

November 27, 2022

Nothing But The Truth: The Truths of Christmas – “Nothing is Impossible with God”

Luke 1:26-38

Vernon Advent Christian Church

Intro – Nothing but the Truth

Worldview, What the True Gospel is, What the Gospel is not, Cultural issues that we must deal with as Christians while standing on the Word of Truth.

Now we enter the Advent season and we celebrate the birth of Truth itself, Jesus. For all truth is God’s truth and Jesus was the “radiance of God’s glory and the exact imprint of his nature,” as we are told in Hebrews 1. Jesus said of himself in John 14:9, “When you have seen me you have seen the Father.” Jesus was the perfect embodiment of God’s character. Literally “the word of God made flesh,” as again John describes it for us in the beginning of his gospel. And again, Jesus said of himself in John 8:31-32, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” And so, as we celebrate Christmas, we are celebrating the fact that God sent Son, the Truth in human form, to rescue us from the penalty of sin and to purchase us back, to redeem us, so that we can be made right, or reconciled, to the almighty God who loves us and sent his son to die for us. There will be more on this exact idea as we tie up our theme on Christmas morning and I encourage you to make plans to join us as we celebrate together God’s greatest gift.

But this serves as an introduction into our theme leading up to Christmas which is, “The Truths of Christmas.” Over the next few weeks, we are going to be working our way through the Christmas story and identifying some truths that hopefully will make the story of Christmas come alive in our hearts and not be simply the same old story we’ve heard over and over again. When the gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, set out to write about the things they had seen and heard they did so from their own unique perspectives. Matthew and Luke are the only ones that record for us the events surrounding Christ’s birth and for our purposes this morning we are going to be looking at the Gospel according to Luke. The word Gospel comes from the Greek word that means “Good news,” so literally it means “The Good News” according to Luke.

Luke was not an eyewitness of the events of his gospel. Luke was a gentile convert from Antioch in Syria and a traveling companion of the Apostle Paul. He was trained as a physician, and it was because of his analytical mind that he is so descriptive in his writing. No other writer goes into the amount of detail that Luke does. But how could this be if Luke was not a first-hand eyewitness? Well, we get a glimpse into the answer when we read in the introduction of his gospel when he tells us that under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, he took it upon himself to write an orderly account according to the eyewitness accounts of those who had walked with Jesus so that the reader can have certainty in the things that they have been taught. And Luke didn’t stop with his gospel but also wrote the Book of Acts, as a sequel if you will, and this time as an eyewitness as he traveled with Paul, recording the birth and spread of the church. In order for Luke to get his information, he became an investigator and began interviewing people who were there with Jesus and saw and heard the things that Jesus did and he wrote them down. One of these people was Mary, the mother of Jesus. We can only speculate as to where and when these interviews took place but we can assume that there was plenty of time for Luke to have detailed discussions with Mary about her experiences and what we have recorded is the result of

those discussions. She would have not only been able to tell him of her experiences but also of the experiences of Elizabeth, her cousin, and the events surrounding the birth of John the Baptist recorded in the first part of Luke 1 that were so closely linked to hers.

What is remarkable about Luke's account is how he presents the facts. He does not try to change the facts, even though they are outrageous and sound too hard to believe. He states the truth with no apologies. In Luke's account that we are looking at today, we find the truth of Christ's birth to be unbelievable, impossible, and amazing. If you are able, please stand as I read the good news according to Luke recorded for us in Luke 1:26-38. [Read]

There are a few things about our passage today that are unbelievable. First of all, the text tells us that during the "sixth month," that would be referring to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy with John the Baptist from the verses before, more on that later, but God sent the angel Gabriel to a young girl from a nowhere town and announced to her that she was highly favored and that the Lord was with her. The very next verse (29) tells us that even Mary thought this to be unbelievable as she told Luke she was "greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be." And we can understand why. First of all, it's not everyday that an angel appears and begins to speak to you. Mary had no idea when she woke up that morning that she would be face to face with a messenger from God and would hear this stunning news. But God chose her and knew her name from the very beginning and she was going to be the one entrusted to bring the gift of his Son into the world. This is unbelievable indeed! First of all, this news is unbelievable because Mary was a woman of no stature in the community. Her family was middle class at best and she, nor her family, were not part of the political elite. She was just an ordinary young girl of no more than 14-17 years of age doing nothing other than what other young Jewish girls were doing as part of their daily routines.

And it couldn't be because of her fiancé Joseph. He too was just another ordinary Jewish man of no significance. He was a carpenter, not a Rabbi or a Priest. And it couldn't have been because of where they both lived. Nazareth was despised by other Jews as it was known as a back-water town where a heavy number of Roman troops were quartered and no one wanted to live there. For all of these reasons, we can understand Mary's response to the angel's greeting. How is it that she, a young girl of no significance, who was engaged to a man of no significance from a town of no significance, receive the Lord's favor in this way. It was truly unbelievable.

Now the message moves from the unbelievable to the impossible. The angel speaks again to Mary starting in vs. 30 [Read through v. 35]. Mary was a virgin. The bible goes out of its way to make this point clear. Both Luke and Matthew make sure that the reader knows that Mary's pregnancy was a direct miraculous result from God and that Joseph and Mary did not consummate their marriage until after Jesus was born. You can almost imagine Luke asking Mary as she's re-telling him the story, "What did you say next Mary?" And then she responds, "I asked him how this was possible since I was a virgin. And he told me that the Holy Spirit would overshadow me and the child would be called the Son of God." They must have just sat there staring at each other in amazement. God performed a miracle. The impossible becomes possible with God. The same God that brought forth a child from a virgin womb is the same God that can make a way in your impossible situation.

This is how God has chosen to operate throughout history. And this particular miracle was one that God had told his people to be on the lookout for. Seven hundred years before the birth of Jesus, God spoke to his people through the prophet Isaiah and said these words recorded for us in Isaiah 7:14, "The Lord will give you a sign, Behold, a virgin will be with child and bear a son and she will call his name Immanuel," which means God with us. God tells His people, I

will let you know I am at work and that I am the One who redeems you because I will give you a sign. It will be an obvious sign. The sign will be that a virgin will give birth. You will know I, the Lord, am working in your midst because the only way a virgin may give birth is if I perform a miracle. Jesus is the promised child born of the Holy Spirit. He is God with us; God the Son.

Mary then tells Luke about another part of the announcement that is no less impossible [Read vs. 36] Luke already tells us about Elizabeth earlier in chapter one because Luke is telling us the account in chronological order. We're told in verse 7 that Elizabeth is unable to have children because she was barren. However, because of God's graciousness according to his plan, Elizabeth becomes pregnant when she is "advanced in years." Advanced in years may mean anything from late middle-age to old age with the point being she is past child-bearing age. Her pregnancy is another impossibility. It's as if the angel Gabriel tells Mary to believe her impossible conception is possible because Elizabeth's impossible conception is made possible. All Mary needs to do is visit Elizabeth and see for herself, which she does beginning in vs. 39 immediately following the passage we read this morning. Mary then tells Luke Gabriel's closing words, "For nothing will be impossible with God." (Luke 1:37) Mary's impossible pregnancy becomes a reality because, with God, all things are possible.

The message Mary received from the angel was unbelievable in that the God of the universe would choose her to give birth and raise the Son of God. It was impossible by the fact that Mary was a virgin, but nothing is impossible with God. And the message was nothing less than amazing if we think about it and look deeper into the description Gabriel gives of this child who is promised. Let me call your attention back to vs. 31-33. [Read] Gabriel, who has come directly from God's throne to Mary, tells her that she will give birth to a son and she will call his name Jesus. In Joseph's dream recorded for us in Matt. 1:21, he also is given the same instructions in a dream to give him the name Jesus, but is told there the reason, for he will save his people from their sins. Jesus is a derivative of the Hebrew name "Jeshua," or Joshua, which means "God saves." And were told that he will be great according to God's standard. The word for great in this passage is the Greek word, "megas" which means he will be exceedingly mighty or incomparably exalted. He will also be called "Son of the Most High." No other son ever born would be able to claim this messianic title as the "Son of God." And as God's Son Jesus is the King of Kings. The angel tells Mary here that "God will give him the throne of his father David." At the time of this announcement, there is no king in Jerusalem. Only a puppet governor set up by the Romans to keep the peace. This news must have sounded incredible to her that her son would sit on David's throne. One thousand years before Jesus is born, God promised David that one of his descendants would sit on his throne and the Lord would establish his kingdom forever. (2 Sam. 7) God also spoke of this through the prophet Isaiah in ch. 9:6-7, "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us; And the government will rest on His shoulders; And His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace. There will be no end to the increase of His government or of peace, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will accomplish this."

King Jesus is unlike any other king, in that, he will forever sit on his throne. And his kingdom will have no end. Again, this is an incredible claim. Every king in the history of the world has a limit to the time and place of their rule. God sets kings up and brings kings down and God assigns every king a specific territory. When God gives the kingdom to Jesus, God gives a kingdom which stretches across every inch of the universe. Jesus' kingdom stretches across the east and west and the north and the south. Truly this is amazing considering all this was told to

Mary before Jesus was even born! Jesus is God the Son. And, Jesus is given a throne over a kingdom which reigns forever, throughout eternity, and there is no end to His kingdom.

I'm sure Mary was overwhelmed by the enormity of what she heard from Gabriel that day. Talk about drinking water from a fire hose. Her head must have been spinning from this wonderful, yet frightening, message that she had just received. And yet, I find one of the most remarkable parts of this entire passage is her response to it all. Verse 38 tells us that Mary said to the angel, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word." This young girl who just a few minutes before this encounter was going about her ordinary life, is now told she is God's chosen instrument to bring about his plan of salvation through the birth of a son when she isn't even married, and she is able to pull her thoughts together and ultimately say, "Lord, your will be done."

Let's bring this altogether into four areas that we can use to apply the things that we have discussed this morning to our lives. First, is the promise that nothing is impossible with God. The Bible is filled with impossible miracles. It begins with telling us that God creates the world in six days. God creates Adam from the dust of the earth. God parts the Red Sea and allows His people to pass through on dry land. Throughout the entire Bible, we read accounts of God doing the impossible. Jesus' life is filled with accomplishing the impossible during his ministry. Jesus tells a storm to stop, walks on water, heals the blind and the lame, and feeds thousands of people with a few loaves of bread and a handful of fish. God does the impossible when He raises Jesus from the dead. And, most importantly, God does what is impossible with us. God gives us complete forgiveness and life everlasting when we believe the blood of Jesus cleanses us from all our sins. All of God's miracles are signs pointing us to the truth that he can do the impossible with us, taking a rebellious people and making us his own, cleansing us from sin and giving us everlasting life with him through this Son. Indeed nothing is impossible with God.

Next, we need to believe in the truth of God's word. The Bible is reliable and trustworthy and every word of the Bible is true. Believe that Jesus is the Son of God, born of a virgin. It is necessary Jesus is born of a virgin because of Adam's sin nature as Paul describes for us in Romans 5. The followers of Jesus all believed the account of Jesus' birth to be true. We also must trust these words to be true. The Christmas story isn't just a cute little fairy tale that we get to hear once a year. It is the story of God's faithful promise of providing salvation for us coming true.

This next point is related in that we not only must believe the truth of God's word, but we must be bold in the Truth. Luke makes no apologies for the truth of God. He plainly states Jesus is born of a virgin and expects his readers to believe it to be true. Luke doesn't try and say, "Well, I know this is hard to believe, so, maybe you just need to believe Jesus is born." Luke presents the facts of Scripture and lets the truth be known. We don't need to defend God or bend the truth to make what sounds impossible, possible. The truth is profound, and the truth is the truth. Let's have confidence in speaking the truth. Luke has confidence in the truth of God's word to change the life of his readers. We need to have the same confidence in the word of God. Let the word of God convict and convert. Our responsibility is to share the good news!

Finally, we must have the humble attitude of Mary. She knows her rightful place before the Lord. She is the Lord's servant. Her attitude is that whatever God wants to do in her life, He may do. And it is her attitude which God finds favorable. We are to say, "What do you want to do with my life God? Do whatever you see fit. You want me to tell others about Jesus? You want me to serve in Your kingdom? I am your servant." It is one thing to say we believe. It is completely different to say we believe and to be willing to live our lives in obedience. We are

servants of God. God is our master. His ways are for the good for us. We must trust in his goodness.

“Nothing is impossible with God.” These are the words that Gabriel spoke to Mary. And that statement is no less true today as it was then. The first truth of Christmas is that we serve a God who makes the impossible, possible. I don’t know what’s going on in your life today, but we all need to be reminded that God “will make a way where there seems to be no way.” How do we know this, because he has shown himself to be faithful every time. In our passage today, God keeps his promise of rescuing his people by announcing to a virgin she will give birth to the Son of God who will save his people from their sins and will establish a kingdom that has no end. The message of Christmas is one of hope. The advent season doesn’t just celebrate the fulfillment of past promises. It should stir our hearts for the fulfillment of the promises yet to come. No matter the brokenness we face in this world, we can trust that God’s promises will never fail. Jesus is coming again and he will dry every tear from every eye. He will mend the brokenhearted, and he will “save to the uttermost those who draw near to God through him, since he always lives to make intercession for us.” (Heb. 7:25) So we hold on to this hope, the promise that nothing is impossible with God. This is the truth and nothing but the truth.