



HICKORY GROVE

BAPTIST CHURCH

Nothing is Impossible With God

December 14, 2022

Luke 1:26-38

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²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" ²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. ³⁰ And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."

³⁴ And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God." ³⁸ And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

(Pastor prays)

Nothing is impossible with God. Now that's what the Angel Gabriel says to a young girl named Mary, who has just received word that she's gonna become pregnant with a King. What a story. It has all the makings of a scandal. What a season! It's labeled as an Advent Sunday. Next Sunday and the following Sunday, we'll spend our time in Luke's description of the coming Lord Jesus.

Advent literally means the one that is coming. The coming of our hopes, the coming of our deliverance from this depressing suffering, sinful, hateful world. This is confusing but this is our hope. That's what the Creed says. That we believe in: God, the Father Almighty, maker of Heaven and Earth. And in Jesus Christ, His only son, our Lord. Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried. On the third day, God raised Him from the dead. He ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty. From thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead." All of that is in the future. This is the beginning.

Let's go back to the story and watch it unfold. See in our passage the foundation of our hope. Look at the root of our joy. Look at the astounding story of redemption that is found only in the Lord Jesus. Today I want to convince you that...

The Coming of Christ is the Start of Real Life

Today I want to convince you that the coming of the Lord Jesus will be the beginning of your life. So let me do it like this. Let's just walk through the passage. This is a narrative. It is a story, and today I'm just going to serve as a tour guide. Keep your Bible open. I want you to see it for yourself in your own copy of the Bible. I'm just going to walk by and point out several things that I think might be helpful as we go through the story. Here's the first one. Number one.

We have a miracle to rejoice in

The great joy of being a Christian is that we have a miracle that we rejoice in. Let's see it as it picks up in verse 26. Notice how the text opens. He opens up talking about the sixth month. In the sixth month, Gabriel, who we hadn't heard from since the Book of Daniel, it's been 400 years since there's been any word from Heaven. God hasn't spoken, and all of a sudden Gabriel shows up in Luke Chapter 1. Earlier in the chapter, Gabriel has gone to visit a really elderly couple, Elizabeth and her husband Zachariah. They haven't had any

children and Gabriel visits and says, “you’re going to be pregnant” and she can’t believe it. Neither can he.

And in the sixth month of that miraculous pregnancy, Gabriel now goes to visit Mary. Isn’t it interesting that Mary, being so young, has been betrothed to a man? We will find out that the engagement was set up by her parents. It was very early. The kids were still young and it was the promise of the future. It was the law that couldn’t be broken. She was engaged, so to speak, but it was a much harder, faster engagement for such a young girl. While on the other hand, you’ve got Elizabeth and you’ve got Zachariah and they are so old. Isn’t it interesting that God works in the young and old? The congregation should be made up of people of all ages. When I was a young preacher, the prevailing philosophy was that you could reach certain people. If you’re a preacher, your church will probably have people who are either 10 years older than you or 10 years younger than you and you can’t reach anybody beyond that. And that’s why you see a lot of preachers who are 55 years old dressing like they’re 30. (Man, get out of those skinny jeans! You do not belong in those skinny jeans!) But what a great picture of how God works and not only on one end of the spectrum or the other end of the spectrum.

Gabriel now comes and he speaks to Mary and notice the greeting that he gives her. Look, before you get the greeting, just look how Luke has written this for his friend Theophilus. This is written to convince a Greek man named Theophilus that he should come to Christ. That’s why the Book of Luke is written. Just read the first chapter and notice how he just brings everything down to verse 26. ²⁶*In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God.* So from Heaven, sent from God, he comes down to a city named Galilee. He didn’t go over to Jerusalem, the city of God. He came to this place called Galilee, to a village called Nazareth, to this unknown teenage girl whose name is Mary. You get to the very end of the verse and here is God coming to this unnamed place that people don’t go to visit. It’s where the pavement runs off into a dirt road. Young Mary is living out there with her family and the angel comes to her. I mean, you heard it in the Gospels: “Did anything good ever

come out of Nazareth?" Luke has set it up so that we see that the God of the Bible is the God of grace. The God of the Bible reaches the people.

Let's go to the greeting in verse 28. And he came to her in verse 28. ²⁸ *And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"* If you're reading that in Greek you would say "rejoice." Now she's getting ready to get some news that would not make her rejoice, and yet she knows Gabriel is an insider. He knows what's going on. He's already talked about John the Baptist. That's who Elizabeth is pregnant with already. He talked to John the Baptist's mother. He knows the developing plan of redemption. And he comes to Mary and says "rejoice!" It's why she's so puzzled. She's like "what is this greeting? Rejoice?" And then he says in Verse 28: *"Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!"* "You are full of grace" is the old translation which has led to many doctrinal problems. The understanding often with the Catholic Church is that Mary, and in fact, it goes all the way to the Immaculate Conception, that Mary is without sin. I think that's where you come off the rails, because this is not saying that God chose Mary because she is so good. No, God doesn't search out grace; God brings the grace. God doesn't reward good people. God takes bad people and makes them good.

Now Mary's a noble woman, there's no doubt about it, But God brought the grace. So you have joy, rejoice, grace. And look what else he says, *"the Lord is with you!"* Now she's going to need that promise because scandal is getting ready to descend in her life. Rejoice. Grace. The Lord is with you. This is the same thing that the Angel of God said to Gideon. Remember Gideon, threshing wheat in the wine press? He was a judge, but he wasn't much of a man, and God came and infused him with power and says, "the Lord is with you!"

Brothers and sisters, I want you to just pull this out. What do we know about Advent? We have a miracle to rejoice in. I want you to know the joy of the Lord is your strength, that the grace of God is real, found in Jesus, and when you are in Christ, the Lord is with you. Let's have faith in this miracle. Let me

give you something else to notice. It's not just that we have a miracle to rejoice in...

We have a person to believe in

So where I want to take you now is down to verse 31. We got past her being greatly troubled. It's going to get worse down to verse 31. The angel said in verse 30, *"Do not be afraid."* But what he says in verses 31-33, I want you to circle, because they're all about Christ. And packed into those three verses, you have in breathtaking brevity, the Angel Gabriel is going to give the entire ministry of the Lord Jesus. You have to just follow along. He's gonna talk about Jesus and His saving work. He's gonna talk about the righteousness of Jesus. He's gonna talk about the deity of Jesus. You can even get the crucifixion out of this, the resurrection, the ascension, the Second Coming. Let's go through the description of Mary's baby. Join me there in verse 31 where Gabriel tells her, ³¹*And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.* Jesus, do you see that "Jesus"? "Jesus" would be a common name in that day and time. It's exactly the same name as the Hebrew name "Joshua." That's why when you preach the book of Joshua, you can draw a straight line from Joshua to Jesus. Joshua is a type of Jesus. The name "Jesus" literally means "Yahweh." Matthew will tell us when he gives us his account. Matthew says the reason that Jesus gets that name is that He will save His people from their sins. Just in the very name of Jesus you find the hope of the Gospel.

What is the Gospel? Let me give it to you clearly. In an abbreviated form, God is holy. He is the Holy Creator, who created all of us in His image. You have dignity because you were created in the image of God. However, that dignity, the image of God in you, has been disfigured because of sin, your own sin. Sin is a crime against God, and God being fully just must punish crime. So the wrath of God rests on every person who's ever sinned. That's all of us. That's why we can say nobody is saved by good works. We're all sinners separated from God. We are not just far away from God. We are separated. In fact, Paul says we are dead in sin and we need reviving. God's good grace is showing up

here in Luke Chapter 1. God sent the angel and He's giving Jesus. You see, Jesus comes to the Earth, lives perfectly, and dies on the cross to take the wrath of God away from us. God raised Him from the dead to declare victory. And for any person, here's how you appropriate it for yourself. This is how it becomes yours. This is the way you become a Christian: You turn from your sin and you believe that Jesus died for you.

You see, we have a person to believe in. Not just a leader or teacher, not someone we think was really wonderful. We have a person named Jesus. Have you believed in Jesus? Have you trusted Christ alone to save you? Does your life reflect that Jesus Christ is Lord?

We'll see his name there, but let's keep pressing forward in verse 32. The angel not only says to name him Jesus, the angel says that He will be great. Do you see that? What a great description. He's in contrast to the rest of us. We are not great. He is great! Great how? He is great in His being, great in His nature, great in His work, great in His love. He is great in His power to save you, great in His power to forgive sin and great in His power to change. You don't change yourself; God changes you and you yield. He is great in His power to restore your heart and to heal you. The Bible says that this Jesus is the heir of all things. John Chapter 1 says that through Him everything was created. Paul says that everything is upheld by the word of His power. Verse 32 tells us He's not just Jesus, but He will be great. Keep pressing it in verse 32. Notice what the text says that the angel tells Mary about this baby she's gonna have. He will be the son of the Most High. It's interesting the way we have that. Remember, Luke is writing this book to Theophilus. You can read back in Chapter 1. He's writing it as an argument, as a way to convince him that he and you should put your faith in Jesus. And he reminds him that he may have the pantheon of Greek gods, but we have the Most High God. Not only that, this one coming will be the son of the Most High. Here is the declared deity of Jesus Christ, that He is God, that He is the Most High God. Jesus is the saving second person of the Trinity. In verse 35 we find out He is the son of God. He is holy. Look, this is partly what separates us from other

world religions of the Book. There are basically three world religions of a book. There's Judaism, there's Islam and there's Christianity. What separates us from those two? There are other things that separate, but what? What is the major separation in Judaism? They would say that Jesus is not the Messiah. That He came but they're still waiting on a Messiah. Islam would recognize Jesus as a prophet. The good prophet. Christianity says that here is the one who is fully God. That Jesus is God! In Luke Chapter 8, when the demons were being cast out by Jesus, they said to Jesus, "why have you come, to torment us before the time, Son of the Most High?"

Keep pressing verse 32. Look what else the Angel says about Jesus. Verse 32 *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,* The Lord will give him the throne of the Davidic line. You know the Bible. The Old Testament here is the declaration that Jesus Christ is the fulfillment of all of the Old Testament longings. That Jesus Christ comes into this world, and even as an infant, He is ruler and King. Look poor, poor Kanye West, his life has gone off the rails, but he got one thing, right: Jesus is King. Have you bowed at the throne of King Jesus? Have you pledged your life and your resources and your hopes and your heart to Jesus the King? Have you given yourself over to the King who died for you, the King who died for you and was risen from the dead?

Look, all of us sitting here, every one of us serve in the court of some king. You might be serving yourself. You may have made it. You've been hurt in life so many times and now you're making sure you're looking for #1. You're serving your own interest. Or maybe you really are ambitious and it's gotten hold of you. You're trying to make as much money as you possibly can. You'll do whatever it takes to get a good job and make a lot of money and that's the king you're serving. Or maybe with the world we live in, that has been so sexualized that it has become your king. Or maybe it's some cause you've attached yourself to, some cause and that's what you're serving. Often it's something good like when you have kids and you just give yourself to your kids, but you end up putting them on such a pedestal. That's where you

worship. Brothers and sisters, we have a good King Jesus. Keep pressing now. I think we got all we can out of verse 32. Let's go to verse 33. Notice that His rule is eternal. Listen to the language in verse 33. ³³ *and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.*"

There are several things to see here. Jesus is going to reign over the House of Jacob and He'll do it forever. His Kingdom has no end. Let's talk about Jacob. Luke has reached all the way back into the Bible, and Gabriel says from the very beginning. Jacob, who wrestled with God in that story in Genesis. And his name was changed to Israel and Israel became the chosen people of God. Now Jesus will reign over the chosen people of God and His reign in this text lasts forever, for eternity. We deal in the currency of eternity. Today, when church is over, after we do our new member commissioning at the end of our service, you'll see me, I'll walk right out that door over there and there's a truck waiting on me go to the airport and get on an airplane. I will fly to Mobile, Ala., to preach a funeral tomorrow morning. I will preach the funeral for a lady who died suddenly and tragically and leaves an only child. She's 24 years old and lost now without her mother. It's just her and her father. And it's a tragic, terrible situation to walk into. But I can do so with hope because I'm gonna preach her funeral and she put her faith in the eternal sovereign King.

Have you put your faith in this King? He's a sovereign King in the details of your life. God is working out the details of your life for His glory and for your good. He's working in the details. Look, don't say that the Devil's in the details. The Devil is not in the details. Jesus is in the details. We have a miracle to rejoice in. We have a person to believe in. Let's keep pushing on it. Let me give you a third thing to consider.

We have a theology to hold on to

We have something deep and rich. We have something textured that is filled with surprise and complexities. And there's a lot of theology in this passage. Let's go to it in verses 34-36. Let's walk through this and see the imagery and rejoice. Now you're going to see some theology that I'm not going to point

out. There's so much there for you to rejoice in. Here are two things to see. Just two. Here you have a beautiful description of the incarnation of God becoming man. Here you have a picture of the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit involved in the incarnation. Here's the very Genesis, the very beginning of why we can claim to be God's people. So in verse 34, here's how it starts. It is a legitimate question. Gabriel has said "you're gonna be pregnant and the child you're carrying will become a King." He described all of that, and Mary had no interest in all the descriptions of Jesus. Her question is, "how is this going to happen?" In verse 34, Mary asks the head angel, "How can this be?" "The young woman is engaged to a man. Mom and Dad set it up and it's legally binding. One day I'll marry him and be with him, but listen to the answer, the beautiful delicacy of the power of God in verse 35. Join me there.

³⁵ And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. So now you've got God the Father and God the Spirit. The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So now you have God the Son. Therefore, the child to be born will be called holy - the son of God. You see that phrase just narrowed down to that one word "overshadow." It's the exact same phraseology used to describe the presence of God in the Tabernacle in the wilderness when God would fill the Tabernacle with His holy presence. It's the exact same wording used to describe the way Jesus changed at the Transfiguration. Here's the power of God to show the absolute uniqueness of Jesus Christ as the Son of God. Here's the miracle of the incarnation. This is where Christmas is right here. Here's the miracle of the incarnation. He explains that to her in verse 35 and then in verse 36 notice what it says just in case you don't believe me. There's already been one miracle. ³⁶ And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. There is already one miracle. One for the old and now one for the young. Here's a description of the two natures of Christ, divine being all-God and human being all-man, yet without sin. Put together, Jesus is the God-man. Jesus had to be all God to be fully righteous

and keep the law. It's the only way it could happen. He had to be all man because He would do that in the place of mankind and die as a substitute on the cross in the place of man. This is telling us that there is only one mediator between God and us; it is the man Christ Jesus.

You know, this makes grace that much more stunning. When you go to the crucifixion and think that the God-man would die on your behalf, that the God-man would suffer and take your sin, that God would raise Him from the dead and you could be forgiven and saved and brought near and adopted because Jesus did that for you.

Brothers and sisters, we have a theology to hold onto. We are people of the Book, and that theology serves as ballast in the bottom of our boat to keep us balanced. It keeps us moving forward in a world that has actually forgotten truth. I mean, this whole Book gives us the story, the narrative of creation. God's creation, and then the fall of mankind into sin and then the redemption of Jesus who comes to purchase His bride that is us. And then the restoration. It's the story of the Bible but it begins with Jesus. It begins here. Do you understand that we have a miracle to rejoice in? We have a person to believe in. We have a theology to hold on to.

We have an assurance to stand on

Do you see that verse I quoted as the very title of this message? Nothing is impossible with God. This is the reason we keep praying. Now in the context, what the angel is doing, the angel is assuring Mary of the veracity of what he's just told her. She just had a whole lot of stuff dumped on her and it seems impossible to her. And he's assuring her there is nothing in verse 37 that is impossible with God. What does this mean for us? What does this mean? This means that there is no sin too heinous and bad that the blood of Jesus won't cleanse you. You need to claim the Gospel as your own. There is no heart that is too wicked that can't be changed. You need to keep praying. Because the heart of stone can be turned to into a heart of flesh. There is no trial too hard that a Christian man or woman can't endure. You see the grace of God is

always sufficient. Look, our faith never rests so calmly and peacefully as it does when it lays its head down on the pillow of God's omnipotence. God can do it. I want you to pick a couple of things right now in your life and write them down. Get them in your heart. Write three things that seem impossible that you need God to move in. Three, what are they? Just write them down. Maybe they're people, maybe you want to put three people you're thinking of. Maybe you have just sort of given up hope. He's too far gone. Write that person's name down and say to yourself, "Nothing is impossible with God." Or maybe there's something been wrestling with. There's a change, you know is blocking you, it's keeping you, it's a sin. It's what we used to call besetting sin, and you can't shake it. I want you to write that down. Take this verse, we have an assurance, you see. This is what gives us hope. We have an assurance to stand on and I'll end it right here with Mary. Verse 38 is so remarkable. I'll just end it with this last point.

There is only one response to give

Think about the extreme faith and maturity of this young woman. She's just been approached by Gabriel, sent from Heaven by God with a message, "you're going to be pregnant. You are going to give birth to a king." There is a scandal that's coming her way. And look what she says. ³⁸ *And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.* Whatever he does, whatever happens, however this is going to be received, I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word. Gabriel's job is done.

Do you see yourself like that? How do you see yourself? Are you a servant of the Lord? Would you be right now willing to say, just in your heart to the Lord, if it will honor God, I will do it. You see the coming of Christ is the start of real life.

And that life can start as we pray together. I'm going to invite you just to bow your heads and think with me, answer the questions in your heart. Is Jesus Christ your Lord? What is it that needs to change? What needs to stop

happening? What needs to start happening? What needs to change in your life so that your life reflects “Jesus is Lord”? What sin in your life right now needs to be forsaken? What sin have you been trying to ignore and act like it’s not a sin? Maybe you’ve been living around folks who really have accepted how you’re living. I’m just asking you before God, this is between you and the Lord, what sin needs to be forsaken? When I was going through this, I was convicted. I thought of somebody I needed to contact. Who do you need to contact? What do you need to repent of, to turn away from? We’re going to sing one more song. It’s a great time to sing to the Lord with great enthusiasm and joy.

(Pastor prays)