

For With God Nothing Shall Be Impossible

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Date: 29 June 2008

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[0 : 00] Turn again to the verses we read in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 1. Luke chapter 1. And just to overview that section that we read from verse 24 through.

And as I said, we're going to go through the Gospel of Luke. And when you go through something, obviously, you're not going to stop at every verse, but as it were, just pick significant bits here and there and try and piece everything together.

But maybe if we're to home in on something, we find these words of the angel in verse 37, for nothing will be impossible with God.

Now, as we were looking last week at this couple, at Elizabeth and Zachariah, we find that, just to refresh our memories and again just to set the picture, this elderly couple who had prayed and prayed for years for a child.

And we're not going down that road again today. We're looking at it, but as we highlight where it says in verse 24, or verse 25, I should say, when Elizabeth says that the Lord has taken away my reproach among people, we mentioned that it's difficult enough for couples who have not had children and have wanted.

[1 : 35] But thankfully, we don't live in a day where there is a stigma attached to it. That doesn't happen today, but in those days it did. And that's why Elizabeth says the Lord has taken away the reproach.

Now, as we know, or as we saw, they had become so elderly that they had stopped looking for a child and had no doubt stopped praying for a child. And I think we can very clearly see that because when the angel did come with a message to Zachariah that Elizabeth was to conceive and to have a child, he wouldn't believe it.

So that we again highlighted the fact that sometimes when we're praying and praying and praying about something or for something and everything remains the same, maybe month in, month out, year in, year out, that we may continue to pray but don't expect an answer to our prayer.

We have become used to our prayer not being answered. And so when our prayer is answered, maybe we can't believe it. Or maybe, like Zachariah, we have actually stopped praying.

We've got to remember that God doesn't always answer our prayers whenever we pray. The Lord has a timetable. And I'm sure the longer we've gone on, the more we have discovered that sometimes the Lord will not give us what we ask for.

[2 : 56] And sometimes we're left perplexed and we don't understand. There are many questions that we don't have answers for.

And it would be a very strange person who would say, well, I have all the answers. Because I don't believe that anybody has all the answers. Because as the Lord says himself, my ways, he said, are not your ways.

My thoughts are not your thoughts. And then he goes on to say, just as high as the heavens are above the earth, so are my ways and my thoughts than your ways and your thoughts.

So we've always got to remember that. That God doesn't think in the same way as you and I. And God's purposes and plans far transcend anything that we could understand.

And God's purposes and plans for your life are not just about your life. They are part of a huge picture. He has a, it's like a worldwide eternal plan.

[4 : 00] So we've got to remember that, that so often we're caught up. And of course, we get that, that's just the way it is. And it's only natural that we are just with ourselves. And we, the focus of our lives is so much upon ourselves.

And I'm not, I'm not criticizing anybody for that. Because it'll be the same with myself as it would be with yourself. Because this is, this is your life. It's my life. And of course, we're caught up with our own lives.

But the Lord is always reminding us. And he said, you know, there's a bigger picture than just your life. He said, there's my glory. And that's, that's where we've got, we've got to, we've got to try and see beyond ourselves and beyond and try and understand a little that it's, it's bigger than you and me.

That it involves the whole glory of God. And so God is now coming to fulfill his purposes and plans, not just for this couple here, but in an incredible way, really, at a global level, the impact of what is happening over these, over this year that we're meeting here, has an impact upon the whole of humanity to this very day and to the end of time.

And indeed, throughout an endless eternity. And so when, when the angel gave the news to Zachariah that Elizabeth was to conceive and have a baby, it was too much for him.

[5 : 27] He wouldn't believe. And of course, through his unbelief, he was struck dumb and he was to remain dumb until the baby was born. Now, of course, these would have been incredibly exciting times for Elizabeth and Zachariah.

And I would imagine that Zachariah almost would have had difficulty working. You know, when something incredible happens in your life, something that causes almost a sense of euphoria, that it's very hard to focus and to just get involved in the everyday things.

And I'm sure that Zachariah, for a period, would have found it like that. And again, we find that for Elizabeth, that she goes away. She goes away.

We read about that, that she went away after these days his wife Elizabeth conceived. And for five months, she kept herself hidden. Now, in all probability, this would have been partly, I would imagine, because of the tremendous interest that would be taken.

Everybody would be talking about it. I suppose in those days, just as in the days we live in, people, particularly in smaller communities, people talk about things.

[6 : 42] And I'm quite sure there would have been a lot of talk because this woman, Elizabeth, was old. And she had conceived and she was now pregnant.

And there would be a lot of talk and a lot of excitement because there was word coming that this baby was going to prepare the way for the coming Messiah.

Now, of course, the Jews were waiting and waiting and waiting and waiting for years and years and years down through the years for the Messiah. And all of a sudden, there is word that the Messiah is coming.

And that this baby that has been conceived and this mother, Elizabeth, is carrying a baby who is going to grow up and is going to prepare the way for the Messiah.

So there would be incredible interest in Elizabeth around that time. So we find that Elizabeth goes away and she hides herself. But when we come to verse 26, we find that the angel Gabriel comes again.

[7 : 46] We spoke before about how the angels are ministering spirits to the heirs of salvation, that the angels are messengers of God. And the angels are ministering in our lives in ways that we do not know or appreciate or understand.

But that's a fact. It's happening. Anyway, here it says, but the thing is, we don't see. We're not aware. But this angel came and certainly Mary was very aware. And this angel comes with another great message.

And it's an incredibly different scene. Because when Gabriel first comes to Zechariah, the angel comes giving the message to an old man concerning an old woman.

But now, Zechariah couldn't believe the message the angel gave. The angel comes now, not to an old man, but to a young woman. A young woman.

And we read here that she's a virgin. And although she is betrothed, or what we would term an engagement, the betrothal or the espousals were stronger than our word engagement.

[8 : 52] It was a deeper meaning, really, than the engagement. It went further. And in fact, it needed devotion to separate it.

It wasn't finally, it wasn't fully the marriage, but it was very close to the marriage. A stronger term and a stronger commitment than even what we would term an engagement.

So Mary was engaged, using her own language, to Joseph. And the angel comes to make this incredible declaration that she, Mary, was to conceive and to have this child.

And Mary's faith is really remarkable. You cannot help but look at Mary and look at Zechariah. Here is Zechariah, this old, committed priest, who has spent his life serving the Lord.

And when the angel comes and gives the message of God, Zechariah, the man of God, can't believe it. And here is Mary. And however miraculous and however amazing the message was to Zechariah and Elizabeth, the message to Mary is even more miraculous, more astounding, more extraordinary than ever.

[10 : 11] And yet there is an incredible submission and acceptance and faith and belief exercised in the heart and in the life of Mary.

It really is one of the most, I think, one of the most extraordinary moments of submission and of belief and of faith that we find anywhere in God's word.

It really is quite remarkable. And so, as we see, the angel came. Now, it's interesting that the angel, we're told here, came to the city of Galilee, the city of Nazareth in Galilee.

And it wasn't down to Jerusalem. You would expect that when Jesus would be born, that it would be to somebody who was living in Jerusalem, the seat of the kings.

Jerusalem was a great city. But no, it's here, away up in the north, up in Nazareth. And Nazareth, of course, was very different to Jerusalem down the south.

[11 : 16] Nazareth was quite a cosmopolitan city. And there were, of course, there were Greek merchants and Roman soldiers living there. And it was, in fact, it was a place where, that we're told, had really become quite a hotbed of corruption.

And maybe that is why Nathaniel, remember when Nathaniel was told about Jesus of Nazareth? And that he was, it was Philip who told Nathaniel, and he said, we have found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.

And when Nathaniel heard the name Nazareth, he genuinely asked the question, he said, can any good thing come out of Nazareth? So you see that even at that particular time, Nazareth was the kind of city that people didn't associate with good things.

Historically, at that particular time, there must have been a lot of corruption and such like there. And it's interesting also that the angel didn't come to the daughter of some high priest or the daughter of some priest or the daughter of some high-ranking scribe or Pharisee.

No, it comes to this woman that we would never really have heard anything about. She was somebody who, it would appear, was a woman with very little in this world.

[12:39] Because actually, when they come up to the temple, and we will see that later on in the following chapter, they bring what only the poor people could bring for a sacrifice.

So it's very obvious that neither Joseph nor Mary had much money. It would appear that they lived, what we would almost say, at the poverty level in life.

So, the one that the Lord chose, the one that God the Father chose to be the mother in this world of God the Son, taking our nature, is somebody who is almost living in obscurity, in a place which some of the Jews, a city that some of the Jews actually despised, and comes from the ranks of what may be termed a nobody in this world.

And that, I believe, is significant. Because the Lord is showing us over and over again that it's not status, and it's not privilege, and that it's not the being somebody that counts in this world.

In fact, the Lord shows us so often that it is the road of humility. In fact, Jesus' life was one of humility. We cannot help but discover that as we go through this gospel, that Jesus' path was a downward, as it were, spiral, all the way from glory down to the stable in Bethlehem, down into the wilderness to the temptation, down into a world where he was despised and rejected by people, down all the way to the Gethsemane, down to the cross, where he was forsaken and abandoned, as it were, by the Father, experiencing God's wrath and curse, down into the grave, all the way down.

[14:32] It's a journey of humiliation all the way for the Lord Jesus Christ. Christ. And he was made poor in order that we might be made rich, rich with the goodness and the grace of God.

That was the great, of course, the great transaction that took place. And so we've got to remember that in this world that puts so much store upon what we are in life, what we achieve in life, a world that is obsessed with a celebrity and with wearing the right clothes and listening to the right music and being in the right place the Lord is showing to us, ultimately these are not the things that matter or count.

It is about Jesus. That is what is fundamental to life. And so we find that Jesus comes by the way of humility.

And it is so vital for us to lay hold upon what the Lord Jesus Christ has done. Because when you think of the riches of glory, the eternal riches and splendor that the Son of God enjoyed with his Father, and yet he comes by taking human nature, the divine taking human, one person taking another nature that he never had before, in order to become our representative, in order to do for us what we couldn't do ourselves.

You see, God is a spirit and God cannot die. And the only way that God the Son could die was by taking to himself a nature that would die. There were times when Christ, the second person of the Godhead, appeared, what we term a theophany in the Old Testament, taking the appearance of a man.

[16:28] But that couldn't die because it was just an appearance. It wasn't other than an appearance. But when Jesus came in the incarnation, when he came into this world, taking our nature, he took absolutely bone of her bone and flesh of her flesh.

He was as physical as you and I are in everything. He had his emotions like you and I have. He had his... He could feel pain in the way that you and I...

He could feel tiredness just like you and me. He could understand emotional pain because we find him crying. Jesus knew all these things.

He knew exhaustion. He knew hunger. He knew thirst. He knew thirst. In all, he was absolutely as human as you and I. Because as he was conceived in the womb, he would have taken of Mary's substance, freed from any defilement, so that there was no sin attached to him, no sin within him, and yet he was human.

And it really is quite extraordinary. And that is why it is the most extraordinary slight, it is the most awful thing for anybody to turn away from Jesus.

[17:53] Because this is God's great intervention into this world. It is God's great display of love. If God hadn't loved us, he would have just left us.

He would have left us to our shelves. And he would never have sent a redeemer or a savior. But love is such that love cannot leave.

And that's what God did. He sent his son into this world in order to save us, in order to do for us what we cannot do ourselves. And that's why it's the worst thing for any person to turn their back and to reject this great offer of love.

And so we see here that this extraordinary message came to Mary. And as we said, Mary who was espoused to Joseph.

And when the angel meets Mary in verse 28, it says, O favored one, the Lord be with you. Now, no person had in the Bible had the experiences that Mary had.

[19:03] And we can say that quite honestly. And, you know, in a sense, I don't, I should be careful what I say, when I say I sometimes feel sorry for Mary in the sense that very often Mary is neglected.

Many people do studies about David and they do studies about Solomon. They do studies about Sarah and Eve and all lots of different people, Bible characters, men and women.

and they ignore Mary. And I think maybe people ignore her for the simple reason that they're afraid that people will say, well, we're guilty of putting Mary on a pedestal, of beginning to worship Mary and putting her on a pedestal and making her equal with Jesus.

She's not equal. The thing about Mary is that she was a sinner saved by grace. It's quite remarkable that the Savior that she bore is the Savior that she needed to be her Savior as well.

It really is quite a remarkable thing. But we must never ignore Mary. And sometimes the church has been in danger of doing that in case they were seen of becoming involved in the worship of Mary.

[20:20] Mary is a wonderful woman of faith, a wonderful Christian woman who displayed the most remarkable grace and submission.

And she is somebody that even the heavenly messenger said that she was favored among women. And so, here is this great woman and she comes, the angel comes with this amazing news and Mary, of course, asks the question, how?

How am I to bear a son? Because her situation and condition was such that as things stood she couldn't. How am I going to bear a son? And we find the angel's message and it's really a wonderful one.

The Holy Spirit shall 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 it's really wonderful and it's a beautiful description of what takes place. Now again, there's a lot of mysteries in there and we leave them as mysteries. And I think there's a beautiful reverence about the way that this is written and I believe that that's exactly how we should leave it.

[21:37] Because the Bible says great is the mystery of godliness, Christ manifest in the flesh. But we read sufficient for us to understand of how the Holy Spirit was the one who was to overshadow Mary and that she through this was to conceive and there was the baby would grow in the womb of her substance.

And so as we said it's here that the two natures now of Christ, the one person where he takes a human nature. And so then the angel tells Mary about Elizabeth and she says you know your cousin Elizabeth she has also conceived and she is now with child.

And as both we read then that Mary goes to see Elizabeth and there's that statement there where they say her nothing is impossible with God.

And that is a wonderful thought. Now there are many things that we could look at here but I want us to finish on that note and I want you to remember that. With God nothing is impossible.

Maybe you're here today and you've never come to accept the Lord as Savior. Now I don't know your situation the thing is it's very personal between yourself and the Lord.

[23 : 05] At the end of the day it is so personal that it is you and God. That's at the end of the day. This is something that you have to see to and deal with yourself.

Not somebody else is going to deal with it for you. You have to deal with it yourself. It's so personal so individual. But maybe you're here and you're somebody who believes that Christ is Savior and you believe that Jesus has saved many people but somehow you feel that he's not going to save you.

You've seen others maybe you've seen other people of your family others of your amongst your group of friends people at work you've seen others being saved and you feel and I'm left here and maybe the years have gone on in your experience and you thought well this is going to bypass me.

I'm one of those who's it's just not going to be for me. I want it. I want this salvation. And maybe today you're getting down over it or maybe maybe there's a hardness creeping in thinking well somehow I've been I've been abandoned I've prayed and I've prayed about this and I genuinely want this.

Well my dear friend remember with God nothing is impossible. He is able today to save you and if you really cry to Him and you really seek Him and you really want Him He will answer He tells us that in His Word.

[24 : 37] Those who seek will find or maybe you are here and you've prayed about your family maybe you're a Christian of many years and you've been praying for your family since they were wee and they've grown up they've gone away and as far as you know maybe one but maybe none of them have shown any interest in the things of God.

It breaks your heart and you're still praying for them every day every night you're praying and praying. Well remember this with God nothing is impossible.

Maybe you're somebody here as a Christian who has prayed for your family and has prayed for your children they have grown up and maybe you're somebody here who has lost a member of your family and from what you knew that person was never saved.

Remember what it's saying with God nothing is impossible. you know that there have been people who have been saved in their very last moments. Once a person is dead then there is no more opportunity but people have been saved from the stirrup to the ground mercy sought mercy found and we know that that has happened for instance I think we've mentioned before somebody in this island who during the war was hit the boat he was in was hit when he hit the water he had no thought of God or of Christ or of salvation and everybody knew him as somebody who had no thoughts he went down and he came up and he went down again and it was there he cried to God to save him he came back up and somebody grabbed hold of him he was he was rescued but he was saved in that moment if he had drowned nobody would have known in this world that that person had been saved it happens so I'm saying that by way of encouragement because we do not know the mysterious workings of the Lord keep on praying never give up for with

God all things are possible let us pray oh Lord oh God we ask thee to bless us and we pray for an opening of our own hearts to understand and to receive Jesus as Lord we pray to bless each one of us with health and strength take us to our various places afterwards safely we pray to guide us throughout this coming week may we know the closeness of God the protection of God and we pray to keep us all in freedom and in liberty bless our nation we pray we pray for wisdom and guidance for those who lead us we pray that they might look to the Lord have mercy on us and forgive us our sin in Jesus name we ask all Amen sharing but remember have mercy on us we pray for

[28 : 21] His■jna to the Lord in liberty you heard in peace in life holy libraries