

Whom Angels Greet – Week 2

December 13, 2015

Learn

Luke 1:26-38 (NIV)

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Main Idea

Advent is Latin for "coming," and in this five-week Advent series, we'll look at the angelic encounters that preceded Christ's coming into the world.

Last week, we were reminded that Christmas is a time of promise. The first announcement that the angel Gabriel made was to an older man, Zechariah, in the temple. He promised that Zechariah and his wife, who were well beyond childbearing years, would have a son by the name of John, who would become John the Baptist and prepare the way for the coming Savior. This week, we see that Christmas is also a time of proclamation. God's exceptional and supernatural communication to Mary was one of good news for all generations: God is with us.

Think...

1. Have you ever experienced a time when you heard God's voice clearly? Was it difficult to discern his voice from your own desires?
2. Jim shares that God does not call us to what is easy, but what is significant. What emotions does that statement evoke for you?
3. The Christmas story reminds us that God didn't just redeem us through the coming of his Son, he challenges us all with a call to faith, trusting it will be done to us according to his word. Where do you see God calling you to respond with faith in your life?

Discuss...

1. Reread Gabriel's greeting to Mary in Luke 1:28. Jim reminds us that Mary was a young girl between fourteen and sixteen years of age, living in small town. What does this reveal to you about God and the way he views us? Do you agree with Jim's statement that whatever your age, what you do, who you are, and the decisions you make matter to God? Why or why not?
2. Looking at the angel's communication to Mary, we see his words bring her from consternation to comfort and from confusion to clarity. How have you experienced a similar process or direction from the Lord in your life?
3. Read Mary's song of praise to God, beginning in Luke 1:46. What stands out to you? How do her words reflect God's graciousness?

Next Steps

In his message, Jim outlines some characteristics of God's communication to us:

- It brings us from consternation to comfort.
- It brings us from confusion to clarity.
- It challenges us and leads us on a path that stretches our faith.
- It often calls us to minister to and serve others.
- It is always in accordance with scripture.
- It does not judge, reject, or shame.
- It is simple and clear.
- It leads us to praise God.
- It gives us peace.

What do you hear God communicating to you? And what would it look like to respond to God as Mary did? Ask God this week to help you hear his voice clearly and respond with faith and obedience.