



John Battaglia, D. Min.
PO Box 891, Jefferson City, MO 65102
573-355-4161//Twitter @johnabattaglia
John.battaglia@capitolcom.org

Luke 1:26-38

Weekly Bible Study Schedule

Tuesday, March 17, 7:00 AM in HHR #5
(breakfast provided)

Tuesday, March 17, 8:30 PM in Office #225
(Sen. Wayne Wallingford's office)

INTRODUCTION

If there is one thing you can expect from God it's the unexpected.

That's what happened to one young woman, named Mary. In today's text, **Luke 1:26-38**, Mary, a young virgin woman, was told of an ensuing miracle. Young virgin women do not have babies in natural circumstances. It was the supernatural work of the Holy Spirit by which Mary conceived. The Holy Spirit is the impetus of the miracle and the one that carries it forward.

Mary's experience is beyond normative. Interestingly, she didn't resist the new direction God was leading her into. She had questions, she needed some clarification and she said yes to this unexpected path. It wasn't like God directed her to move to a different city or to change jobs. This was **BIG**. Everything would **CHANGE**. What might have happened if she resisted? Perhaps, the Lord would have selected someone else to work through. The Bible doesn't specifically say. Regardless, His plan would have been accomplished.

What about you and me? How do you and I respond when God's unplanned calling collides with our neatly packaged lives? My hunch is each of us have had unexpected intervals in our lives, some of them good and some tragic. Is it possible that God will use the "unexpected" to work our His will and plan for your life? If so, and I believe that's the case, He is more capable to bring about the best results for your life, than you can on your own.

Your experience may feel like you're behind a curtain on a stage, unable to

see the audience, yet know they are present.

God is present, even if you can't see Him. If you quietly listen, you will hear Him call you forward into a new stage of life. He will applaud your faith and courage.

It's natural for endorphins to explode in our bodies whenever God leads us into uncharted territories.

For some, they are paralyzed by excuses holding them back from entering a new land of possibilities. Maybe you're afraid to take risks: you want to understand everything before you do it. Unless God qualifies His directional map in the fine print, you refrain from signing off in agreement. Others may be more concerned about one's earthly reputation, what people might think, than the significance of living in the higher calling.

For Mary, a supernatural destiny was at work. My hunch is God is at work within you in a non-conforming manner to advance His purposes and provide abundant life planned for you.

Although unexpected by Mary, the miracle birth of Jesus was planned long before her time.

In **Genesis 3:15**, God shows up and announces to the serpent, Satan,

*"I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; **he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.**"*

Isaiah 7:14, Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus Christ, Isaiah prophesized about the forthcoming of this male child:

*"The Lord himself will give you a **sign**. Behold, the **virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.**"*

Another significant announcement: God doesn't want anyone to miss the **BIGGEST** event in history, so He gives the world a supernatural sign that cannot be overlooked.

1:26 "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth..."

GABRIEL

Mary is unaware that Elizabeth is pregnant and unaware the same angel, Gabriel, visiting her has already visited her cousins. Gabriel is sent on behalf of God to bring Mary good news. Angels are messengers and ministers on assignment for God's business. These angels obey and love God. Angels who do not love and do not obey God, we call them demons. They're in rebellion against God led by Satan himself. Of all the angels in the Bible, only two are named: Gabriel and Michael. If you get an angel, it's a good day, if you get Gabriel it's a really good day. She gets Gabriel.

NAZARETH

Nazareth is mentioned here in Luke. It's not mentioned in the Old Testament, and it's not mentioned in the Apocrypha, or the Talmud. It's not mentioned in the ancient historian Josephus' record because no one important came from or to Nazareth. It was nothing. We know it to be 70 miles north of Jerusalem, 22 miles from the Mediterranean to its east, and 15 miles west of the north tip of the Sea of Galilee. It is on the southern slopes of the Lebanon mountain range and the northern edge of the Jezreel valley. It is just a little town nestled away in a valley. And it's right at the north of the Plain of Esdraelon, also called Megiddo, where the battle of Armageddon will be fought.

Nazareth may not have been on most people's map. The Disciple Nathaniel says in John 1:46,

"Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

The assumption is, no, and yet, the angel Gabriel shows up with a supernatural message. **This was altogether unexpected.** God had Nazareth on His map, and more importantly, God had Mary on His map. And He has you on His map. God seeks to meet us where we are. God

sent Gabriel to earth with the revelation of Messiah's impending miraculous virgin birth. Just as Jesus was present in Mary's womb, it's God, the Father's, plan for Jesus to be spiritually present with and in us.

Almost 4 out of 10 people reading this message are facing serious brokenness. There are conflicts in one's marriage, upside down finances, disappointed aspirations, perhaps, death of a family member. **You are on God's map!**

1:27 to a virgin, betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary.

JOSEPH

Joseph was young, probably a teenager. He was most likely 14-16 years of age. He was a poor carpenter. He lived in Nazareth, a simple little town. He was from the kingly line of David. He was of royal blood (cf. Matthew 1). Although Joseph was not Jesus' biological father, he was Jesus' earthly father, the way we know adoption, which was legally binding. From the lineage of David, Jesus was born.

VIRGIN

Virgin is the word parthenos, it means, "one who has had no sexual relation." According to Roman law, the minimum age for girls to be engaged and married was twelve. Girls were usually engaged around twelve or thirteen and married after the engagement or the betrothal was over.

BETROTHAL

Betrothal was when there was a pledge to be married. Now, a girl could be as young as 12 and betrothed to be married. The betrothal would begin with a simple ceremony anticipating the wedding. It's not the same as our engagement. Betrothal was a binding, legal relationship, and parents arranged it. It was a legal document. Betrothal was so serious that to terminate a betrothal required a divorce. At the end of the year of betrothal, they wouldn't live together, they wouldn't

sleep together, and they wouldn't consummate their relationship. Afterward, they had an official wedding ceremony, subsequently, live together as husband and wife, and consummate their relationship physically with intimacy.

1:28-33 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. 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 bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. 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."

FAVORED BY GOD

Gabriel shows up and gives this grand announcement, "Mary, God has favored you. He has chosen you." The word "favor" means grace, undeserved merit. Mary was saved by grace. She was chosen by God to be a recipient of grace. The same is true for all who become Christ-followers; we're chosen by God to be recipients of grace. His favor is upon you. We don't deserve His grace, yet He freely gives us His grace. When we say yes to His gift of grace, God's favor is upon you.

Religion is all about what you do to earn God's favor. Christianity is all about God favoring you by grace.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God..." (Ephesians 2:8)

JESUS

His name means: "**Savior, God saves me from my sins**". Not only was He fully man, He was fully God. "The Son of God," is a divine title. Jesus is God, the Son, second member of the Trinity. Trinity can be understood as three distinct persons, one divine essence (meaning one God), otherwise known as the Godhead. God, the Father, God,

the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit, are each co-equal and co-existent.

We're all sinners. The Apostle Paul said he was the chief of sinners. There are times I feel I'm a close second. How about you?

"for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." (Romans 3:23)

Jesus is holy. He is sinless. When He died, He died not for His sins, He had none, but for our sins so that we might be forgiven. He forgives us.

SON OF THE MOST HIGH

Jesus is the Son of the Most High God, the same as the Most High God. In other words, His sovereign rule, He is the preeminent God.

KING JESUS

Jesus is eternal. He lived before His birth; He lives after His resurrection and ascension, eternally existing without beginning or end. He is the King of Kings, and His kingdom will have no end (cf. 2 Samuel 7:8-16).

1:34 And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

MARY'S QUESTION

Unlike Zachariah, whose question emerged from unbelief, Mary believed. She just didn't understand. She's a virgin, she's 12, she's poor, she lives in Nazareth, and she's a simple ordinary girl. The Scripture doesn't say, maybe Mary was thinking, "did I miss this lesson when momma told me about the birds and the bees?"

She wasn't seeking a sign, yet Gabriel gave her answers and a sign. It's acceptable to ask questions. Ask the Lord to show you the way, to direct you or to help you understand...the question isn't the issue; it's faith, it's the attitude in which we approach God. Faith is moving forward even before we have all the answers. Faith is absolute surrender to God and to trust Him before the Ah's light up.

1:35-37 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 with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God.”

GOD OF THE IMPOSSIBLE

Life has a way to cook down God’s promises to a minimum, into a kind of ordinariness. However, God is anything but ordinary. Mary was ordinary, Joseph was ordinary, Nazareth was ordinary, but God is extraordinary, He is supernatural. God is not irrational He is transrational. The most brilliant person on earth is finite in his or her thinking. Human intelligence may have taught people the way to pierce the sound barrier, but the aggregate of neurological prowess, will never enter the infinite, well, at least not until, eternity.

Perhaps you need God to answer a prayer, heal a body, restore a broken relationship, provide a financial miracle...**nothing** is impossible for God. **Nothing** is too big for God.

The angel promised much to Mary. However, some of the fulfillment of promises didn’t happen immediately. Some took three years, some over the course of her life. Point is, God’s promises are true and sure, and they don’t always happen immediately. Faith mixed with patience enjoys the benefits of God’s promises.

If God could enable Elizabeth to have a baby, if God could supernaturally impregnate Mary, if God could come to earth in the form of a human, if God could forgive the sins of humankind through His death on a cross, resurrect from the dead, ascend to heaven, and eventually return to earth to take His followers to heaven to live eternally with Him and all those that believed, then, **ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE WITH GOD!**

1:38 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.

A SIMPLE FAITH

Mary’s response is full surrender to the Lord. I am yours Lord. Do whatever you want to do with and through me. Now Mary had questions. She didn’t understand it all, but she did choose to believe and trust the Lord.

CONCLUSION

I pray your response will be that of Mary. If you have questions or comments about this sermon email me indicating so. I’m more than happy to speak with you.

SELECTED RESOURCES

Block, Darrell L. *Luke, Volume 1: 1:1-9:50: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Academic, 1994)

Green, Joel B. *The Gospel of Luke* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1997)

Harris, Ralph W, ed., Stanley M. Horton, ed., and Gayle Garrity Seaver, ed., *The New Testament Study Bible: Luke Volume 4* (Springfield, Missouri: The Complete Biblical Library, 1988)

Liefeld Walter L. “The Expositor’s Bible Commentary” with *The New International Version, Volume 8*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelin (Grand Rapids, Michigan: The Zondervan Corporation, 1984)

Marshall, I. Howard. *Luke: Historian and Theologian* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 1970)

Morris, Canon Leon, The Reverend. *The Gospel According to St. Luke: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: InterVarsity Press, 1974; reprint, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1982).