

01/19/25 - Luke 1:26-38 - "Good New in Unexpected Places"

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Date: 19 January 2025

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[0 : 00] Was that to stand? Yeah. Sit, sit, sit. Okay. It's a long passage.

I'm not opposed to standing. Some churches do. Can I sit? No. You stand. All right.

If you guys have your Bibles, turn to Luke 1, verse 26. We'll be reading from verse 26 to 38. That's Luke 1, verses 26 to 38.

It also will be on the screen as well. In verse 26, it reads, 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 : 17] 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 bury son.

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 of 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 of her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.

[2 : 20] 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. This is the word of God, the word of the Lord.

Thanks be to God. Thanks be to God. On March 29th, 2019, my wife Bethany and I received the most shocking news of our lives.

Leading up to this day, Bethany had been pregnant for two months. And March 29th marked her first ultrasound.

Now, we were overwhelmed with excitement of expecting our third child into the world. However, the night before the ultrasound, I made quite a scenario for her on the couch.

I said, Beth, what if there's two in there? There'd be no way of knowing at this point, right? And immediately, Beth, we had this playful relationship.

[3 : 35] She recoiled with the usual, Shut up. Don't even go there. And so, March 29th came. And, you know, going through the process, going into the OBG.

You know, it's, you know, we had two other kids. We're experts at this. You know, we're good. And, you know, we know the protocol, but still that thought lingered. What if there are two?

As I sat by Bethany's side while the nurse performed her imaging, the ultrasound tech asked if we were excited about having another child, having another one.

We're like, yeah, one. Yeah, another one. Okay, we're in the clear. And then the ultrasound tech said, what if you were having two?

And our lives changed from that moment forward. Now, I'm not certain how Bethany responded other than the stammering of shock as she kept asking the tech, are you serious?

[4 : 46] Are there two? If you don't believe me, I actually recorded it. I wanted to hear the heartbeat. That's something I wasn't able to do on the other ones. I don't know if that's a violation, so I might get in trouble for saying that.

I might have to cut this off the sermon. But, you know, I wanted to get that initial heartbeat because it's just a beautiful moment. And unbeknownst to me, I was recording the most shocking moment of our lives, of us responding to that.

I know for certain that my mouth dropped so low that you could probably fit a cantaloupe in. And I forgot how to speak English. It was very clear in the recording.

But what a surprise. What a shock. What a historic moment. As Forrest Gump wisely said, life's like a bunch of chocolates.

You never know what you're going to get. But the moment we realize what we do get in life, whether good or bad, whether trial or blessings, it leaves us in shock.

[5 : 58] You know, before we had twins, we had the shock of going in for the first ultrasound and not hearing a heartbeat. That really happened. And it was just as shocking to us as it were, realizing that we were having twins.

And it hits you on both sides of the spectrum. And today, our text, we enter a historic account of the angelic announcements. And once again, from the angel Gabriel.

And this angel would visit the slums of a city of Galilee named Nazareth in verse 26. This is the place you don't go out at night.

A corrupt city. And in verse 27, we see we meet who the angel came to visit to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David.

And the virgin's name was Mary. In the original language, it's Miriam. Now, theologically, we should find it odd that an angel would have anything to do with a shoddy city like that.

[7 : 18] Right? Or to come to the probably run-down home of Mary. As opposed to what we saw last week, the angel appearing in the holy place of the tabernacle, surrounded in beauty.

And now to this place. I mean, certainly Nathaniel had it right in John's gospel. John chapter 1, verse 46.

Nathaniel said, Nazareth? Can anything good come from there? Right? I get that all the time when people ask me where I'm from.

I'm from Youngstown and I proudly wear that. I'm from Youngstown. They're like, why? Do you not know?

There's other places. I'm like, Youngstown is my home. Right? What a surprise to Mary.

[8 : 24] What a shock that an angel would come to her and to see her. What a historic moment. And not only that, but this mighty angel visits this young teenage girl.

She's dated probably around 12 to 14 years old in this passage. She was legally bound to her husband through betrothal.

And to separate at this point is basically equal to divorce. Joseph is preparing their home. And in contrast to the nobility of Zachariah and Elizabeth last week, Mary would have had nothing.

She's the complete opposite of Zachariah and Elizabeth. You know, a 12-year-old, 14-year-old doesn't know all these things within Scripture. They don't have that time.

They have 14 years of building credibility in their own lives where Zachariah and Elizabeth were elderly, really old. So what you have is old and now young, a story that stands in contrast with last week.

[9 : 35] And we meet here literally a nobody in the middle of nowhere in the text today. What a surprise coming out of a passage last week.

What a shock and what a historic moment. Well, by the end of our time today, we're going to see something develop.

We're going to see that good news is intended for humble people. And with that, I have a sermon titled Good News in Unexpected Places.

I'm going to break this text into two separate sections and to capitalize upon Luke's unfolding of this narrative.

And I want us to see that good news is intended for humble people so that we can be reinforced upon that according to God's Word. And so let's pray and we'll get to it.

[10 : 46] Amen. Amen. Lord, we come to you needing you to speak to us. We desire to hear from you today with our Word open, our Bible open, with our hearts open, our ears open.

Father, help us to receive your Word however you desire for it to be received whether correction, encouragement, or rebuke. Father, let it be done for your Word is for our good.

Speak to us today, Lord. We praise in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. And so the first section is God's grace is troubling and comforting.

God's grace is God's grace and in verse 28 the narrative continues. You've got the characters set up.

We meet the nobody in the middle of nowhere with this somebody of an angel that just got done visiting two somebodies in the temple.

[12:05] And so now the angel speaks and he came to her and said in verse 28 look with me greetings oh favored one the Lord is with you.

Gabriel is here and he's at it once again. The unfolding redemptive plan of God which broke the 400 year of silence in the passage last week continues to be broken and unfolding continuously nearly a year later in the second appearance.

What a pronouncement. The Catholics love this one. Hail full of grace is what they say.

The Lord is with you. it's just amazing what you can come up with with your own renderings of Greek words as the Vulgate's faulty translation did.

Many scholars believe that that language is actually way out of context with what Luke desired to write and Luke will have words one day with them Vulgate readers.

[13:28] A sober understanding of this greeting is favored one just as we have in the text that's accurate. She's favored.

Favored in the sense that out of the billion women in the world at this time God chose her. She's blessed indeed obviously and it has nothing to do with her.

She's got 12 years of a track record. It's got nothing to do with her age. It solely reflects the fact that God's decreed selection of her brought her this honor just as it is for all those in Scripture that have been chosen.

You see this greeting has two significant elements. It's God's special favor and God's special presence that brings about this significant greeting. This greeting echoes the greeting of Gideon back in Judges chapter 6 verse 12 where an angel of the Lord visited Gideon hiding in a wine press hiding from danger safe in his little hole and the angel of the Lord appeared to him and said to him the Lord is with you almighty man of valor and here's Gideon don't put me outside right making wine it had nothing to do with anything of him in himself but what God planned to do through Gideon which made him a mighty man of valor and thus both Gideon and Mary's honor is contingent upon the Lord's plan of redemption working through them and you can hear the shock in her voice she says or she didn't say anything actually here she was greatly troubled in verse 29 she was troubled at the saying troubled she tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be it's like she's she's like are you at the right home do you know where you are do you know who

I am in the BLT you ever hear that the Brent's living translation or the BLT sandwich you get the same thrust if you're hungry for either you know the BLT it would go by like say what are you kidding me favored maybe in the crooked head to reinforce the confusion in a very literal sense Mary was speechless as she pondered the meaning of this greeting young teenage Mary from the ghetto living in a ghetto home duct tape on the door and the windows no known public reputation a nobody in the middle of nowhere and God chose her this is in stark contrast with Zachariah who seemed to be more troubled at the appearance of the angel rather than the message of the angel and

[17:02] Mary was more troubled at the message rather than the appearance and unlike Zachariah who doubted Mary sought understanding what could this mean in verse 30 the angel said to her do not be afraid 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 Yeshua 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 of his kingdom there will be no end what a declaration and he didn't just say it he declared it right and what

God declares it will be done what a surprise what a shock what a historic truth where in the world would Mary ever find fear says do not be afraid well if it's any consolation to her response where she was greatly troubled at the saying that she was fearful she tried to discern what sort of green that might be her preponderance is the message what did he say to her greetings oh favored one the Lord is with you she thinks the angel got the wrong house but doesn't this reinforce the fact that God's grace when we realize it found us is really troubling right me

I can be forgiven for all that isn't grace troubling it's troubling in the fact that it always finds us in a state of unworthiness or at least it should for such agreeing to be stated to a nobody in the middle of nowhere is quite troubling here we don't deserve it we can't earn it but still God bestows it grace to those unworthy which is a theological astute definition of grace it's a troubling thought to any humble individual that God would save them that God would give them the opportunity to be saved from their sins and this is a precisely this is precisely a theological reality that we need to come to grips with and be reinforced with today in other words the good news of the gospel cannot be received by someone who believes that they're entitled to receive it

God isn't a people pleaser if you don't believe me look through the Old Testament scriptures God is never obligated by any other will other than his own to save other than his sovereign will and church when grace catches us off guard like this what a comfort that we have what a comfort to know that the moment we received the grace of God we realize that God met us in our mess in the middle of nowhere to nobodies grace he found us and all of which God was never obligated to do you see the humble receive grace where the entitled completely miss out upon it

Paul reinforces his own to his own discredit love how Paul puts himself on the chopping block in his unworthiness he says in 1 Timothy chapter 1 verse 15 the saying is trustworthy and deserving of full acceptance that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners of whom I am the foremost but I but I receive mercy for this reason that in me as the foremost Jesus Christ might display his perfect patience as an example to those who were to believe in him for eternal life church our redemption is wrought by the work of God not by the work of man the second section continues

[22 : 57] God's grace demands surrender verse 34 Mary said to the angel how will this be since I am a virgin now unlike Zachariah last week Mary was not disciplined here she was also not disbelieving here and the phraseology here indicates that she's simply asking for enlightenment she's interested in this plan but she has no idea what's at what's at stake right now what's that going to look like this question is is simply biological how can a virgin become pregnant that's not logical that doesn't even make sense and the angel said to 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 set apart holy the son of God the angels already established what this savior Jesus will do with all this fulfilled prophecy of the Old Testament his kingdom will have no ends and now we find out exactly who he's going to be the credentials and so how is it biologically possible for a virgin to become pregnant and yet remain a virgin because she still has no sexual relations this is a biological phenomenon a miracle a miraculous phenomenon at its core scientists are still wondering at the birth of creation as

Christians understand it the spirit hovered over the waters and still biologists inquire about such a question regularly arguing that something how does something come out of nothing this is the thrust of Mary's biological question now you've probably seen the movies no thanks to Greek mythology for dramatizing sexual relations between higher powers and human beings you won't find any crude sexual suggestions here but what you do find is a figure of speech that describes the miraculous activity of God of God overshadowing you just as it was in the transfiguration this is transfiguration miraculous God work occurring in humanity in real time and space and so the biological question is raised how does something come out of nothing and it's as if

Luke is forcing his readers and us today to look at this entire narrative of Mary the nobody and Nazareth the nowhere to reinforce not biology but theology that God is able to do exactly what he wants and what he wills to do God the creator of everything can make something out of nothing because he's the creator God is able and the theological significance of this miracle far outweighs any biological unknowns we have to get past the biology and get to the theology and ask ourselves not how this all happened but why did this happen why did this have to happen this way why would this miraculous conception be needed why would

Jesus need to be conceived by the spirit within a human not how but why well in order for God's plan of salvation to be possible God had to bypass original sin bypass the corruption that was passed down generation after generation seed after seed from Adam that all mankind has inherited Galatians 4 4 says but when the fullness of time had come God sent forth his son born of a woman born under the law to save those under the law to become human in Hebrews 2 17 therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of

[28 : 39] God to make satisfaction for the sins of the people you see through the seed of God and the womb of a woman God himself clothed himself in humanity and qualified himself to be able to save to be able to save and to be a satisfaction for the penalty of sin what a shock surprise and it's a historic truth and just as Gideon was given a sign in Judges 6 so too Mary would be given a sign as well the angel says and behold your relative Elizabeth in her old age don't you love that he's called her an old lady in her old age has also conceived a son and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren verse 37 for nothing will be impossible with

God can't God do it can't God miraculously intervene within our lives according to his sovereign and redemptive purpose of course he's God therefore as the grace of God not only must be received humbly but we see it also must be lived out received sacrificially God's grace demands surrender Mary said in verse 38 behold I am the servant of the Lord God is my master I am his servant let it be to me according to your word and the angel departed from her did she understand everything were all her questions answered unlikely very unlikely but what she did what she did what she trusted God's word God's grace demands surrender in 1738 I don't know what those kids are doing down there I know it's not my kids they're at home sick we just got a witness in 1738 Charles Wesley wrote his famous hymn and can it be that I should gain he said and can it be that I should gain an interest in the Savior's blood died he for me who caused his pain for me who him to death pursued amazing love how can it be that thou my God should die for me are you on board with the promises of God who are we to question his sovereignty if

Forrest Gump is true that life is like a box of chocolates you don't know what you're going to get when you do get what God decreed for you to get do you receive it with open arms do you say let it be to me according to your words who are we to question God's plans where were we as he spoke to Job when God created the foundations of the world where were we see good news is intended for humble people what a surprise and what a shock and what a historic truth let's pray