

## Joy of Every Longing Heart—Jesus Changes Everything

December 5th and 8th, 2019

Scripture: Luke 1.26-38

### Luke 1.26-38 (NIV)

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> 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, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

<sup>35</sup> 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. <sup>36</sup> 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. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail."

<sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

### Luke 1. 46-56 (NIV)

And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

<sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

<sup>48</sup> for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

<sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.

<sup>50</sup> His mercy extends to those who fear him,

from generation to generation.

<sup>51</sup> He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;

he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

<sup>52</sup> He has brought down rulers from their thrones

but has lifted up the humble.

<sup>53</sup> He has filled the hungry with good things

but has sent the rich away empty.

<sup>54</sup> He has helped his servant Israel,

remembering to be merciful

<sup>55</sup> to Abraham and his descendants forever,

just as he promised our ancestors."

<sup>56</sup> Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.

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### Read and Discuss

#### Introduction

In the second week of Advent (the season of anticipation leading to Christmas) Pastor Jacob shared the story of the angel's announcement to Mary that she would become pregnant even though she was a virgin and that her child would be the Son of God. Mary was like everyone else in her day, she hoped for God to speak to God's people again. When she had heard from God's messenger, her identity took on new meaning and her life took on great purpose.

#### Engage the Scripture

- Jacob shared his story of getting glasses as a child. He was teased and felt self conscious until a teacher reframed the situation by telling him his glasses were “cool”. Likewise, Mary received word from God that reframed her name. Mary is connected to the Hebrew word for “bitter”, but since her story was told “Mary” has become a name that is called blessed. (Luke 1.48) What transformations have you seen in how others are viewed? Has your own name taken on different meanings or caused different reactions in different seasons of your life? What caused those changes?
- Read Luke 1.26-38. What do you notice about the way it marks time? How is time measured? How is time measured in your own life? “Before or after 9/11?”, “In the days when I was an active addict...”? “When I still dreamed big dreams...”? Are these markers of time helpful? Are there better ways to situate your story in a time and place?
- Imagine the life of a teenage girl. What things might she be giving up to say yes to the words of the angel? Have you ever felt God asking you to do something out of the ordinary that caused you to count the costs?
- Read Luke 1.46-56. This is Mary's response to the confirmation received from her cousin Elizabeth. They are some of the most world-changing words ever spoken. The arrival of Jesus has large scale implications. What are some of those and how do you see the being lived out today? How do they connect to the longing of your heart?

#### Pray

Pray through this verse of the hymn from Charles Wesley:

*Come, Thou long expected Jesus Born to set Thy people free;  
From our fears and sins release us, Let us find our rest in Thee.  
Israel's strength and consolation, Hope of all the earth Thou art;  
Dear desire of every nation, Joy of every longing heart.*