

DATE: December 6, 2009 Communion Sermon

TEXT: Luke 1:26-38

TITLE: "Christmas lesson From Luke: The Annunciation"



I am beginning this morning our look at the gospel of Luke and the story of the birth of our Lord. Our text this morning is called "The Annunciation". I realize there will be no new revelations in these sermons... we have all heard the story 100's of times before... my prayer is that no matter how often we hear the great truth of Christ's birth our heart will be excited and we will once again praise God.

Before we look at Mary I want to share one brief aside. Notice in our text that the angel Gabriel is the messenger from God sent to Mary. This is the primary purpose of angels... they are servants of God. In scripture we have only three angels called by name. Interesting enough they are all male names. **First**, is Michael. He is spoken about in Daniel, in Jude and in Revelations. He is called the archangel in Jude.

Second, is Gabriel. He is named in Daniel and in Matthew and Luke. He appears to be the messenger of the Throne. **Third**, is Lucifer. He is named in Isaiah as the Fallen angel who became

Satan. In the Apocrypha, the books written between the Old and the New Testaments two additional angels are named. They are Raphael and Uriel.

In our text this morning we see Gabriel, the Messenger of the Throne of God, go to a little, obscure village and speak to an unimportant, peasant girl named Mary. What I want to do this week and next week is look at this girl and see the tremendous lessons on obedience that she teaches us. I believe the primary lesson we receive from Mary is obedience.

Lesson # 1 notice the preparations needed for obedience. *Ironsides*, in the commentary written on this text states....

It is very evident that Mary was chosen, not simply because she was a virgin, but because of her deep spirituality and her subjection to the will of God. When He chose a young woman for the high honor of becoming the mother of the Savior, He did not take some frivolous worldly girl, living in carelessness and enjoying a butterfly existence. He chose a pious, lovely young woman, who delighted in doing the will of God and ever sought to be subject to His Word.

We must apply this lesson to our lives. Are we willing to echo the words of the Mary "I am the Lord's servant, May it be to me as you have said." We must prepare ourselves to be men and women of God centering our lives on Him.

I have had a number of people come to me and say "If I knew God's definitive will for my life I would obey." They then add "but I'm just not sure what God's will is."

I believe God is constantly revealing His will to us... often we are not prepared to see it. Gary Maeder has written a book entitled *God's Will For Your Life* states this about discovering the will of God...

The will of God is frequently approached from the "program" angle: What college does God want me to attend? What Job does he want me in? What does he want me to do today? These are all valid questions, but God's will for you is not fundamentally a program, but is rather a personal, growing relationship with Him. In short, it's not what you do; it's what you are. The will of God concerning the formation of our characters is universal: we are all to be conformed to Jesus Christ and be led by and display the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

The primary will of God for our lives is that we become His children. We become His children by surrendering to Him and molding our lives to Him. As Meader says it is not a program, it is a relationship. Allow me to conclude the quote from Meader...

The overwhelming majority of God's will for your life concerns your character and is revealed in the Bible. Discovering the will of God for your life is thus primarily a matter of acceptance and not of guidance; John 17:7 states "If any man is willing to do His will, He shall know of the teaching."

I saw an example of this with my parents. They tried to guide me but did not try to force me into a preset mold. My parents were concerned with what I did but were far more concerned that I was a happy person.

God does care what we do... but is most concerned with who we are. Mary was a Godly woman. She was prepared to act in obedience to the Word of God. We must prepare ourselves to hear the Word of God. First and foremost we must be willing to obey. *James 1:22* states...

Do not merely listen to the Word and so deceive yourselves. do what it says

1 Peter 1:14 tells us to...

prepare your minds for action; be self-controlled; set your hope fully on the grace to be given you when Jesus Christ is revealed

God reveals His will for us in his Word, the bible; in his people, in fellowship; in His quiet voice, in prayer. We need to be close to Him to hear as He speaks to us. Be prepared to obey.

Lesson # 2 Notice our text also teaches us the cost of obedience. By obeying god Mary paid a great, great cost. *Verse 38* of our text states...**"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered.**

"May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her."

As a result of this decision of obedience Mary was impregnated with Jesus. Imagine what it must have been like for this young girl. She was probably about 14 years old. She is betrothed to Joseph. To be betrothed is like our engagement but much, much more binding. The only way to end a betrothal was through a divorce. If a man dies during betrothal the woman is considered a widow.

However during betrothal no sexual contact was permissible. Writers of that day and age wrote about "the virgin who was a widow". Imagine Mary discovering she was pregnant. She goes to her parents and tells them that it was by the Holy Spirit. Would you believe your daughter? They

had to suspect Joseph. Next she goes to Joseph and tells him. He knows he is not the father. We know he did not believe her. Scripture tells us he was willing to quietly divorce her and allow her to marry the father of the baby. Gabriel had to go to Joseph and tell him to believe her. Imagine the small town of Nazareth. Adultery was considered a grave, grave sin. A woman could be stoned to death for adultery. In *verse 39* of our text we read that Mary went to visit Elizabeth. I believe it was very likely that she had to get out of town to escape punishment until she and Joseph could be married. For the rest of her life she had the reputation of being an immoral woman. For the rest of her life the “good woman” of the town probably shunned her. The great cost of obedience.

I believe we too must face the fact of the cost of obedience. So often we refuse to act in obedience if there is a cost. Our young people compromise morality to be accepted by friends. But adults compromise morality because it is more convenient. It is easier to live together than to marry. It is easier to cut corners at work. It’s easier to be quiet rather than share our faith.

We have once again been reminded of the cost of being in the military. Our young men and women are in harms way. Their cost of obedience could be death. Our young men and woman are

separated from loved ones in defense of our country. But I love the song “**Onward Christian Soldiers**” The first line is “Onward Christian Soldiers, Marching as to war.... with the cross of Jesus going on before”. We are in a war. The message of Christ is attacked. The truth of God’s word is mocked in our own land.... are we willing to pay the price to win the war? Are we willing to act in obedience even though we may be shunned and laughed at. There is a cost in obedience. Mary faced it.... we must face it.

These are lesson on obedience. We saw the need to be prepared to be obedient. Obedience is a result of grace. We need to live on the grace of God. We need to be willing to be obedient even when we see the cost of obedience. Praise be to God for the example of Mary. AMEN