

## MARY: VOICE OF WONDER

SERIES: The Voices of Christmas

SERMON: #6 - Mary: The Voice of Wonder

SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:26-38

WEDNESDAY BLURB: Ever look at a newborn baby and see the face of God? Don't miss that the wonder of Christmas includes the miracle of birth, the overwhelming realization of new life, the wonder of looking into a brand new face. This Sunday Mary is the voice of Christmas. Come hear how the miracle of Christmas is a new born baby, the miracle of Christmas is the birth of new life. Jesus' new birth gives us new birth. Come this Sunday, in wonder!

**PP#1:** Luke 1:26-38

[1:26] In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, [27] to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. [28] The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

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**PP#2:** [29] Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. [30] But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. [31] You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. [32] 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, [33] and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end."

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**PP#3:** [35] The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon 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. [36] Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. [37] For nothing is impossible with God."

[38] "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

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**PP#4:** The Voices of Christmas

Mary: The Voice of Wonder

“Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call Him Immanuel.” -Isaiah 7:14

**Mary Speaks:**

White towel.

Of the voices of Christmas, you will hear none more astonished than mine. What happened to others leading up to that first Christmas may have been miraculous, but what happened to me was completely unique.

**PP#5:** *Image of the angel appearing to Mary, in her house.*

I am Mary. It began with the wonder of the angel. My father was in the field and my mother had gone to market. I was mending clothes, and I admit, I was daydreaming about Joseph, the man I had been betrothed to marry. He was older, for sure, twice my age, but at the age of 15 I was smitten with him. He was so mature, dignified, people respected him. I loved how he looked at me, those deep eyes, and his how he touched me so carefully with those rugged and calloused hands of his. I always felt so safe with him, and at peace. It was going to be a good marriage.

Suddenly I was startled. I looked to the doorway and there stood a stranger. I thought he must be seeking my father. I would have told him to go to the field, but he stepped through the door and I saw he was no ordinary person. He had a glow, I really can't explain it, from within him. I opened my mouth, but nothing came out. He spoke first: “Hail, woman, richly blessed. The Lord is with you.” Who was this? What did he want? He didn't seem dangerous in a threatening way, but neither did he seem altogether safe. He was quite...different.

Then I realized this must be an angel. But what did he mean by calling me highly favored? My family was not special. We were poor, humble, people. We lived in Nazareth, not Jerusalem. Everyone from Nazareth was considered to be, well, something of a hick. The angel didn't leave me time to think. He continued, "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 name Him Jesus."

The angel then foretold that this son would be the Son of the Most High, and that God would give Him the throne of King David and that He would be an eternal King, reigning forever. My father had often spoken about the prophecies. We were supposed to expect them to happen.

**PP#6:** *Another image of the angel appearing to Mary*

Was that what was happening now? Were all the old prophecies coming true at once? Why was I involved? One time a traveling rabbi had taught in the synagogue all the promises of Messiah. Our family did trace its ancestry to David. Could I be living in the time when these things would come to pass?

Then I thought of Joseph, the man I was to marry. He was also a descendant of David, but through the royal line. Would he be the father? But what the angel said didn't make me think this baby was coming from Joseph. So, the first thing I managed to say...I carefully asked, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" I think Gabriel almost smiled. I suppose he was amused that I would have a problem with such a small detail for God.

Here I had been told that God was going to break into history and set up a King on the throne of David who would be His very Son and rule forever. Surely the greatest marvel of all time! And all I could do was wonder how I could get pregnant. But even that detail was a wonder beyond understanding. The angel explained that the Holy Spirit would come over me in such a way that I would become pregnant without Joseph, or any man. What a wonder!

Certainly the birth of Isaac to Abraham and Sarah in their old age had been miraculous, and my cousin Elizabeth, being pregnant when past the time for bearing children, miraculous. But the birth of my baby was more than miraculous. It was also unique. He would be conceived without a human father. God would be His father, literally! That meant my son would be human *and* divine. He would be the Son of God and the Son of a humble Nazarene girl. Wow.

I was dazed, but it started to sink in. Finally, I told the angel, "Let it be to me as you say."

**PP#7:** *Image of Mary talking with her parents, or even a rabbi.*

And just like that, he was gone! It took me a while to recover. I ran to tell my mother, and she proclaimed that our family was so honored by God. She could hardly be contained. My father was not so excited. He stayed quiet for awhile and finally asked if I was already pregnant. I told him certainly not. But he didn't seem convinced. I suppose he thought I was making up an angel story in order to explain why I was pregnant.

But I wasn't! At least I didn't think so, yet, anyway. He dropped it for a while, but I saw him go to the synagogue the next day. He then took me to go talk with the rabbi. I had to explain everything over and over again. The rabbi didn't seem too convinced either. He and my father read through many scrolls, asking me again exactly what the angel said. I told them that I hadn't been with Joseph or any man, ever! I did not break the law!

My parents talked with the rabbi over and over. Finally, my mother and the rabbi's wife took me into a private room. They wanted to inspect me, physically, to see if I was telling the truth. It was kind of embarrassing, but I wanted them to believe me. And they could see that I was indeed a virgin.

**PP#8:** *Mary visiting Elizabeth*

The rabbi and my father talked a lot more. They decided not to tell others, as no one would understand. I couldn't even tell Joseph. "Let's just wait and see," they said.

Then, after a few weeks, when my body started to change, they talked some more. They finally suggested that I go away for a while. We agreed I should go to visit my cousin Elizabeth. After all, the angel said that in her old age she was pregnant with a miracle, too.

I was so glad to go and see her. What joy we shared! She told me I was indeed the mother of the Messiah. Can you imagine? It was just so wondrous!

Well, I finally had to come back to town and face everyone. Like the rabbi said, no one believed me. They treated me and my family with great shame. It was hardest to tell Joseph. The look on his face broke my heart. He didn't say a thing. I tried to explain, but he just walked away without a word. My poor Joseph!

But then, a few days later, he came rushing back to tell me a miracle. He had seen an angel, too. The angel explained what was going on, and he was so happy. We would be married! We were so blessed! So wondrous! And he said he didn't care if anyone believed us or not. We had each other, and that was good enough. But it was good that my parents believed us, and the rabbi, too.

Well, you've heard the rest of my story. Everything Gabriel announced to me came true. I eventually did marry Joseph, but we were very careful not to consummate our marriage until after Jesus was born.

**PP#9:** *Mary holding baby Jesus in the stable.*

I am the voice of wonder. That first Christmas night while I was cuddling my newborn baby in my arms, all I could say was how wonderful it all was. As I was thinking about it all, staring into His face, suddenly some shepherds burst into the stable. They, too, had encountered an angel; in fact, a whole host of them. They were there to see my baby. They told us everything the angels had said. I was overwhelmed! When they left the stable, they were glorifying God and praising Him for all they had seen and heard. They couldn't keep quiet. They told everyone that the Son of God had come, that the Messiah had arrived, that there was a Savior.

I, on the other hand, kept quiet. Others were shouting and praising God for this Christmas night, but I kept all these things and pondered them in my heart, and wondered. How was it that I was holding in my arms the miracle of a baby, a new life! And this baby was the messiah! When I looked at him, I was looking into the very face of God. God had come to fulfill the promises! God had come to save people from our sins. I was holding my savior! I just couldn't speak! I was overwhelmed!

Have you sensed it yet...the wonder of Christmas? I know you're just so busy, with all the festivities and the preparations and everything. But have you noticed? God is doing something. God is making Christmas happen again. God always fulfills His promises. And He has made so many promises to all of us, the promise of true peace, deep down inside, of joy that carries us through the toughest days, of knowing that we are saved, that Jesus came for us, and that we have a future in glory for all of eternity. Have you felt that? This is the wonder of Christmas, and I wish for each of you a deep sense of wonder. May God move your hearts, as you begin to grasp just how amazing Christmas really is. It is so wonder-full!

Yes, I remember that first Christmas perhaps better than anyone. I was so young and filled with wonder. But with each passing year, the wonder deepened still more, and still does.

My song shall always be, "My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior, for He has regarded the humble state of His handmaiden." I pray that this year, you will also be moved and filled with wonder.

Christmas, Jesus, my baby.

Nothing is impossible with God.

What a wonder!

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SCRIPTURE READING: . . . . . Tess W

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# DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR DEC. 13, 2015

**Christmas Series:** “The Voices of Christmas”

**Sermon #6:** “Mary: The Voice of Wonder”

## **Opening prayer**

**Introductions:** Introduce yourself & share a time when God spoke to you.

**Context:** Skim Luke 1:1-25. Review: What is going on in this chapter?

**Read:** Luke 1:26-38

1. Verse 26. Map time! Locate Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, Jerusalem and Bethlehem on a map of ancient Israel. How far from Nazareth to Bethlehem?
2. Verse 28. What do you think the angel meant when he said, “The Lord is with you?”
3. Verse 29. What was Mary’s initial reaction to the angel. Why, do you think?
4. Verse 30. Why do you think Mary was chosen to be the mother of Jesus? What does it say in this story was the reason Mary was chosen?
5. Verse 31. What does the name Jesus mean? [Hint: Check the footnotes of your Bible.]
6. Verse 32-33. What is the significance that Jesus would be given the throne of David? From what you remember of Jesus’ story, was this to be true literally? If not, what did it mean?
7. Verse 33. How do you rectify the that the angel says Jesus will “reign over the house of Jacob forever” and that Jesus was rejected as the Messiah by the Jews?
8. Verse 35. What is the significance, do you think, that Jesus does not have an earthly father?
9. Verse 36. Why, do you think, the angel tells Mary about Elizabeth’s miraculous pregnancy?
10. Verse 37. The angel says, “Nothing is impossible with God.” How have you found this to be true in your life?
11. Application: What will you take away from this passage? How will you live it out?