



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

Mary's Impossible Story!

Luke 1:26-38

Message #2 of 50 – S774

Sermon given on January 14, 2018



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

Mary's Impossible Story!

Luke 1:26-38

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 1**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- Luke's goal in writing this narrative was to give us an orderly accounting of the life and ministry of Jesus
- Everyone's life can be described in many different ways
- There are events, details, people, and places
- And the most effective way of communicating those things to others is by weaving them into a narrative, a story
- Humans were created to communicate through stories
- A well-told story does more than just communicate information, it invites the hearer to enter into the story
- Luke's gospel is written in such a way as to invite us into the life and ministry of Jesus Christ
- Luke continues the narrative of Jesus with a story that people have struggled to believe since the very first time it was told – the Virgin Birth
- But if you don't believe this story, you will have a problem with a lot of what Luke shares with us
- Let's get into the story of the announcement of this miraculous event
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **Mary's Impossible Story!**
- Last time Luke told us about the announcement of the miraculous conception to the old couple Zacharias and Elizabeth
- There are some interesting contrasts between the first two stories in Luke's gospel
- **Luke 1:26-27**
- The first contrast is the location of the visitations

- When Gabriel appeared to Zacharias, he was in the temple in Jerusalem
- Jerusalem was the capital of the nation of Israel – still is
- The temple was the religious center of the nation – was the only place on earth where sacrifices could be made to God
- Nazareth was a small insignificant town in the northern part of Israel that had a bad reputation for corruption
- When Philip told Nathanael that he had found the Messiah, and told him Jesus was from Nazareth **John 1:46**
And Nathanael said to him, “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” Philip said to him, “Come and see.”
- When Gabriel appeared in the temple, it was to a priest performing one of the most important roles of his life – burning incense before the Lord
- Here Gabriel appears in the home of a poor young girl, named Mary
- Twice in verse 27 we are told she was a virgin – had never been with a man sexually
- Also told that she was ‘betrothed’ – similar to being engaged, but much more binding
- Culturally, girls married early in life – usually around 15 or 16 – though some historians suggest this could have happened as early as 12
- The man was typically older, at least well into his twenties
- Remember, they viewed life and the world differently than we do
- Marriages were arranged by the parents, possibly with little or no input from the girl
- As soon as a girl was old enough to start having children, she would be available to be married to a man who was able to provide a home and living for the family she would bring into the world
- To be ‘betrothed’ meant a marriage had been arranged
- The betrothal period could last up to a year
- Culturally same as being married, but not living together or having relations – ended by death or divorce for infidelity before wedding day

- When Gabriel appeared to Zacharias, it was on the most significant day of his life as he performed the once-in-a-lifetime service of burning incense to the Lord in the temple
 - Gabriel appeared to Mary as she was planning for the most important day of her life – what she would hope would be her once-in-a-lifetime wedding day
 - It is not hard to imagine that what happens next was not in her plans
 - **Luke 1:28-30**
 - Mary was a young unmarried girl in a nothing town far from Jerusalem and the temple
 - It is very likely that she wasn't the prettiest girl in Nazareth
 - It is also likely that at her young age, she hadn't accomplished anything great in her life
 - It is highly likely that no one expected anything great from this poor young girl
 - Mary reminds us that God doesn't need great people to do great things
 - God can use the unusable to do the impossible
 - 'you have found favor with God' = God chose Mary for this great work – not based on her merit, but on His grace
 - What Gabriel says next really rocks her
 - **Luke 1:31-33**
 - In these three verses Gabriel lays out a huge amount of theology
 - Mary is going to conceive and have a Son = pointing to His humanity
 - Picking a name for your child is one of the great privileges of parents
 - Mary didn't get to pick – 'call Him Jesus'
 - Fairly common name – Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew name Joshua = Yahweh saves – the Lord is salvation
 - His name = His mission to the earth **1 Timothy 1:15**
- This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.**
- 'He will be great' – how might Mary have interpreted that statement
 - Do you think it included rejection, persecution, betrayal, and death on a Roman cross?
 - 'called Son of the Highest' = Most High God – God Almighty – pointing to His deity

- ‘throne of His father David’ = He will be the promised Messiah
- As a good Jewish girl, she would have been familiar with the passage **Isaiah 9:6-7**

For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given; and the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called Wonderful, Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of *His* government and peace *there will be* no end, upon the throne of David and over His kingdom, to order it and establish it with judgment and justice from that time forward, even forever. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will perform this.

- Gabriel told Mary that she would be blessed with what every Jewish girl hoped for – to be the vessel through whom the Messiah would come to the earth
- We don’t know how long Mary pondered this before speaking, but her response is amazing

- **Luke 1:34**

- Zacharias responded in unbelief about something that God had done previously in Scriptures
- Mary’s response is to ask for clarification – she believes it will happen, but doesn’t understand how it will happen
- God loves believing questions – He doesn’t always answer them any better than He does Mary’s question, but it blesses God when we believe

- **Luke 1:35**

- Basically, Gabriel answered her question by saying it will be a miracle
- It was a supernatural event that cannot be explained using human terms
- It was going to be an act of the creative power that was present at the beginning **Genesis 1:1**

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

- This is the doctrine of the ‘virgin birth’ of Jesus
- Why did Jesus need to be born of a virgin?
- The bible teaches that all humans are born with a sin nature, and that sin nature is passed down to us through the man
- Jesus has existed eternally and has always been holy, had to be conceived into human flesh apart from the sin nature of man
- Because no man was involved in the conception of Jesus, He would be born the ‘Holy One – the Son of God’

- Zacharias asked Gabriel to prove that what he said was going to happen – struck mute for nine months – unbelief will always cost you something
- Mary doesn't ask for proof, but Gabriel gives it to her – her faith, her belief earns her more grace
- **Luke 1:36-37**
- God spoke the universe into existence – He formed the first human out of the dust of the earth – He opened the womb of an old barren woman – why would this be any harder than that?
- Mary believed what Gabriel said and God gave her evidence for her to base her belief on
- Too many people are waiting for evidence before they believe
- They are waiting for God to do something before they respond to what God has told them
- Mary didn't have all the answers to what it meant to be the mother of the Messiah, but she trusted God who chose her to do it
- **Luke 1:38**
- God told her that she was going to conceive a son without the aid of a man
- Her response was to tell God that she was willing to go along with God's plan
- In our culture, we don't understand the risk she is taking to say yes to God
- If a young unmarried woman gets pregnant today, people will often base their response on how the woman feels about it
- By accepting God's will for her life, Mary was risking her whole future
- Her fiancé thought about sending her away, which would have meant she would never be able to marry
- Her father could reject her, and she would be cast out, forcing her to beg to survive, or worse, turn to prostitution
- The moment she said 'yes' to God, the future she had envisioned for herself was officially over
- I see in Mary's response one of the most courageous and faith-filled statements in all of Scripture

- This is a living example of **Romans 12:1**

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, *which is your reasonable service.*

- Mary is offering God her whole life – she offered God the life she wanted for the life that God wanted for her, no matter what that meant
- Mary was so common that you probably wouldn't have noticed her
- But within her lay a hidden faith that earned her the description of 'blessed among women'
- Mary does not deserve our worship, but she does deserve our respect
- She is a model of simple faith in God and a willingness to obey Him even when His plan is radically different than our own
- God gave Mary an impossible story
- People struggled or refused to believe her story of the virgin birth for her whole life
- That is until her Son did the impossible and raised Himself from the dead
- It is highly unlikely that the story God has given you to live out is as impossible as Mary's
- What's keeping you from living out God's will for your life?
- Mary believed the impossible because God said it
- When God speaks – just believe – then say 'yes' – and then watch Him do the impossible
- I love being the pastor of this church
- When I said yes to God and my pastor to plant this church, I didn't know what the future held for Kelly and me
- We didn't know that God was calling us to do something impossible
- We didn't know about all the hurts, disappointments, and discouragements that would come
- We didn't know how much it would hurt when people we loved left the church
- We didn't know about the daily ache in our hearts for all the hurts and difficult circumstances the people in the church were experiencing
- We didn't know how impossible it was to do what God was asking us to do
- But we believed Him, we said yes, and we learned to trust Him

- And He has surrounded us with people who love us and serve Him
- I love that God called me to be the pastor here at CCFV, and I'll serve Him here as long as He wants me to
- Trust God, say yes to Him, and watch the impossible become possible
- Let's pray!