

The Thrill of Hope - Part 2 - Luke 1:26-45

Icebreaker:

What are your favorite activities during the Christmas season?

Background:

In the previous study (Luke 1:5-25), we learned Zachariah and Elizabeth were barren in their senior years. In their culture, childlessness was a sign of disgrace. The Archangel Gabriel appeared to Zachariah and foretold that they would have a son, whom we know as John the Baptist. With God's promise in hand, Luke 1:25 accounted how Elizabeth shed her feeling of shame. Like Elizabeth, it is easy to see oneself through the eyes of shame. Now, in this week's study, we will learn how Gabriel appears again, but this time, speaking to a young virgin named Mary.

Faith is the willingness to look foolish.

Read Luke 1:26-45 together

Luke 1:26-34 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; His kingdom will never end." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

1. What do you think Gabriel is saying to Mary in verse 28?
2. What does "being called highly favored" in verse 28 and "finding favor with God" in verse 30 and 42-45 mean?
3. How do we find favor with God or can we? (Ephesians 2:8-10)

Ephesians 2:8-10. For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith — and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God— not by works, so that no one can boast. For

we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

Note: "Favor" is the same Greek word for grace in Ephesians 2:8. "*favor, disposed to, inclined, favorable towards, leaning towards to share benefit*") - properly, *grace*. **5485 (xáris) is preeminently used of the Lord's *favor* - *freely extended to give Himself away to people* (because He is "always leaning toward them").**

4. How do we respond to God's favor?

5. Why did Mary respond to Gabriel's announcement the way she did? (Verse 29)

Note: In verse 34, Mary's question "How will this be" in the Greek is altogether different to that of verse 18 "How can this be" asked by Zechariah. Mary was asking for information, Zachariah was asking for proof. (Mills, M. S. *The Life of Christ: A Study Guide to the Gospel Record*. Dallas, TX: 3E Ministries, 1999. Print)

6. How is Mary's response different from Zechariah's? Why do you think Zechariah was made deaf and Mary was not?

7. How did Gabriel reassure Mary in verse 30?

8. What hope did the announcement of the Kingdom in verses 32,33 bring to Mary? What hope does the kingdom of God bring to us?

Vs. 35-38 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail." "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

9. What role did the Holy Spirit play in the virgin birth of Jesus Christ?

10. What assurance did Gabriel's words, "For no word from God will ever

fail” have for Mary, and all of us? (I Peter 1:24, 25)

Peter 1:24, 25 For, “All people are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field; the grass withers and the flowers fall, but the word of the Lord endures forever.”

11. Why might Mary’s willingness bring her shame in her culture? (Matthew 1:19)
How does honoring God in our lives sometimes bring scorn from our culture? (verse 38)

Matthew 1:19 Because Joseph her husband was a righteous man and did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

12. It can be said that Mary’s faith was her willingness to look foolish in her culture for the sake of finding hope. What does that say about her faith?

13. Today God makes known His promises through His Word. How has the Word of God brought hope to you that leads to faith?

Vs. 39-44 At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear! But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

14. In God’s divine plan, how was Mary’s favor from the Lord connected to Elizabeth’s favor having a son in old age?

15. How does Mary’s meeting with Elizabeth help both of them find community in obeying the Lord’s will? Why is it important for us to find community also?

16. As the baby leaped for joy, how did you respond when you first encountered Jesus?

17. How do you experience joy when you encounter Jesus?

Blessed are you when you believe God fulfills his promises to you.

Luke 1:45, Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill His promises to her!"

18. Mary believed, and when you believe in God through His Word for your eternity, what is the promise and what is the hope? (John 3:16-18)

John 3:16-18, " For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God". "For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. "He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God".

Hope is awakened when you encounter the favor of God and believe He is for you.