

The Angelic Announcement to Mary

- I. God's grace is revealed.
- II. God's Son is sent into the world.
- III. God's power is shown.

Dear Christian friends,

The words are FAMILIAR ENOUGH. **On the basis** of God's Word we believe and clearly confess that Jesus is God's "ONLY SON, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, **born** of the Virgin Mary." Or to use the words of the **Nicene Creed** – Jesus who is "THE ONLY SON of God, eternally begotten of the Father, GOD FROM GOD, Light from Light, TRUE GOD from true God" – this Jesus "FOR US and **for our salvation** came down from heaven, WAS INCARNATE of the Holy Spirit and the Virgin Mary, and became fully human."

Tonight with Luke's help we POP IN on Mary as she hears the news of **her role** in God's plan of salvation. In this ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT TO MARY 1)God's grace is **revealed**, 2)God's Son is sent into the world and 3)God's power is **shown**.

**I. God's grace is revealed.**

Six months have passed since God **had sent** the angel Gabriel to Zechariah. Now God had ANOTHER MISSION for Gabriel. But this time it's NOT to the **holy city** of Jerusalem but to a small hick town up north in "**Galilee of the Gentiles**." The holier-than-thou Jews of Jerusalem couldn't believe that "**anything good could come**" from there – but that didn't stop God from DOING THINGS HIS WAY. Paul explains, "**God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things and the despised things ...so that no one can boast before Him.**"

God sent Gabriel to Nazareth – "**to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph.**" Mary and Joseph were more than simply ENGAGED as we do it today. ACCORDING TO the **custom** of the time they had already exchanged their **wedding promises** but had not begun living together as husband and wife. **Think of the parable** of the **wise and foolish virgins** WAITING for the bridegroom to come and take his wife to **their new home**. That was the situation with Joseph and Mary. Joseph had not yet taken Mary HOME AS his wife.

**"The angel said to her, 'Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.'**" Literally Gabriel said, "You who have been graced and are still enjoying God's grace (or favor)." Mary's life SO FAR had been "**full**" of God's grace. Throughout her life SO FAR God had "**been with**" Mary – watching over her, taking care of her, blessing her.

Understandably Mary was "**greatly troubled and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.**" Mary was thinking to herself, "What's THIS ANGEL DOING here in my house?" Gabriel reassured Mary, "**Do not be afraid, you have found favor (grace) with God.**" Then came the BIG NEWS. Mary was to be the mother of the LONG-PROMISED Savior – the human mother of the **eternal Son** of God in the flesh. Mary received a blessing that NO OTHER WOMAN in the world **ever has** or will receive.

WHY did God pick Mary for this **special blessing**? Mary wasn't the only virgin in Israel. She wasn't the only descendant of David **living in** the Promised Land. The Catholic church **may teach** the IMMACULATE CONCEPTION of Mary – that Mary was born sinless – but God's Word nowhere teaches

that. Mary herself sings, ***“My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”*** Mary was NOT PERFECT. She was **not** a perfect little girl. She was **not** a perfect wife. She and Joseph **didn’t have** a perfect marriage. Mary was **not** a perfect mother for Jesus. Mary was A SINNER no different from you or me.

So WHY Mary? It was all God’s ***“favor”*** – His ***“grace”*** – His totally undeserved love. IN GRACE God chose Mary to be the **human mother** of our divine Savior.

Why Mary? Why YOU? Why ME? Do you see how ***“highly favored”*** YOU are – that ***“the Lord is with YOU”*** – that YOU ***“have found favor with God”***? WHY has God intervened in your life and made you a Christian – kept you a Christian to this day – promised you eternal life in heaven? Let’s NOT KID ourselves! With David each one of us must confess, ***“Surely I have been a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.”*** With Isaiah we must admit, ***“All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags.”*** With Paul we must all say, ***“I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do, this I keep on doing.”*** With Paul and EVERY CHILD of God we can ONLY REJOICE and say, ***“by the grace of God I am what I am.”***

The ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT continues.

## II. God sent His Son into the world.

***“You will be with Child and give birth to a Son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus.”*** Mary THE VIRGIN will become pregnant and have a baby Boy. God has already picked a name for Him. ***“Jesus”*** – or in Hebrew Joshua. The name means “JEHOVAH SAVES.” It was a common name – but Mary’s ***“firstborn Son”*** is ONE OF A KIND. ***“He will be called the Son of the Most High. The holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.”***

The catechism calls this the **miracle** of the INCARNATION. Incarnation means “in the flesh.” The miracle of the incarnation is that the ETERNAL SON of God was born a **true human** being – our FLESH-AND-BLOOD Brother. Or as Luther explained it in the catechism, Jesus is “TRUE GOD, **begotten** of the Father from eternity, and also TRUE MAN, **born** of the Virgin Mary.”

This is the KEY to understanding **Christmas** – the **key** to the real meaning and joy of Christmas. Jesus is **not just** a CUTE BABY who grew up into a GOOD GUY. Jesus is our God born a **man** – our Creator born a **creature**. As we kneel at the **manger** – and later stand at the **cross** - we must believe and confess, ***“My Lord and my God!”***

God sent His Son into the world ON A MISSION. ***“The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever.”*** Jesus is the ULTIMATE PROOF of God’s faithfulness to His Word. A thousand years earlier God had **promised this** to David. IF EVER God had a right to take back a promise, it was this one. But as Paul wrote, ***“If we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot disown Himself.”*** God NEVER GOES BACK on His Word or breaks ANY of His promises.

God sent His Son to be our CONQUERING King. Jesus didn’t look like that – NOT as He ***“lay in a manger”*** or as His parents fled to Egypt or as He grew up LIKE ANY OTHER boy in Nazareth. Jesus didn’t look like a **conquering** King as He rode that donkey on Palm Sunday or as He hung from the cross on Good Friday.

But WHAT A KING Jesus is! Jesus may not look like much of a king – but look what Jesus ALL ACCOMPLISHED while on earth! With His **absolutely holy** life Jesus perfectly obeyed every commandment for us. Jesus is **“the LORD OUR Righteousness”** as Jeremiah had prophesied. With His innocent death on the cross Jesus FULLY PAID for every one of our sins. With His glorious resurrection from the dead Jesus CONQUERED death and hell. With Jesus as our King we enjoy God’s **complete forgiveness** of all our sins – we have a WHOLE NEW RELATIONSHIP with God – we are going straight to heaven when we die. AND Jesus our King **“reigns forever!”** He will never retire – never be replaced.

Mary has heard the **angelic announcement**. She doesn’t doubt what Gabriel has told her – but she would like MORE INFORMATION. As the **angelic announcement continues...**

### III. God’s power is shown.

**“How will this be?”** Mary asked, **“since I am a virgin?”** Mary had not yet had sexual relations with Joseph – OR ANYBODY ELSE. God is very clear in the 6<sup>th</sup> Commandment. Any sexual relations BEFORE or OUTSIDE of marriage is sin. God’s will is still, **“marriage should be honored by all, and the marriage bed kept pure, for God will judge the adulterer and all the sexually immoral.”**

Gabriel explains to Mary – but NOT FULLY. You can’t explain miracles! **“The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”** Then he reminds Mary, **“For nothing is impossible with God.”**

**“Nothing is impossible with God”** – NOT EVEN a virgin having a baby. Virgins don’t have babies – but the VIRGIN MARY did. This is the miracle of the **Virgin Birth**. Mary had no sexual relations – Jesus has NO HUMAN FATHER. By this miracle Jesus was BORN WITHOUT a corrupt sinful nature. **“Flesh gives birth to flesh”** – so God used this miracle for His Son to be born a **true man** WITHOUT original sin.

**“Nothing is impossible with God.”** That’s not true about us. We are NOT almighty. We don’t have ALL THE ANSWERS. We don’t always know the BEST WAY to do something – or what IS BEST for us. We can’t make everything WORK OUT for good. Our problems are often MORE than we **can handle**. We may face situations that **look** HELPLESS. We can feel HOPELESS – **like** a LOST CAUSE. That can be true in our PERSONAL LIFE – as we deal with problems in our families or marriages – as we struggle with an **addiction** or **pet sin**. That can be true in our life **as a congregation** or synod.

But HEAR AGAIN the blessed truth - **“nothing is impossible with God.”** If we ever think there’s NO WAY God can work things out then look again at **Christmas** – at **Good Friday** – at **Easter** morning. Nothing – NOTHING! – **“is impossible with God.”**

That was the end of the ANGELIC ANNOUNCEMENT to Mary. **“I am the Lord’s servant,”** Mary answered. **“May it be to me as you have said.”** MAY WE who have also been so **“highly favored”** by our God – we who have God’s Son as our King – we who have an almighty God – may our life and attitude ever be that of Mary, **“I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said.”** Amen.