray, Amen.

CHILDREN'S

Before Jesus was born, God made two things that weren't possible, become possible! God chose two special women to become pregnant and have babies. I know this might not sound impossible, but for these women it really was. The first woman was Elizabeth, who became the mother of John the Baptist. Elizabeth was very old much too old to become pregnant. She was also barren, which means that it was physically impossible for her to have children. But that didn't stop God. God wanted Elizabeth to be the mother of John the Baptist, so that is exactly what He did! God also chose Mary. God wanted Mary to get pregnant and give birth to baby Jesus, so that's exactly what He did! Mary wasn't too old, she was just the opposite, Mary was too young to have a child. That didn't stop God though, Mary was to be the Mother of the Newborn King, Jesus Christ, and she was! We need to remember that nothing is impossible with God by our side!

Think:

1. How do you think Mary felt knowing that she was chosen to give birth to Jesus?
2. How can we have faith like Mary? (praying, reading the Bible, going to church)

Try it:

Draw a picture of the angel telling Mary that she would be the mother of Jesus Christ!

Pray:

Dear Heavenly Father,

Thank You for sending Your precious son, Jesus Christ, to save us of our sins. Please help us to shine Your light, and to have strong faith just like Mary!