



Sermon Series: The Visitors

Sermon Title: An Unnatural Birth

Date: 12/3/2023

Luke 1:26-38

Don't limit God by what He's created.

Over the course of 5 profound moments with Mary, we see God working COMPLETELY unhindered by the natural world.

THE TIMING

Luke 1:26-27

In the Bible, we have God's announcement fixed in time. But since the exact time of Jesus' birth is not told to us in scripture, we can be confident that God wants us to focus on the unnatural, miraculous moment rather than the date.

THE MESSAGE

Luke 1:28-33

Gabriel is delivering several messages here from God to Mary: There is a message of blessing; in the middle of Mary's fear, the reassurance of God's favor, and the miraculous, outside-of-nature miracle that is about to happen. He is loving, kind, and patient with Mary.

THE QUESTION

Luke 1:34

Mary's question, "How will this be?" differs from John the Baptist's father's question, "How shall I know this?"

Mary's question is – *what is the process?* Meanwhile, Zechariah is asking *who's really going to let me know this?* Gabriel answers by

naming himself, which would have reminded Zechariah, the priest, of Gabriel's standing before God.

God is open and receptive to your questions. When you come to Him in conversational prayer, How, Why, and When are acceptable questions. Yet, in Zechariah's example, we are cautioned against questioning God's word or his authority to act.

THE PROCESS

Luke 1:35-37

For some, these few verses are a bit of a stumbling block. We hear the process explained by Gabriel and still ask the question: Wait! How does this happen? A Virgin giving birth? Fortunately, living in our times, if you capture the idea of in vitro fertilization in your mind, then The Holy Spirit coming to this Girl and delivering God's power to create something/someone out of nothing within her is not as crazy as it once did to people. It's still a miraculous process for Mary, yet it's also better understood by us today.

THE SURRENDER

Luke 1:38

The moment ends abruptly, but consider this:

1. Mary has listened to the visitor – Gabriel, the messenger angel.
2. She asked an appropriate question and listened carefully to the explanation.
3. And finally, she goes forward in her life with the attitude of surrender:

“I am the servant of the Lord; Let it be to me according to your word.”

These 5 moments show God working inside and *outside* of the natural world. They demonstrate his closeness to us, his unlimited power, and his loving, forgiving, rescuing nature. There is no one beyond his reach and his care.

Discussion Questions:

- What about the sermon stuck with you this week? What part challenged your thinking?
- In scripture, the angel Gabriel appears to Daniel, Zechariah, and Mary and announces the coming Messiah. What does this tell you about Gabriel's role? Do you think other angels are assigned specific responsibilities? Explain
- *Don't limit God by what He's created.* Do you have any miraculous moments in your life that are obvious interventions from God? Explain
- How would you answer someone who says the story of Jesus' birth is fictitious because there is no evidence?
- Is there anything in the Christmas account that is a stumbling block to your faith? Explain