

Advent 19, before the advent – 9 months before

This morning we are going to go back to just 9 months before the birth of Christ....

We started our journey 4000 years before, last week we went back 700 years before with the prophet Isaiah

This morning we celebrate the advent of Love, we have lit these candles here on stage, each representing the preparation for advent, the first was the advent of peace, last week the advent of hope....

We light these candles symbolically as we move towards Christmas day and we acknowledge that Christ is the light of the world....he is the fulfillment of peace, hope, love and joy....we will light the final candle at our Christmas eve service....the Christ candle.....so please be planning to attend....

But this morning, I want us to all go back to 9 months before the advent.....and we are going to look at Christmas this morning through the eyes of Mary....

Lets read together **Luke 1:26-38**

Let me just say from the outset this morning....you learn in hermeneutics class in seminary – be evident in application..

As I tried to do that this week, I kept coming back to the Message of Gabriel....and I don't want to mess with this passage by giving a trite point or 2 of application....

Rather, I want this passage to simply be our focus and attention – because it gives us the greatest message of all time – and there is only one application.....to celebrate it....

So that is what we will do....we are going to celebrate this passage by simply dealing with it this morning, b/c it is quite simply the beginning of God's greatest display of love for us....

Lets get some facts straightened out about Mary....there is a lot of mis understanding about her and who she wassome of it legend created by various popes.....

But to understand how Mary would view Christmas....we begin with who she was.....

1. Mary is a 13 y/o peasant woman, which means she was poor – Luke 1:48 – tells us of her position...
2. She came from a small, seemingly inconsequential town.....Nazareth – you will remember Nathanael questioned this town....asking....can anything good....
3. She was betrothed to a carpenter named Joseph – betrothal was similar to engagement, but much more serious.....the only way a betrothal could be broken was by certificate of divorce....
4. But the single most important thing about Mary.....She was a virgin – lets talk about the specifics of this, because there are those who use some doctrinal hoop jumping to tell us otherwise...

The word for virgin is Parthenos – it means what we know it to mean.....one who has never had sexual relations...

There are some who teach that she was able to have relations with Joseph because they were betrothed, this is inaccurate.....the betrothal period where the bride was promised to the husband, and if the husband finds reason then he can break the pending marriage without consequence.....

Their betrothal actually lends credence to Mary's purity....

It is a non negotiable item of our faith that Jesus was born of a virgin.....why/

Because it confirms the prophetic word – behold the virgin will conceive (is. 7:14)

It confirms that the only possible father of Jesus is....the triune God

Lets talk about some things that are not true, perhaps you've heard them....

1. She was born without sin, and never sinned.....this is false. This was a pronouncement by pope pious in 1854.....we have all sinned and fallen short, even Mary
2. Perhaps you heard she never died – this was pronounced by the catholic pope as well.....and not true...
3. She intercedes for believers.....again, false....their is only one mediator between us and God – Jesus
4. She was an eternal virgin – absolutely not true – this is even backed by biblical evidence as we see Jesus having earthly brothers and sisters of which James the author was one of them....

Never the less.....it was Mary, whom God chose to reveal to us Messiah....a poor, young, Jewish bride....

Lets imagine for a moment.....everything that Mary sees in this passage of scripture....

First.....Gabriel.....v. 26 – an arch angel.....a servant of the Lord....

We don't know what he looks like, but what we do know.....is that their must be a majesty to him, because a. he sits in the presence of God, and b. he scares people.....(v.30). and Zechariah....

If you have to tell someone.....don't be afraid.....sorry.....im already scared....

We see Mary's response to Gabriel.....v.29 she was greatly troubled.....why? b/c of the message.....

Think about all she's being told – through you the salvation of the world, through you God's son, through you grace will be poured out into the world...

She was probably troubled b/c she was asking the question that all of us need to ask when it comes to salvation....why me

Greetings o favored one, the Lord is with you? Why did this trouble her.....well, she didn't think of herself as favored....favored to Hebrew people meant wealthy.....

And b.....the Lord is with you.....told to you from an angel....

She is just a little bit freaked out.....and Gabriel probably is used to people being freaked out, so he knows he needs to explain things and do so quickly....

Lets focus for a moment, on the most important thing he tells her.....you are highly favored

The word favored means unmerited grace, or in other words.....Mary, God has chosen you as his means of bringing salvation to the world...

v. 34 – how will this be, since I am a virgin....

Mary answers, I know how this works.....I know that baby's don't come from storks.....

And Gabriel is ready with an answer.....Gabriel tells Mary – read v. 35

What we have here is a foundational doctrine of Christian belief, that Jesus would be born of a virgin, and that he would be born of God.....through the power of the Holy Spirit...

But what I am pretty astounded by....remember, an angel, favor, miraculous message....

v. 38 – let it be....