

THE EXTRAORDINARY PROCLAMATION ABOUT CHRIST
Luke 1:26-38

We are in our Christmas series called “**An Extraordinary Christmas**” and we’ve called it that because the event of Christ’s birth was extraordinary. It’s unusually great and convened in a special way. The first way we saw how it was extraordinary is because Christ **Pre-Existed** his birth. He is God and God is eternal, which means His birth wasn’t an ordinary birth. It was an **incarnation** – God the eternal Son, the 2nd member of the Trinity became flesh and dwelt among us. Last week we looked at some **Extraordinary Prophecies** that foretold Christ’s coming in the flesh and this week I would like us to turn to **Luke 1:26-38** where we find the **Extraordinary Proclamation** about Christ’s conception, a proclamation message delivered by the angel Gabriel to the virgin Mary. It’s the announcement that the time has come for these prophecies to be fulfilled and we find in this some challenging application for our own lives.

You see, unlike John who writes with an emphasis on Christ’s deity as the **Son of God**, Luke seems to write with an emphasis on Christ’s humanity as the **Son of Man**. And that’s important. He is fully God and fully Man. He had to be both to be the mediator between Holy God and sinful man. He had to live perfectly, completely fulfilling the Law’s demands and then die in our place as the Perfect sacrifice for our sins. Luke emphasizes His perfect human life and humanity. Luke is the one who wrote about how the disciples could **see** Christ’s literal resurrected body and how He **stood** among them and they could **touch** Him and **feel** Him, He had breakfast with them. He was really a man with a body like yours and mine and He still has His resurrected body. This emphasis on Christ’s humanity had to be highly appealing to the Gentiles/Greeks Luke was writing to who often sought ways to perfect humanity. Greeks were always looking for ways to perfect man, as you see in their philosophers and religion. Luke is saying through his gospel, here it is. This is the Perfect Man – the God-Man. I think the main thrust Luke wants us to understand through this gospel is **if you want to know how to live the way men and women were originally designed to live, you need to look to Christ, the Son of Man who lived in complete and total surrender to the Father. He had a real, deep, genuine, obedient and dependent relationship with the Father at all times.** He came to restore our relationship with God through His life and death but also to show us what that looks like.

Unlike other gospel writers, **Luke will intentionally point out specific individuals who do have a genuine relationship with God and have received God’s purpose for their life, Mary being the individual highlighted in our passage today.** But he also wrote about those who didn’t. In 7:30 it says, the Pharisees and teachers of the law (the really religious people of the day) actually rejected God’s purpose for their life. They liked their religion more than Jesus. **They liked going through their religious motions but they didn’t want a real, living relationship with God.** Why? Because it’s easier. Relationships require work and honesty and humility. But **Luke wants us to accept God’s purpose for our life, He wants us to have a real relationship with Him and follow Christ.** Luke 9:23 says, “If any man wishes to come after Me, He must deny himself, and take up his cross **daily** and follow Me. Whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake, he is the one who will save it. For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?” Christ wants us to take up our cross daily. What is our cross? Well, I don’t think it has to be something specific. It’s just the Christian art of denying yourself. Denying the sin nature and selfish life to live for the glory of God. Paul said in Gal. 2:20, “I have been crucified with Christ and it’s no longer I who live but Christ lives in me.” It’s taking up your cross and living for Him now and not just ourselves. It’s becoming a serious disciple of Christ, fully devoted

to Him, saying “I’m all in on Christ.” That’s the overall context of the passage we’re in. Christ is the Son of Man and we’re called to follow Him.

I. THE SALUTATION (VV. 26-29)

A. Gabriel

In verses 26-29 we see this extraordinary salutation of Gabriel to Mary. The angel Gabriel is an important messenger of God in the Bible who carries important messages. Gabriel’s name means “Hero of God” and he’s described as one who stands in the presence of God (Lk. 1:19). To the OT prophet Daniel, Gabriel brought understanding and instruction concerning the visions he received from God. He was a great help to Daniel. Gabriel is also the angel who appeared to Zacharias in Luke 1. Zacharias was a faithful priest under the Law and Gabriel informed him while he was in the temple sanctuary doing his priestly duty that he and his wife Elizabeth would have a son and to name him John. It’s in the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy that Gabriel appears to Mary in Nazareth. Both couples, Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zacharias loved the Lord.

B. Mary

What we need to notice primarily about Mary is that she’s a virgin. She’s never had sexual relations with a man at this point. She was engaged to Joseph, but they had not yet been officially married and had not yet come together. Matthew 1:18 says, “Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: when His mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, *before they came together* she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit.” It’s a supernatural pregnancy and one that was prophesied about. We studied Isaiah 7:14 it’s like the crown jewel prophecy for the virgin birth. 734 years before Christ, Isaiah prophesied there, “Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son, and she will call His name Immanuel – God with us.” And the big moment has come for that to be fulfilled with Mary. And you have to believe that part of the reason why Mary and Joseph were the ones God chosen by God for this incredible fulfillment is because they were doing things God’s way in their relationship. They were obedient followers who loved God. In this culture at the time, engagements typically lasted a year and were taken seriously. The sanctity of the engagement was like being married already, which is why Joseph responds the way he does.

C. Joseph

Matthew 1:19 says when he found out Mary was pregnant, he suspected the worst. He assumed Mary had cheated on him and so he was going to send her away secretly rather than disgrace her publicly. Unfaithfulness like this at the time was worthy of a death penalty and Joseph knew that so he was very kind in planning to just send her away. But an angel appeared to him in a very vivid dream saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins... [when] Joseph awoke from his sleep [he] did as the angel of the Lord commanded him, and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a Son; and he called His name Jesus.” And Joseph and Mary’s obedience to God here was pretty radical. Because for Mary and Joseph to go through with this meant that **they were going to look unfaithful** – as if they didn’t do things God’s way – even though they were. So by obeying God, **they were taking on reproach**. Hardly anyone was going to believe

that Mary was supernaturally conceived by the Holy Spirit. Most would've said they were making it up, trying to hide their sin. So **saying yes to God here meant losing their reputation maybe** for the rest of their life in some peoples' eyes and many weren't going to believe until Christ was at least 30 years old doing ministry. This tells us a lot about Mary and Joseph. They were fully devoted to God even if it meant some reproach from others.

II. THE MESSAGE (VV. 30-33)

Verse 30: "The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.'"

A. The Surprise – Favor with God.

God just loves it when people are serious about Him and Mary was, so she found favor with God for it. God honored her by letting her receive this precious proclamation and the precious Savior! And she's a little taken back by it – pondering the salutation.

B. The Command – Do not be afraid.

In Scripture, whenever a divine being appears to someone like this, this is the typical response: fear. It's kind of like when you lift up a log on the ground and the bugs start running away from the light. But the typical response of the Lord or the angel is **always**, "Do not be afraid." A little fear of God is good but at some point we need to realize He loves us so much that He died for us. There's no condemnation in Christ (Rom. 8:1) and we can as the Bible says, approach the throne of God with boldness whenever we need too because Christ is our righteousness.

C. The Divine Data – The virgin will give birth to Immanuel, "God with us."

Verses 31-33: "Behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord will give Him the **throne** of His father David; and He will reign over the **house** of Jacob forever, and His **kingdom** will have no end." Gabriel says you Mary, of all people, are the person God has chosen to bear His Son, ready or not. He is the Son of the Most-High. He will be given the throne of His "father" David – the Davidic throne. He will reign over the house of Jacob and His kingdom will have no end. **Take special note there of three words:** throne, house and kingdom. It can be kind of an "Aha!" moment if you've never realized this but these are the exact words we find in a covenant given to David called the **Davidic Covenant** back in 2 Samuel 7. And this goes all the way back to the Abrahamic Covenant we've talked about a few times this year with land, seed, and blessing. This is an extension of the **seed** element from the Abrahamic Covenant we see in Genesis 12.

In 2 Samuel 7:12-17 God is speaking with David. David wanted to build God a temple but God said no. Instead, this is what God had to say to David through the prophet Nathan approximately 1,000 years before Christ, "'When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up **your descendant** after you, who will come forth from you, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build a **house** for My name, and I will establish the **throne** of His **kingdom** forever. I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me; when he commits iniquity, I will correct him with the rod of men and the strokes of men, but My lovingkindness shall not depart from him, as I took it away from Saul, whom I removed from before you. Your **house** and your **kingdom** shall endure before Me forever; your **throne** shall be established forever.' In accordance with all these words and all this vision, so Nathan spoke to David." So who is God talking about here? Who's the descendant who will inherit the throne, house, and kingdom? Well, it's not as easy as it

looks because like we learned about last week, this is another **double reference prophecy**. Double reference prophecies are not unusual and have two fulfillments: **A partial fulfillment and an ultimate fulfillment**.

The Partial fulfillment:

We know that from reading on in the context and from the other passages that the partial fulfillment described here would be in David's son, Solomon. God wouldn't let David build the temple but he would let Solomon do it. Solomon's reign was wonderful. God did establish his **throne and kingdom and house**. Other than Christ, Solomon was the wisest man to ever live. The land had rest all his years and gold was so plentiful while he ruled that silver was considered worthless. But even that reign of Solomon was only a small picture of someone more important. It's obviously talking about someone greater than Solomon too.

The Ultimate fulfillment:

The ultimate fulfillment, like Luke 2 says, is that Jesus Christ is the One who will rule and reign on the Davidic throne when He returns to set up His Kingdom for 1,000 years (you read about that in Revelation 20). But then it is also **everlasting** so it goes beyond this earth to include the ultimate experience of dwelling on the New Heaven and New Earth in the New Jerusalem with Him (Rev. 21). I find it fascinating how zero'd in Gabriel is with the words he uses to Mary, using the exact words from this prophecy to David so long ago.

III. THE QUESTION (VV. 34-37)

Mary responds with the question in 34: "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" And that's a good question, right? Gabriel's response is, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. For nothing will be impossible with God."

In other words, Gabriel says it's through the pure power of God, Mary, that this is going to happen. The Holy Spirit, the third member of the Trinity, is the one who is going to carry out this creative act. He enabled Elizabeth, who is known for being barren, to conceive – and you're going to conceive as well without the help of your husband.

❖ **Christ's conception was of the Holy Spirit.**

Why is this important again? Because if Jesus had an earthly father then He would have a sin nature like us, passed down from Adam. He wouldn't be any different than you or me if He had an earthly father. But He didn't. The Holy Spirit is the One who brought this to pass in her womb. It was supernatural.

In **verse 37** Gabriel says nothing will be impossible for God. You know, God said the same thing to Sarah back in Genesis 18. When pre-incarnate Christ told Abraham that he and Sarah would have a son at the same time next year, Sarah laughed! She was way beyond child-bearing years and had given up on the idea that she could ever have a child. But that's exactly what the Lord was waiting for! He was waiting for Sarah and Abraham to be beyond their years so that this child would be proof that God did it and not them. Romans says God waited until, in the words of Paul, Abraham's body and Sarah's womb were as dead. Paul said it is God who "gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist (Rom. 4:13-25)!" So Mary, just because you've never

been with a man doesn't mean that it's impossible for God. God is the One who created you. God is the One who calls everything into being. God is the One who forms the baby in the womb. Now let's look at her response.

IV. THE RESPONSE (V. 38)

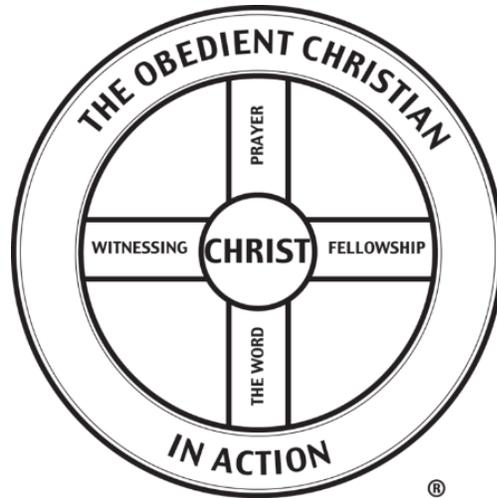
Verse 38: Mary said, 'Behold, the bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.' Don't you love that? "Behold the servant of the Lord. Let it be done to me according to Your Word." She's completely surrendered to God. She says I am His servant. I am available. Yes I have my questions, but let God's Word and God's will come to pass in my life. May it be so. Guys, this is the Mary of the Bible that I really like. She's not perfect but she's obedient, even though the course of her life is being altered. She's honest and humble and has a surprise-ability about her. All of this is unexpected to her. Throughout the Scripture, she seems to be a little confused about what the Lord was exactly doing in her life or with her Son, but she always did her best to be obedient to God, even if it meant nine months of unplanned pregnancy or moving to Egypt for a while until Herod's search to kill the baby was relieved. She loved the Lord and was always readily at His disposal, caring more about obeying the Lord than she did about her reputation.

And I want to ask you something: Have you made it to that place in your spiritual life where you're ready to say what Mary said? "Behold, the slave of the Lord? May it be done to me according to Your Word? **Does God's Word and God's will find a home in your heart?** Are you serious about doing the will of God with your life? For Mary, there was no other option.

Remember, this is Luke's emphasis throughout the whole book. **Christ, the Son of Man, lived a life of surrender and He's looking for individual believers, like Mary, who will do the same.** Paul said, in view of God incredible mercy and grace, we are to offer our lives as living sacrifices (Rom. 12:1-2). It's what we were made for. Christ didn't become a man and fulfill the Law with His life and then die for our sins so we could continue to live in sin. **He wants to free us to know that life that can be found in Christ and being His disciple. He wants to use ordinary people to do the extraordinary.** Are you willing today to say as she did, "Behold, the servant of the Lord. Let it be done me according to Your Word."

If that's you and you get this – you believe Jesus is your Savior and you understand you're saved by grace alone – and you're ready to live for Him, why don't you make that decision in prayer today. Tell him this is it: **"I want to get serious about being Your disciple. Behold your servant."** Start by praying that prayer today.

And I want to help you take the next step of obedience. With the new year approaching, it's a typical time to set goals. Many set goals to go to the gym and work out to lose weight or whatever. But as believers, I think it's important for us to set spiritual goals every year. I usually pick one major goal to really work on in my relationship with the Lord each year. And if you're one of those who wants to be a disciple of Christ, I want to give you a few recommendations. To be a vibrant, obedient disciple of Christ, there's **four major areas you need to be grounded in:** In the Word, in prayer, in fellowship, and in witnessing as illustrated by this wheel diagram – the obedient Christian in action (from our men's 2:7 discipleship course on Thursday night).



On a vertical dimension with God, maybe this is your year to establish a consistent devotional life **in the Word** – making it a goal to read the entire Bible through or spend 5 days a week in the Word and writing down each day what you learn. Maybe you want to work on your **prayer life**. Develop a more consistent prayer life. Or maybe you've got those, but on the horizontal level with others, you need be more intentional, making it a priority to come to church to fellowship each week. The encouragement of **fellowship** is critical for the believer – Hebrews 10:24-25 say don't give up meeting together as some are in the habit of doing, but encourage one another all the more. Maybe increased fellowship is coming to Sunday school or joining a small group study or getting coffee with some believing friends. Surely all of us could work on the last one: **witnessing**. When's the last time you shared your faith with someone? Pray for those opportunities. If you need help learning to share your faith we can get you plugged into a discipleship study where you can learn more about doing that. **What's your 20/20 vision?** What's your spiritual goal for the year 2020? Write it down and then pray it in to your heart.