

SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE

For the Week of December 7, 2014

SERMON: “An Unlikely Choice”

TEXT: Luke 1:26-38

PREACHER: Matt Ryman

- 1) Read Luke 1:26-38

- 2) In this passage, Gabriel comes to Mary to announce that she will give birth to the Messiah. Compare Gabriel’s announcement to Zechariah in 1:5-25. How do the two announcements compare?
 - This announcement is a continuation of God’s announcing his coming to His people.
 - Gabriel appeared to Zechariah and told him of the miracle that would occur in their family: that John would be born to Zechariah and Elizabeth and that he would lead the people of Israel to repentance (1:16-17). John would be great and his whole life started with a great miracle.
 - Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her of the miraculous way that she would have a child, even though she was a virgin. This was a greater miracle than Elizabeth’s pregnancy, which is fitting because Jesus would be greater than John. Surely a virgin becoming pregnant was a far greater miracle than an older lady who had been married for decades!

- 3) In v.18 Zechariah questions Gabriel and in v.34 Mary questions Gabriel. Zechariah was rebuked and muted for his question, but Gabriel just answered Mary’s question. Why do you think there was a difference in Gabriel’s responses?
 - Look at the questions they ask. Zechariah asks “How shall I know this?” and Mary asks “How will this be?” Zechariah’s answer implies that he doesn’t believe Gabriel and therefore is not trusting God’s very word. Mary’s answer doesn’t show disbelief, it just shows that she is wondering “How will God do this?” She believes the message and just wants some more details. She confirms this obedient attitude with her words in v.38.

- 4) In v.30, the text states that Mary “found favor with God.” Can you think of other Biblical texts where people “found favor” with God (for two examples, see Genesis 6:8 and Exodus 33:17)? What does it mean to find favor with God?

- The word favour is translated from the Greek word “charis” and the Hebrew word “chen” which means grace. Mary did not earn the right to be the mother of Jesus, just like Noah didn’t earn the right to survive the flood and Moses didn’t earn the right to see God. When God has grace on someone He is giving them something because He is good, not because the person is good. This plays out in our own salvation as we read in Ephesians 2:8 “For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; **it is the gift of God**”
- 5) The climax of this section of scripture is in v.34 where Mary asks how she could become pregnant while still being a virgin. The virgin birth of Jesus is vital to God’s plan to save mankind from their sin. Do you agree? Why or why not?
- Mankind has been sinful since Adam and Eve committed the first sin in Genesis 3. At that point, God said that all of mankind would have to die (Gen.3:19) but he also said that a son of Eve would one day crush the enemy (3:15). How could this happen naturally? It couldn’t. We needed God to intervene and make a way for mankind to receive forgiveness of their sin. Therefore, Jesus (God the Son/ 2nd member of the Trinity) took on flesh and lived among us as the “new Adam”, indeed the fully obedient Adam. This speaks to Christ’s divinity (because he had no earthly father) as well as his humanity (because he was born of a woman). He is indeed the God-man! Fully God, fully man. This was the only way that mankind could be saved from their sins. If Jesus had an earthly father, then he was just a man and we are still lost in our sin with no hope of eternal life.
- 6) What can we learn from Mary’s willing obedience amidst the craziest news that she ever received in her life? She was chosen by GOD to give birth to His only Son. Would you have been so willing and obedient? Discuss the ramifications this would have had on her and Joseph. What would that have looked like in your family?
- 7) Vv.32-33 tell us about Jesus’ kingdom having no end. Read Isaiah 9:6-7. Discuss Christ’s kingdom and the names that are attributed to Jesus in the Isaiah text. How should this affect our mission as followers of Christ? (Matthew 28:19-20)