

Tommy Meador / General

The Gospel of Luke / Luke 1:26–38

Introduction

- https://www.huffpost.com/entry/chain-smoking-marathon-cigarettes-china_n_6374c271e4b0283a8d168214 - not the person you'd expect to finish a marathon in 3.5 hours.
- Life is full of people who accomplish things you wouldn't expect - e.g., - you wouldn't expect the Gamecocks to defeat Tennessee. Talk about a Christmas miracle!
- Mary is NOT the person you'd expect to be the mother of promised Messiah, the King of Kings, the Savior of the world. Luke knows that she's not who we'd expect, and Luke wants us to be blown away by the reality that the God of all creation would place His only begotten Son in the womb of Mary of Nazareth.
- Luke not only wants us to be blown away by the fact that Mary is the mother of Jesus, he also wants us to be blown away by the way Mary responds to the message of Gabriel.
- The Christmas story is supposed to leave us in awe of God. The message of Gabriel left Mary in complete awe of God, and the message of Christmas should leave us in awe of God as well.
- Our problem: not so easily amazed. We lose our awe. Sad reality: The work of God in our lives not so impressive.
- This Christmas: I want you to stand in amazement of God.
- How do you know if you are in awe of God? Mary shows us two responses of someone who is in awe of God. When you are in awe of God, you'll respond in two ways.

Look at what God has done with awestruck wonder.

- Luke setting up a contrast between Zechariah and Mary.
- Zechariah's story amazing, but some things you might expect. A significant child born to a godly priest. A barren wife - unfortunate - but we've heard that story before (Abraham/Sarah). John's birth announced in the right place: the temple/Jerusalem. It's a miraculous announcement, but we're not surprised that God would select a godly, priestly couple serving in the temple to be parents of the man who would prepare the way for the Messiah.
- We should be very surprised that God would choose Mary. She has nothing in common with her cousin Elizabeth - not of a priestly line, no credentials, etc. Above all... A virgin! One thing for a barren women to have a child, but an absolute miracle for a virgin to have a child.
- Mary is engaged to Joseph, a descendant of King David.
- Mary not elderly like Elizabeth. Mary's young - some scholars say as young as 12-14. She's not even married. An unmarried woman to have a child? Scandalous.
- Elizabeth didn't get a message from Gabriel. Zechariah did. Gabriel appears to Mary - an angel appearing to a woman. We don't expect that.
- The place - the birth of the long awaited Messiah not announced in Jerusalem but Nazareth - a small town in Galilee of about 500 people. Nathan: "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" ([John 1:46](#))
- The announcement: "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you" (1:28) Favored = grace.
- The initial response (1:29): deeply troubled. You would be too. Mary is completely unprepared to hear from God's messenger that the favor of the God of Israel is on her. She's not prepared to hear that God is with her. Remember, no one has heard from God for 400 years, and Mary doesn't yet knows what happened to Zechariah. God breaks his silence

by speaking to a teenage, peasant girl in Nazareth? That's deeply troubling.

- Gabriel: "You have found favor." Of all the women in the world, God has graciously chosen Mary.
- Mary will conceive, give birth to a son, the Son of God. God will give this child the throne of David. ([2 Samuel 7:13](#), [Isaiah 9:6-7](#))
- Good News: Herod and his sons will not sit on the throne forever, but this child born to a virgin in Nazareth will...
- Vs. 34 - Mary: "How can this be?" NOT a question of doubt like Zechariah... (vs. 18 - How can I know this? OR, I need a sign... We know Zechariah's question was one of doubt because of how Gabriel responded.) Gabriel responds to Mary by answering her question. Mary not doubting. Mary has a legitimate question of wonder - "You know I'm a virgin, right? You're going to have to explain this to me..."
- "The Holy Spirit will come upon you... The power of the most High..." The same Spirit of God that hovered over the earth at creation comes over Mary's womb and the very one who created the heavens and the earth ([John 1:3](#), [Colossians 1:15-16](#)) placed by the Spirit of God in the virgin's womb. The one who created everything to come in the flesh to die and rise again to make a new creation.
- Overshadow - think how the glory of God would overshadow the tabernacle - God's presence would overshadow Mary's womb. The very presence of God - God in the flesh would take up residence in Mary's body as a fetus.
- vs. 36 - second time - Son of God - Mary will know - this is NOT Joseph's child. This is God's child. vs. 37 - Nothing impossible with God. What a statement! (See [Gen. 18:14](#)) The God who created all can work in His creation however He chooses and cause a virgin to conceive.
- Matthew's Gospel - this is fulfillment of prophecy ([Matt. 1:22-23](#), [Isaiah 7:14](#)). This prophecy fulfilled in a teenage girl in Nazareth. This is meant to leave us in awe!
- **ASIDE: Why does the virgin birth matter?**

- Fulfillment of prophecy.
- Reminder that this is a miraculous birth.
- Jesus is fully God and fully man at the same time. (Fallen humanity could not produce its own savior.)
- Jesus had no sin nature ([Hebrews 7:26](#)) inherited from Joseph. (The fact that Jesus did not have a human father means that the line of descent from Adam was partially interrupted.) [Lk: 1:35](#): “The holy one...” Sinners beget sinners. Jesus was begotten by God who is NOT a sinner. This does NOT mean that Mary was sinless but that the sin nature passed down father’s lineage from Adam was not passed on.
- A virgin teenager giving birth to a child that would be YOUR Savior. This isn’t just Mary’s story. This is your story. What a story! A story of God extending grace to Mary so that He might ultimately extend grace to the whole world!
- A story that should leave you in awe of how God was at work to bring about your salvation. ([Galatians 4:4-7](#)).
- **Luke calling us to a simple response: Look at what God has done with awestruck wonder.**
- But, it’s easy to lose that sense of wonder at what God has done because we wander...
- God has hard-wired us to be a people who stand in wonder... the problem is that we tend to wander from the ONE who we should captivate us with His wonder, and instead we stand in wonder of things that will never be able to give us eternal life.
- Our problem: wonder replacement. We replace the wonder of God with the wonder of stuff that might give us a sense of amazement in the moment but over time disappoints. (e.g., that relationship, those possessions, that academic pursuit, that football team, that hobby, that vacation, etc.)

- Everything you gaze at in wonder will eventually lose its wonder... BUT God is always wondrous. He is always worthy of you gazing at in absolute awe.
- How do you know if you have given yourself over to wonder replacements?
 - Where do your eyes gaze?
 - What stirs your emotions/passions?
 - What consumes your thoughts?
 - What gets your resources?
 - What gets your allegiance?
- What if you find yourself given over to wonder replacements?
 - **Ask questions of wonder.** Mary asked and got an answer. God wants the questions of a seeker. It's good to ask questions about the Trinity, about why the virgin birth was necessary, etc. Some of us aren't near inquisitive enough about God. This is why small groups and discipleship groups are so important. We all need a place to ask the big questions, and we need people we can search the Bible with to answer the big questions. Digging into the Bible with others I often walk away saying, "wow!"
 - **Remember grace.** Constantly look at what God has done in your life.
 - Because when you constantly look at what God has done in your life you will:

Surrender to God in courageous faith.

- Wonder and awe overcame Mary as she considered what God was going to accomplish in her life.
- Mary's response to Gabriel a complete response of faith - a response of surrender. "I am the Lord's servant."

- This is how Paul describes himself in his letters - a servant of Christ - Or, a slave or bondservant of Christ. The idea: "I belong to you... Not your will but my will be done."
- Mary: "May everything you have said about me come true." Mary completely embraces God's plan for her life.
- Mary embraces God's plan even though it would complicate her life. She's going to have a conversation with Joseph that would not be the normal conversation an engaged couple would have. Then, people are going to find out that the child is not Joseph's. This young, teenage girl is going to be accused of adultery.
- Then, she's going to watch her son grow up and leave home. She's going to hear His message, and she's going to see how His message is rejected.
- She's going to see her own Son, who was innocent in every way, sentenced to death. She's going to watch at the foot of the cross as her Son died the death that we deserve. Mary will also see the empty tomb - that her son rose again! That her son was exactly who the angel said - the Son of God - the eternal King!
- Mary embraced God's Word - it would complicate her life - but God's Word would change the world.
- **Surrender to God in courageous faith.**
- Mary's story is a story of surrender. In [Luke 1](#), she has some answers, but she doesn't have all the answers. All she knows is that she can trust God. She knows she can take God at His Word.
- You can too... You can take God at His Word because of what He has done for you. Like Mary, you can surrender your will to His will.
- **Surrender to God is far more than completing ministry tasks.** Tendency to think I'm surrendered to God because I show up and do some church stuff. But...
- **Surrender is giving up control of my life.** Open-handed life. Always putting my "yes" on the table because I belong to God. Not my will, but His will be done. Some of you are close fisted.

- **Surrender is willing to have your life complicated for the sake of the Kingdom.** For some in our church, it's fostering children because your home is not your own. For others, intentionally going to a church like Gethsemane because you know the need is there. For others, it's building that relationship with that person who needs a Christian brother/sister and you know that relationship is going to drain you. For some of us parents, it's going to be a willingness to say to our children when they feel called to serve on the international mission field, "Go with my blessing," when you know that means you won't see your grandchildren once every few years.
- Surrender is saying to God, "not my will be done... ever... Let your will be done always."
- And why wouldn't you say that? When you understand the majesty of God, His greatness, and when you are in awestruck wonder of Him, what other response is there?
- This morning, be in awe of what God has done for you in the Gospel. Repent of your sins and turn to the one who died and rose again for you.
- Believer - Look at what God has done and surrender.