

# Luke 1:26-38

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[ 0 : 00 ] Our children three years old to fifth grade are dismissed at this time for the children's program with their workers.

Please find your way to the back and your teachers will take you to the room. Our scripture reading today is taken from the book of Luke, chapter 1, verses 26 through 38.

This can be found on page 831 of your pew Bible. Again, the passage today is Luke 1, 26 through 38.

Please stand for the reading of God's word. 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. 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 : 20 ] And the angel said to her, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

And he will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. 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 his kingdom there will be no end. And Mary said to the angel, How will this be, since I am a virgin? 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. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son. And this is the sixth month with her, who is called barren.

For nothing will be impossible with God. And Mary said, Behold, I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.

[ 2 : 26 ] And the angel departed from her. This is the word of the Lord. Thank you, God. Good afternoon.

It's good to be in God's house with you. To worship and celebrate with you. To hear God's word with you. I've been trying to listen to this text this week.

Hopefully we have heard well. Let me pray. Father, we love you and we thank you for this opportunity that is before us. As your people to sit in your presence.

And to hear your word. So may we listen well. So that we will live well. This world.

For the glory and honor of your name is our prayer. In Christ's name. Amen. One of the challenges of preaching during the seasons is that we've been to these texts before.

[ 3 : 36 ] And though it's probably not wise to say too much that is novel. Still, our hearts need to be in tune with what thus saith the Lord.

So, the passage before us has been called the highest of several summits of revelation in Luke chapters 1 and 2.

And it's good to be able to come to this text on today. And to listen to it. And to hear it. And to hear it well. Where would we be as it relates to our information.

This very unique information that Luke lays before us. Just think if it were not in the Holy Writ. If it were not in Scripture. We would be deficient in ways as it relates to our knowledge surrounding the means by which God sent his son into the world.

The count before us today is known as the Annunciation. And in it, the reader gets a behind-the-scenes kind of look at the means by which God brought his son, our Savior, into the world.

[ 4 : 58 ] The narrative includes several persons that I want to focus on. If the count were a play, and perhaps some of you have participated in plays, productions, that were about the Annunciation.

Perhaps you were the angel, or there may be a Mary here. This is one of the ones that could be acted out well. Well, really, there are not simply two roles that can be cast.

We certainly have the messenger. We have the maiden. But also, we have the Most High God that's very prominent in the text on today.

First person we see, of course, is in verse 26, we see the messenger. He is an angel. A supernatural being that is engaged in the service of God, executing, listening to God's word, and doing God's will.

Psalms 103, the end verses so inform us that the angels are hearkening unto the will of God, doing his biddings. They are, in fact, his heavenly messengers, going where, doing whatever the Lord God so bids them to do.

[ 6 : 31 ] The angel's name is Gabriel. You see that in the text? Man of God is what it means. Four times the angel, the archangel, Gabriel, is mentioned in Scripture.

Sure. We see him twice in the book of Daniel and here twice in the book of Luke. Michael is the only other archangel that is mentioned by name in Scripture, the only other angel that is mentioned by name in Scripture.

And he's mentioned five times. These, it's, and we see from, I believe it is Luke chapter 1, verse 19, Gabriel, he is in the very presence of God.

He's come from the presence of God, come from the courts of heaven, and is doing the very biddings of the Lord. He's a messenger. What about this particular mention, this particular mission?

We don't know all of the varied activities of the angels. We see some of them, some of them appear in Scripture. But we know that they are God's messengers sent forth, according to Hebrews, to minister unto those who will be heirs of salvation.

[ 7 : 45 ] We see their activity in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament. But what about this particular mention? Gabriel was a messenger on a mission.

He had been dispatched from God. Look at verse 26. In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth.

Look at the last verse. We see that angel then departed from her, having accomplished his mission. And so he comes from God, but then he goes back to God.

He's an angel on a mission. Six months earlier, he had gone to Jerusalem, the city of the great king. He had spoken to Zechariah, the priest, a professional minister of the Lord.

But the dispatch in today's text is to the lowly Galilean village of Nazareth, which contrasted both in its size as well as its significance with Jerusalem, where Gabriel had visited in our text on last week.

[ 8 : 59 ] As a matter of fact, the word, according to John chapter 1, verse 46, about Nazareth, can any good thing come from Nazareth?

Look at verse 27. According to verse 27, Gabriel was sent to a young Jewish woman, a woman of marriageable age.

She had been promised in marriage to a descendant of David known as Joseph. And according to this verse and other places that we see in this particular passage, Mary was a virgin.

The reference here is to an unmarried girl or a woman. And this information sort of surfaces in several places in our text on today.

Twice mentioned in this verse. Mary's personal testimony in verse 34 that we will get to sort of settles the question of her virginity because there she speaks about one as not having known a man sexually.

[ 10 : 12 ] What about this message that Gabriel was sent to Mary with? You see that there? He came to her, verse 28, in his words, Greetings, O favorite one.

Gabriel's message from the Lord really dominates this particular passage. And through his words, through what we see in this text, We come to understand how God's Son would in fact enter into the world.

And according to Luke, he came to seek and save that which is lost, chapter 19 and verse 10. Notice the greeting that is recorded for us in verse 28.

O favorite one, the Lord is with you. What a stunning kind of greeting. And the text speaks about it was sort of the words that stunned her.

It could have been his very presence that stunned her also. We see that was the case earlier in chapter 1 when Zechariah had encountered this angel.

[ 11 : 23 ] The message continues in verse 30 where Gabriel calls Mary by name. I mean, it's sort of like it got the right woman.

It was at the right address. He's at the right place. And perhaps that, I don't know if that was stunning or encouraging. Because he was at the right place. Had made the right stop.

He was at the right place. She was the right one. Don't be afraid, Mary, is his words. For you have found favor with God. Why Mary?

Because God, in his infinite wisdom, had prepared this vessel for his special purposes. Why Mary?

Because of God's grace. God's undeserved kindness in his very counsels had prepared this particular vessel for this particular purpose.

[ 12 : 22 ] And at this particular juncture in time. God, in his own wisdom, in his own counsels, had filled her with his grace. You found favor with God.

The message was that Mary was going to give birth. And notice the progression of the text. Look in verse 31. It says, you will conceive. And then verse 31, you shall call.

Verse 32, he will. So he speaks about her. Then he speaks about him. And then he speaks about God in the last part of verse 32, 32b.

The Lord God will give. And on and on. What do we have here? This message gives us his identity. He is going to be a male child.

He's going to be called Yeshua or Joshua or Jesus in the Greek. That would be his name. And his name would speak of his mission.

[ 13 : 23 ] He would be a savior, a deliverer. The Lord is salvation. That's what he means. Matthew extrapolates that on that a little bit more. For he shall bring forth a son.

You will call his name Jesus. For he will save his people from their sins. He would be a deliverer. That's his identity. But then it also speaks about his destiny.

The child that was going to be born was destined for greatness. You see that he will be great. Verse 32. He will be called the son of the most high.

And the Lord God will give unto him the throne of his father David. His destiny would be greatness. Born in obscurity.

But his destiny, he would be great. And certainly there is none greater who has ever walked on the face of this earth.

[ 14 : 27 ] The poem, and perhaps some of you have heard it, One Solitary Life, says it so, so well. Listen to it. He is a man who was born in an obscure village.

The son of a peasant woman. He grew up in this obscure village. He worked in a carpenter's shop until he was 30. And then for three years he became an itinerant creature.

I mean, just imagine it. Here, Jesus born in obscurity. Sort of lived 30 years in obscurity. I mean, it's sort of like he was on pause in a sense.

We got this grand entry into the world. And then you don't hear much about him for decades. But then he comes on the scene, continuing with the poem.

He never wrote a book. He never held an office. He never owned a home. He never had a family. Never went to college. Never traveled, except in his infancy, more than 200 miles from the place where he was born.

[ 15 : 32 ] He never did one of the things that usually accompanies greatness. He had no credentials but himself. While he was still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him.

His friends went away. One of them denied him. He was turned over to his enemies. And it goes on. I'm skipping some. But 19 wide centuries have come and gone.

Today, he is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of all human progress. I am well within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, all the navies that were ever built, all the parliaments that ever set, all the kings that ever reigned put together, have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as this one solitary personality, Jesus.

He was destined for greatness. Born in obscurity, backwoods, Galilean town. But Justin, according to the word of this angel, the message was that he was going to be great.

The child also would be called the son of the Most High. He was greater than the prophet John who was Jesus' forerunner both in birth but also in ministry.

[ 16 : 54 ] John would be called the prophet of the Most High, chapter 1 and verse 6. But here we have the identity of this one. He would be the son of the Most High, having the same qualities of the same nature as God himself.

Furthermore, he would be a ruler. A ruler who would occupy the throne of his father David. He would fulfill the Davidic covenant that promised a ruler would come indeed from David's family, from David's loins.

He would rise up one who would sit on the throne and his kingdom would in fact endure forever. Just as on last week, the Old Testament had told of an Elijah-like person who would come with a ministry of restoration, Malachi chapter 4.

Even so, scripture had told that this one would come, and he would come mightily, powerfully, on the one hand, humbly on the other.

And look at verses 32 and 33, Isaiah 9 and 7, that's captured here. And we hear the echoes of that in these particular verses. Of the increase of the increase of his government and peace, Isaiah 9 and 7, there will be no end.

[ 18 : 14 ] An unending scope of his rule and the spread of his peace. On the throne of David, that's the place from which he would rule.

And over his kingdom to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness. Those two pillars of God's kingdom economy from this time forth and forevermore.

How is it going to happen? The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform it. That's Isaiah 9 and 7. But you see that here in these particular verses.

Look, particularly verse 33. He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. And his kingdom, of his kingdom, there would be no end. An eternal, coin-going kingdom.

Huh? All of these things packed in this message coming from God through the angel Gabriel to Mary.

[ 19 : 16 ] The angel Gabriel delivered a message from the throne of God itself. But hardly a more important dispatch had ever come from heaven, from the very courts of heaven.

And Gabriel, the heavenly messenger, got the call to deliver it. The messenger. God's heavenly servant dispatched from heaven into time space with a message for a maiden.

That God had chosen, had favored to bring forth his son. Luke gives us this information. He fills in the gaps. He informs us.

And history, as far as the nature and how it was that God's son entered into the world to do his mission that he was sent to do.

The maiden. Mary, of course. And there are various things that we can say about her. But look at verse 27 in particular. She is a virgin.

[ 20 : 23 ] She is promised in marriage. And in that particular day, it was an engagement. But more than an engagement. It took a divorce, a betrothal. But she was promised.

The dowry had been paid. And this gives us her status. Her name, we see it in verse 27. A popular name. Just like the name of Jesus would have been in that day popular.

Miriam, or Mary, as we know her. For years in our nation, that name was the most, Mary was the most popular name. And because people name children in hopes that they might mimic something about a person that they would admire.

And so Mary was a popular name. And it remains somewhat popular. Not as popular as it used to be. Here she was. Her situation. A young, chaste, Jewish maid who had been promised in marriage to Joseph.

Out of the thousands of Israelite maids who were of marriageable, childbearing years, here is one that gets this particular call, this particular assignment, chosen by God for this special, special assignment.

[ 21 : 40 ] Question for you all this afternoon. Where might you have gone? To sort of fill this particular slot. If you needed a person, I mean, where would you go even simply for a babysitter, huh?

Let alone for bringing the Son of God into the world, huh? Who would it be that you might choose? What would be the person's socioeconomic status?

What about her home in Byron? Her mother, her father. Humanly speaking, this woman did not have much to commend her at all. Again, she was from Nazareth.

An off-the-beaten-path village. And across-the-tracks kind of place, huh? This would not be in our particular city. This would, she would not be from the North Shore.

Or from the Gold Coast. Or even from High Park in our day. Perhaps a place like Pilsen or Woodlawn or maybe even Englewood.

[ 22 : 43 ] Or Fort Heights, perhaps. Huh? Our choices in life do not all the time square with what the Lord God would do.

And who it is that he himself might choose, huh? There's a warning here for us, isn't it? Paul wrote the following words to Christians who were at Corinth.

Or consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many were powerful. Not many were of noble birth.

But 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 naught the things that are. Why does he do it? That no flesh would glory in his presence, huh?

[ 23 : 45 ] He that glory. Let not the wise man boast in his wisdom. Let not the strong man boast in his might. Let not the rich man boast in his riches.

But what are you going to boast in? If you're going to boast, boast in this. That you understand, the Lord says in Jeremiah chapter 9, and know me. The living God, friends, is not bound by convention or custom or expectations of men.

Why Mary? Why lowly Mary? Grace. Why you? Grace. Why me? Grace.

God's sovereign choice that doesn't necessarily fit the patterns that you and I might outline for him. Huh? He is God.

Huh? What does she hear? This maid of humble means heard a gracious word from God that spoke of his magnanimous grace to her.

[ 24 : 49 ] She, from among all women, would be the bearer of God's son. Oh, that's hard even to fathom and to think about that out of all the people in human history.

The Bible says that God, at the right time, in the fullness of time, he sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, that he might fulfill the law.

Huh? Notice Mary's logical question in verse 34. How might you respond if you heard Gabriel's message? Mary's question reveals, look at it, how will this be since I am a virgin?

It reveals her virgin status. She hasn't been sexually active. She hasn't been with a man. She is sexually pure. Yet sort of the third time that we see, again, the word translated virgin, it really should be, I do not know a man.

But again, just sort of put that virgin in there, sort of interpreted it for us. But literally, she did not know a man. Regarding Mary's conception, it would not be by normal means.

[ 26 : 01 ] It would not be after the order of pagan myth where gods would cohabit with humans and sexual activity. It was through God's marvelous, matchless, creative power that Mary would conceive in her womb and bear her son.

Look at there in the verse, the Trinitarian dimensions of what we see there in verse 35. The angel answered her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you.

And the power of the Most High will overshadow you. And therefore, the child to be born will be called holy. He's the Son of God. Huh? The messenger dispatched from heaven to a maiden, a lowly Galilean maiden.

Each of them in their own ways servants of the living God. But the main character in all of this is the Most High. And this particular term, you see it in verse 35, and you see it also in verse 32.

It speaks of God's majesty and his sovereignty. Huh? That's what it speaks of. His rule, his sovereign rule and control over all things.

[ 27 : 16 ] How would the humanly impossible thing going to be accomplished? It's going to be done by no one less.

And there can be no one more than the Lord God himself. He would do it. And therefore, the child that would be born would be called the Son of the Most High.

Conception would be by the power of the Most High God. So the text before us on this afternoon features two servants. One angelic and one human and two servants, but one sovereign, the Most High.

And here he is. He's orchestrating things to work according to his will. The one with whom all things are possible. Nothing is impossible with him.

Gabriel, who stood in the presence of the Lord, knew well that the Lord God could do nothing less than that. Huh? This season reminds us of God's sovereignty.

[ 28 : 21 ] His holy, powerful, and awesome rule over all things. He is in control. But it also reminds us of our need as his servants to submit to him.

The Most High God, by far, the main character. It's not the messenger. It's not the maiden. It's ultimately about him who executes his plan to bring his son into the world.

He acts in history to fulfill his work. And all heavenly messenger and earthly maidens are at his disposal. Regarding Mary, you have a young maiden who has just crossed the threshold into womanhood.

She's young and inexperienced. And we would barely trust her with a babysitting job, let alone being the mother of a promised deliverer. But prophecy and history point to this particular day.

And next week, we'll look at this whole idea of her magnifying the Lord. But in reality, what you have here in her words, you have a song of simple surrender.

[ 29 : 33 ] That's here. From the Church of God in Christ background. And there is a song that has been sung in that church for decades.

As a matter of fact, I think it might have been the founder who is the... If you can say that there's an author of this song at all, it would be him. It is the...

It's interesting because the title and the chorus and the verse are all the same. The name of the song is Yes.

The chorus of the song is Yes. The verse of the song is Yes. It's a simple, simple chorus.

But I've heard this particular song, Rise in the Midst of God's People. And it would literally sort of fill the room, whether you have a large auditorium or a simple storefront kind of dwelling.

[ 30 : 40 ] And it was because it was an indication of the surrender of those who were singing it. Yes. Yes.

Yes. Yes. Yes.

Yes. And then somebody else might pick it up. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord. Yes, Lord.

Yes, Lord. Simple. Now, here's the deal. The Magnificat is right at the top of the charts. But what is it that precedes the Magnificat?

[ 31 : 43 ] Yes. Yes. Yes. Yes. Mary's yes to God in submission precedes the song. The song of surrender, Y-E-S, precedes the song of J-O-I.

Joy. That's Mary's song. And did you know that saying yes to God can have a way of complicating your life?

It can. And surrendering to God can really confuse things. Oh, and we love the season because we just sort of settle back.

We sort of settle in. We like to cruise. But if you really want to know, I mean, you remember Simeon's word to Mary?

This child is going to be for the rise and the fall. And it's going to be a pain to you. And who knows about the very kind of reproaches that this unmarried maiden, the stares of those who may have seen her.

[ 33 : 05 ] And they did funny math. They did one plus one equals two, humanly speaking.

Huh? But in God's economy, it wasn't all about that. It was one equals, huh? God's overshadowing her, her becoming pregnant, huh?

There are people of this season who will have what some will consider the perfect Christmas from the world's perspective. But it will be without the joy of surrender and submission.

How very sad, huh? But some, even in the midst of the minuses and the messiness of life, they will be blessed because of their submission and yielding to the very will of God.

Huh? Saying yes, your surrender doesn't guarantee ease. Sometimes it will in fact mean pain. And the most risky of assignments under the superintendents of the Almighty are just right for those who put their faith in him.

[ 34 : 27 ] Huh? How we labor so much not to have to bear shame and reproach. We want so much for our faith to be wrapped in, dressed in the fashionable garb of this world.

And say yes, sometimes bearing reproach, submission to God can mean social or even professional suicide.

But in many cases, many still, in spite of those things, and their surrender to God, say yes, huh?

Yes. He does ask you and me to do the unthinkable. Sometimes the unimaginable. And while this particular situation with Mary is unique, it's never to be repeated, it's not unlike the Lord to ask his servants to do the things that put us at risk.

In the eyes of this world, most assignments are less risky. Appreciate Dave mentioning Matt and Joanna as they're about to take their leave.

[ 35 : 37 ] And speaking with Joanna on yesterday, she spoke about having, and she used these words, the opportunity to say yes to something like wonders of worship.

Matt had the occasion to say yes, I'll take on men's breakfasts. I remember when we were at Medici's and when Matt passed around those batteries, that we were going to stick with it, huh?

That we were going to be on course with him. But each of them has said yes to worship leading, whether it's vocally or instrumentally. He's saying yes to the small things.

And every now and then, the Lord asks us to do something that really has more risk with it. Are you saying yes in surrendering and the smaller things?

That could be a prelude to something better, huh? This passage enables us to see the work of the Most High. This is what it's ultimately about, bringing his son into the world.

[ 36 : 49 ] But the side benefit of it is that we see heavenly and earthly servants were sovereignly chosen by God to participate in this grand initiative. May you and I be prepared similarly to surrender and say yes to him in the various aspects and dimensions of life.

What would we be without this Luke and Jack? We are enriched by its information. We are enlightened by it. But we are inspired also to worship this Most High God who dispatches angels, who guides men in order to participate with him in doing his will.

And we are motivated by it for surrender and service. And on this, at this Christmas time, 2011, may our gift to our God be nothing less than our surrender, our saying yes to him.

Let's pray. Father, we love you. Father, we thank you on today for inspiring Luke to record, do the investigative, journalistic kind of work, to record what we have here before us in its detail, in its wonder, in its beauty, in its mystery.



Father, one thing emerges from us is that the greatness of God is seen and your sovereignty over men and angels. Lord, may we similarly find ourselves saying yes to you in all dimensions and aspects of life.

[ 38 : 41 ] It's our prayer in Christ's name. Amen. Let's stand together and sing our last song. Amen.