



Sermon-Based Study Guide  
Good Shepherd Presbyterian Church

Luke 1.26-38

Prepared by Curtis A. Bronzan, ThM  
curtis@gspc.org | 562/493.2553 x115

I. Introduction to this Series and Study

This week we continue our Advent series The Greatest Gift, turning our attention to Mary, a teenage girl chosen to give birth to the Messiah!

II. Connecting With One Another

When was the last time you were asked to do something difficult? How did you respond?

III. Study the Text

a. Read Luke 1.26-38.

Recall from last week's study that Mary was in the first of a two-stage marriage process. While Matthew relays the story from Joseph's perspective, Luke engages the birth of Jesus from Mary's experience. His portrait of Mary includes her chastity, thoughtfulness, and obedience.

Look over these verses again, finding each of these aspects of Mary's character, writing out the verses in your own words below:

Chastity: \_\_\_\_\_

Thoughtfulness: \_\_\_\_\_

Obedience: \_\_\_\_\_

Why do you think Luke takes the time (and papyrus!) to point these things out?

Why is it important for his audience to know these things about Mary?

b. It should be noted that despite these qualities, God's choice of Mary does not spring from any inherent merit she possesses, but rather from God's unmerited grace.

"Her description as one who has found *favor with God* makes it clear that God has acted on her behalf and not because of her. In fact, Mary is totally perplexed by the sudden announcement. She did not ask for or seek this role in God's plans; God has simply stepped into her life and brought her into his service. Her asset is that she is faithful."

Where have you experienced God's unmerited grace in your life?

How has God "stepped into your life and brought you into his service"?

How could you be increasingly faithful in God's call on your life?

- c. This angelic announcement to Mary follows the announcement to Zechariah earlier in Luke 1. Read Luke 1.5-17, noting as any similarities and differences as you can find:

Similarities

Differences

- d. Though she was "highly favored with God," Mary's interaction with the angel invited her into significant service. One commentator writes, "[T]hose highly favored by God do not have a life of unbroken happiness... For three thousand years [the] chosen people have suffered perhaps as no other people. The Auschwitzes and Dachaus are only the latest in a whole line of indignities and obscenities endured by the chosen people. And I would like to believe that Mary understood at some level that there is a tremendous price to be paid by those who are highly favored by God... The chosen, the highly favored of God, should be prepared for pain and suffering."

What do you make of this quote? Do you agree? Why or why not?

- e. Read Matthew 5.3-12 and John 16.31-33.

How do these verses inform or challenge your responses to the above questions?

- f. Read Luke 1.29-33.

The announcement of Jesus' birth in Luke 1 echoes similar announcements in the Old Testament. See, for instance, Genesis 16.11 and Isaiah 7.14.

What similarities and differences do you see in these passages?

- g. As a physician himself, Luke may have initially been skeptical about Jesus' miraculous birth. "And yet he is the one who records in detail the angel's message to Mary, that she, a virgin, was to be mysteriously impregnated by God's Holy Spirit and that no earthly father was to be involved."

Was it necessary for Jesus to be born of a virgin? Why or why not?

- h. Some theologians have argued that Jesus had to be born of a virgin to escape the original sin passed down through all earthly parents.

What do you make of this idea? Do you agree or disagree?

- i. In Luke 1.32-33 and 35, Luke emphasizes three things about Jesus: His position, His authority, and His divinity. Look over these verses, then rewrite Luke's words in the corresponding spaces:

Position: \_\_\_\_\_

Authority: \_\_\_\_\_

Divinity: \_\_\_\_\_

Why is each of these important to emphasize?

- j. Jesus, the coming king of the Davidic line, fulfills promises found in 2nd Samuel 7.8-17, Psalm 89 & 132, Isaiah 9.5-6 & 11.1-5, 10, and Jeremiah 23.5-6.

Which of these do you see most obviously fulfilled in Jesus' earthly ministry?

Are there any that haven't yet been fully fulfilled? What do you make of those?

- k. Mary's question in verse 34 is understandable. In the angel's response, he states, "Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age." This has happened before in Scripture (see Genesis 11 and 25, for examples).

Why do you think God does things out of the ordinary like this? Is there a purpose?

- l. In Luke 1.37, the angel Gabriel states, "For no word from God will ever fail."

How do you understand this statement? What "word from God" have you had trouble believing?

- m. Mary's response to this divine declaration is simply, "I am the Lord's servant... May your word to me be fulfilled."

What "word from God" do you need to respond to this way today?

#### IV. Pray

- a. Thank God for Mary's faithfulness in responding to the angel this way,
- b. Ask God to reveal ways in which you could be increasingly faithful to God's call on your life,
- c. Lift up the pastors, staff, elders, deacons, and leaders of Good Shepherd, that they would lead like Mary, as "the Lord's servants."