

For With God Nothing Will Be Impossible

Call to Worship: Isaiah 9:6-7

1st Scripture: Luke 1:1-25

2nd Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Introduction

It's quite hard to imagine being a young, ordinary lady (from the ill-respected city of Nazareth), going about your business, preparing for marriage, only to have an angel suddenly appear before you, informing you that you are going to bear, and give birth to the Messiah and Savior of the world, and that, without the aid of a husband. But, that is exactly what happened to the young teenager, Mary, who was probably about the same age as my daughter Faith or Kaylee. What a profound and glorious intrusion into a young girl's world.

Well, once again, we have reached that time of year, which seems to come faster and faster the older I get, where we celebrate the glorious birth of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, who was born of this young virgin, and had come to redeem fallen mankind. And as we work through this narrative for this morning, I want us to especially hone in on the final words of the angel Gabriel, spoken to Mary, before he had departed, "For with God nothing will be impossible." As we do this, we will ponder a four-part sequence of events, which directly relates to these words, found in the text, that I hope will bolster our confidence in God's sovereign glory, while fueling our joy for all that is represented in the Christian understanding of Christmas.

I. A Summary of the Overall Event

Here is the short form: Six months into Elizabeth's pregnancy, who was bearing the great forerunner to the Christ (John the Baptist), we are told that the angel Gabriel was sent, by God, to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to give a young, betrothed virgin, Mary, the news that would profoundly (and forever) impact and change her life. She would, as a virgin, conceive and bring forth a Son, whose name would be called Jesus. And this Son, being of the offspring of David (both Joseph and Mary came from David's line), would be the promised Messiah, who would

bring redemption from sin to His people. And He would reign, as King, over the true Israel of God (the house of Jacob) forever. Mary, obviously shocked by this news, asks how this could be possible since she is a virgin. And Gabriel tells her that the power of the Highest (of God) would overshadow her, such that the Spirit of God would bring about the conception of this Child in her womb. After being assured that God is able to do this, Mary willingly submits to the will of God, accepting this glorious and profound responsibility. And Gabriel then departs.

Now, let us hone in on, and consider, two noteworthy facts (which are rich in application), before getting to the main points that I want to address for this morning:

1) Notice the labels that are attached to Mary, by Gabriel, and the source of those labels. In verse 28, Gabriel greets her with these words, “Rejoice, *highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!*” And then, after Mary is troubled and confused by the greeting, the angel responds in verse 30, “Do not be afraid, Mary, *for you have found favor with God.*” And following this, he explains the great privilege she will have, in bearing the Messiah. And later on, when Mary is with Elizabeth, in her song, having completely embraced what Gabriel has told her, she sings in verses 47-50, “My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. *For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. For He who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is His name. And His mercy is on those who fear Him from generation to generation.*”

Now, why do I note these things about Mary? Simply put, Mary was blessed and highly favored of the Lord. Now, why was this the case? Why was Mary so blessed, and favored by the Lord? Well, we can answer this in three ways, which come together to shape the overall answer to this question. First, Mary was clearly a godly, chaste young woman, at a very young age. This is not to say that Mary was sinless; she wasn't, but (as we see in the text), she did fear the Lord, which means that she was walking with God from a very young age. Second, Mary was highly favored by God, because God's grace was obviously upon Mary. Even as Noah had found grace (unearned favor) in the eyes of God, clearly, Mary was a chosen object of God's grace as well, which served to set her on the God-fearing, chaste path that she was on. And then thirdly, and perhaps most noteworthy, Mary was highly favored and blessed, because God had chosen to

grant her the glorious privilege of being the bearer, rearer, and mother of the Christ, who was the eternal Son of God. Indeed, it is Mary's close identification with the Christ that best suited her for the summation of the wondrous labels that were given to her. Needless to say, Mary was *highly* favored by God, and she stood out as most blessed, among all women, for the great honor that God had bestowed upon her.

From a practical standpoint then, this should compel us to view Mary in three significant ways: First, *not* as sinless. Again, Mary was a product of grace, and as godly as she was, it is dangerous to attribute honor to her, that would equal the honor that is to be attributed to Christ. Christ is in a class of His own, as the eternal Son of God, and as the only sinless man, who has ever walked the face of this earth, following the fall of our first parents. Christ alone is the Savior of mankind, and He alone is to be worshipped, as the God-Man. Those who worship Mary are idolators, and if Mary were present here today, she would grieve deeply over the way, in which, many have exalted her to a position beyond what God had ever intended.

Second (and this is perhaps more relevant for us, brethren), we do want to be careful in our response to those who worship Mary, that we don't overcompensate, treating Mary in a way that would dishonor her, or minimize the fact that she was highly favored by God. God highly favored Mary; God blessed Mary with a very unique and honorable privilege, and we don't want to cheapen that, by failing to give honor to whom honor is due. Mary was a stand-up young lady, who feared God, and who was graciously chosen by God, to bear, and raise His Son. To this end, we ought to look up to her, and call her blessed. Again, she was not without sin, but she definitely stands out among women, and we ought to consider her as exemplary, and as a tremendous role model for us, which leads then, to a third, very practical way, in which, we ought to view Mary, especially in our day and age.

What a desperate need there is for our culture and society today, to have chaste, young, God-fearing Marys. Oh young people, let me encourage you to look, not to the culture, nor to the media around you, nor to Hollywood's finest or famous singers, for your examples to follow. Our society has long gone down the path to immoral and foul destruction. We are long past the times of basic decency, and have fallen into a deep, deep, den of iniquity, where people like Mary would be mocked, laughed at, and cast out of any acceptable mold. But, hear this, young people.

Mary was highly favored by God! Don't covet and run after the world's favor; don't hunger and thirst for worldly popularity, but rather strive after that which is acceptable and pleasing to God. Fear God while you are young, and flower into your teen years as a God-fearing individual, cherishing the likeness of one who was highly favored by God, and called blessed among woman. No, you won't bear the Christ child as Mary did, but you can be united to the same Christ, by faith, and that is the most favored position, any individual could ever be in. Seek the Lord, while you are young, and you will never regret it. Mary would have been hardly known in her day; she was not wealthy, she was not popular, she lived in a despised town, but God had His eye on her, and she was highly favored by Him! [Christ was her Savior, vs. 47]

2) Notice the labels that are attached to the Christ child (whom Mary would bear), by Gabriel, and the source of those labels. How does Gabriel describe the child, and what are the implications of these descriptions. [Read verses 31-35]. Let us then work through the list of labels given here, briefly tapping into the glory of each one, before moving into the final portion of this sermon.

1) The Name given to the Christ child would be "Jesus," which means "Savior." This is obviously significant because it sums up the greatest emphasis of the role that this child would play in history. He would be a Savior; indeed, not just *a* savior, but *the* Savior of mankind, and that, in the greatest and most critical sense. He would bridge the gap that has been indelibly placed between God and man; Creator and creature, because of sin. Since our first parents rebelled against God and fell into sin, all of mankind has been alienated from God. Think about that. What more horrible news could exist, than to know that the creature (made in the very image of the Creator) is at enmity with the Creator? But, immediately following the fall, God, out of the sheer richness of His mercy and grace, had promised to send a Redeemer to rescue fallen sinners from certain destruction. An Anointed One would be set apart for this mission. And this Jesus; this Savior, was to be that very Anointed One.

2) He would be great, and would be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God would give Him the throne of His Father David. And He would reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there would be no end. This Savior would also be a great and mighty King, whose reign would continue forever. He would far exceed all of the great kings of

history (the Nebuchadnezzars, the Alexander the Greats, the Cyrus's, the Caesars...etc), both, in the quality and quantity of His power and reign. He would exercise universal rule over every created realm, forever. He would be the Son, not simply of some great, earthly king, but of Almighty God Himself (the Highest of all Beings), whose throne rests at the center of all things that have ever and will ever exist, affirming His sovereign rule over all things. This Christ child; this Savior of mankind, will be the glorious and eternal King who reigns over His people, while destroying all who refuse to bow the knee to Him.

3) In verse 35, this child is also described as that "Holy One," who would be called the Son of God, particularly because He will be One who is conceived of the Holy Spirit. [Read vs. 35 again; Note the words "Therefore, also...", indicating that the mode of His conception is what would warrant these two labels]. As the "Holy One," He would bear the image of God in the most definite sense: as a man, being without sin and therefore separate from sinners; and as God, retaining the eternal nature and glory that belongs to His Person, as distinct from the creation. He would be in a class of His own, as a man, born of the Holy Spirit, and therefore, without the natural affects of sin. And He would be in a class of His own, as God, bearing the eternal nature of the Creator, incarnated, and distinct from all that is created. That Holy One would be the only God-Man; or "God become Man," containing both His divine and human natures in full, and in One Person.

And so, to this end, we can sum up the labels given to this child in the following way. He would be the Savior of Mankind, the King over all things created, the only undefiled man (completely unaffected by the sin nature of Adam), and the only true Son of God, with respect to His whole, eternal divine nature, and His having been conceived by the Holy Spirit.

And what then are the implications of these realities for us? What does what happened there in Nazareth (and later, Bethlehem), have to do with all of us, if anything? Well, if you are a living human being, then it has everything to do with you. Because, you are desperately in need of such a Savior, and you must have dealings with this King now, before it is too late. What we have just read and considered, has happened over two thousand years ago, and that child has long since grown up, offered Himself up as a sacrifice for sinners, rose from the dead, and has ascended to the right hand of God, having been given authority over all things. And He has

promised to return to consummate His Kingdom, and to bring eternal judgment and condemnation upon all who reject Him.

It is essential; it is critical that everyone here realize, that as wicked and as terrible and as corrupt and as confused as this entire world is, the greatest problem you and I have; the greatest dilemma facing each one of us, is our own, personal sin and corruption. The fact of the matter is that every last one of us is born with a sin nature, and in rebellion against God. We have not kept His good, righteous and holy laws, and we are, naturally, an offense to God. And for this reason, we are naturally condemned and destined for eternal judgment in hell. You see, we ourselves, need to be saved from our own sins (and from the corrupt nature that has been passed down to us in Adam). And this is far more important than our failing economy, national debt, the Coronavirus, or any other temporal consequence of the fall that we must endure.

We are not right with God. God is our enemy because of our sin. And only Jesus; only that Holy One who was born of the virgin Mary, can save us. Because He has offered Himself up, to bear the judgment of God, on behalf of sinners, so that, in Him, we can be completely forgiven for our sins and forever reconciled to God. And the only way to access His free gift of grace, unto the forgiveness of our sins; the only way to have our debt of sin cancelled, is to truly believe in Him; to repent of our sins and confess Him as our Lord and Savior, now, before it is too late. Let me then ask you, have you had such dealings with God, yet? If not, know that you are on very dangerous ground. You are not only presently in rebellion against God, but you have not subjected yourself to the authority and Kingship of His Son. Seek Him now, before it is too late. Recognize that the cute little infant, represented in that manger, is no longer an infant. And He will either be your judge or your Savior, when you stand before God. Have dealings with Him before it is too late. Ponder the labels, attributed to this Christ, by God, which we have considered this morning.

II. For Nothing Will Be Impossible With God

Finally, let us conclude our time by pondering that four-part sequence of events, given within this text, which affirm the fact that “nothing would be impossible with God.” What the angel Gabriel had conveyed to Mary, seemed to be something far beyond the imagination, and

any realm of possibility. But, consider what God has done, in order of increasing difficulty, to reveal the glory of His power and sovereignty over all things that take place.

1) He had opened the womb of Elizabeth, Mary's cousin, enabling her to bear a child in her old age. Clearly, Elizabeth was beyond the years of child-bearing, and yet, God revealed His power by enabling her to conceive. Indeed, she was already six months pregnant with John the Baptist, when Gabriel had here approached Mary. [Read vs. 36-37].

And so, as God had done with Sarah, Abraham's wife, here, we find Him overcoming the impossibility of Elizabeth bearing a child in her old age. Nothing would be impossible for God!

2) Following this, an even greater impossibility was overcome by God. Mary did, indeed, conceive a child of the Holy Spirit. Can a virgin become pregnant and give birth to a child, without having sexual relations with a man? Well, if God so chooses to cause that to happen, the answer is yes! How so? Because with God, nothing will be impossible. Well, let's take things up a notch further.

3) The child who was to be born to Mary, would be God incarnate! How could the eternal, infinite, uncreated, all-glorious, Son of God become part of the created order? How could God actually become man, and that, in such a way that He would hold two natures as One Person, taking nothing away from either nature. How could the Son of God remain fully God, and yet, become fully man, at the same time, enabling Him to be a legitimate and worthy sin-bearer for all who come to Him by faith? Only, because with God, nothing will be impossible. And then, we take it up even one more notch.

4) As difficult as it would be to imagine Elizabeth bearing a child; as unthinkable as it would seem to be that *a virgin* should bear a child; as incomprehensible as it would seem to be that God should become man, nothing would seem more impossible than this: How could God ever provide a legitimate salvation for wicked, ungodly sinners, such that, He could remain just, and yet, justify the ungodly in His holy presence? You see, this may not seem so beyond the imagination for us, but that is only because we really do not understand just how holy and pure our God really is. The hill that exists between God and sinners, is insurmountable from any logical standpoint. It is a wedge that is infinitely deep and wide. The distance is beyond measure and would be boldly declared as impossible, even for God, when one rightly considers

the holy nature of God, and just how offensive we are, naturally, to God. And yet, God even overcomes that, by doing the unthinkable. The Son of God, Himself, enters the creation, becoming part of the creation, being born of a woman, and taking on humanity Himself... so that, He could absorb, in His own humanity, the full weight of the debt that sin incurs from God's justice, as a substitute on behalf of sinners! He takes on our nature so that He could take on our sin, and absorb the full weight of God's wrath against sin, in His own body (with the worth and value of God), only to lay down His life, experiencing death for us, so that, we could be given eternal life, freely in Him. And He was raised from the dead three days later, victorious over sin, death and the devil, unto the justification of all who truly believe in Him. Indeed, if creation wasn't enough, if all manner of miracles in the creation were not enough, if child bearing in old age or even as a virgin are not enough, if becoming a man is not enough, then becoming a man and dying unto the redemption and reconciling of sinners to God ought to assure us that, "with God, nothing will be impossible!"

Let this reality be the flame of joy which lights up your Christmas, this year, brethren. We can say all kinds of things about the difficult providences that we have faced in 2020, and will continue to face in 2021, but God has already done everything that is necessary to procure our salvation from the curse of our sin nature, and nothing can change that. Not a thing! Revel in that. In the world, you will have tribulation, but be of good cheer, Christ has overcome the world! He is our eternal peace, when everything in this temporal world falls apart. And He who began the good work in you, will see it to its completion. For, nothing is impossible with Him!

Oh friends, but if you don't know this God, in truth, seek Him now, before it is too late. He has provided everything that is needed to grant salvation, freely, to any and all, who truly come to Christ by faith. Call on Him! He can even wash away all of your sins! "For with God, nothing will be impossible!"

Amen!!!

Benediction: Psalm 2