

Sermon Title: The Grand Miracle

Sermon Text: Luke 1:1-38

Main Point: The miracle of the incarnation displays the sovereign faithfulness of God by:

1. Fulfilling God's Promises to His People (5-10; 14-17; 31-33; Malachi 3:1; Genesis 18:14; Numbers 24:16-19)

2. Answering the prayers of many (6, 9, 10, 13, 29; Matthew 1:21)

3. Reorienting His People Around His Word (1-4, 19, 28-29, 38 Psalm 19)

Quotes:

"One has the picture of a strong man stooping lower and lower to get himself underneath some great complicated burden. He must stoop in order to lift, he must almost disappear under the load before he incredibly straightens his back and marches off with the whole mass swaying on his shoulder. Or one may think of a diver, first reducing himself to nakedness, then gone with a splash, vanished, rushing down through green and warm water into black and cold water, down through increasing pressure into death like region of ooze and slime and old decay; then up again, back to color and light, his lungs almost bursting, till suddenly he breaks surface again, holding in his hand the dripping, precious thing he went down to recover." (C.S. Lewis, *God in the Dock*)

What the church needs is "God's word working through God's Spirit. Someone has to pick up a Bible and read it [and preach it]. And when this happens the Spirit begins to work on people's hearts, causing them to believe the words and give proper weight to them. The people then repeat the words in their songs and prayers. They discover, most remarkably, that they can speak to God as guided by these biblical words. They also repeat the words of God to one another throughout the week. They help each other discern God's will for their lives. Then their lives begin to be shaped by the words, so that they begin to live differently at work and at home. They discover that these words are life-giving and love producing. So they run and call others who have not yet heard [the word to come and believe too]. The word of God produces action and those actions and those words work together to give witness to the power of God [to save], a salvation that begins now and stretches into eternity." (Jonathan Leeman, *Reverberation*)

"It is good news that gladdens the heart, and it changes our hearts precisely by giving us something to be glad about—something we embrace by faith alone, not by doing something about it. To be precise, it gives us someone to be glad about. For the gospel, being the story of our Lord Jesus Christ, does not give us practical advice or a theory about how to live our lives. It gives us God in the flesh. Think of it this way: we who believe in Christ belong to him like a bride waiting for her Bridegroom. He is on his way to us and our whole life is a preparation for his arrival. And we want to be a good bride, pleasing him in everything we do. So what can we hear that will help prepare us for his coming? You could give us sermons about how to be a good bride, but that gets tedious very quickly. This is not because we don't want to be a good bride, but because we don't want to hear about ourselves all the time—we'd rather hear about our Beloved!" (Philip Carey, *Good News for Anxious Christians*)