Message Cheat Sheet

DEC. 1, 2024

Get more out of the message

LUKE

God's Favorite Kind of Person | Luke 1:26-38

How can we become the Christ-centered church our world so desperately needs? Join us in Luke's gospel, the most expansive biography of Jesus in the Bible. With the beloved physician as our guide, we hope to experience Jesus so we can participate with the new reality God is bringing into our world.

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The Big Idea

How did God make good on His high and lofty promises to restore creation and renew the world? By partnering with the most ordinary person in the most ordinary place in the world.

Good to Know

- Luke is the only gospel writer to include this scene where Gabriel encounters Mary.
- The angel's message is simple but profound, the "Most High" is about to become the "most low."
- Notice Mary is not troubled just by the appearance of the angel, Gabriel, but rather by the fact that he called her God's "favorite."
- Matthew and Luke are the only gospel writers who talk about the virgin conception. But where Matthew subtly implies it, Luke outright says it.
- There are Greek myths of gods impregnating humans through intercourse in order to birth demigods, but there's nothing like the virgin birth in all of ancient literature.
- Luke opens his gospel with a musical! Luke 1-2 describes three separate angelic appearances, three different responses to their message and three songs. Cool right?
- Mary's encounter with Gabriel mirrors Zechariah's, but where he failed to trust God, she succeeded.
- "Nazareth" isn't mentioned anywhere in the Old Testament or any Jewish writings of the day so for a long time, many skeptics doubted its existence. However, in 1962 archeologists discovered an inscription that mentions it in the ancient ruins of a port city on the coast of the Mediterranean.
- The word translated "virgin" (parthenos) means a young, unmarried girl and normally indicates virginity. A young Jewish girl would normally be engaged between twelve and fourteen years old.

Group Guide

Following the series with your group?

- Start with some icebreaker questions.
- Read the passage together before you dive in.
- Share any insights from the message. Use the questions below to get your conversation started.

Conversation Starters

1. Gabriel's first message to Mary was to emphasize the fact that she was one of God's favorite people on the planet (vs. 28-29). How did Mary receive that message?

2. To really get a sense of what was going through Mary's head, read Genesis 3:15, 2 Samuel 7:12-16 and Micah 5:2-3. Talk about the connections Luke is trying to make for us.

3. Have you ever received an unexpected honor? Share your story with the group.

4. Why is Gabriel's announcement of Jesus' birth such a big deal? Read and discuss the following Old Testament promises (this list is just a sampling). Which part of the "Messianic benefits package" jumps out to you the most?
   - He would crush the forces of evil (Gen. 3:15).
   - He would usher in an age of reconciliation with God (Is. 53:4-6).
   - He would bring physical, emotional and spiritual healing (Is. 35:5-6).
   - He would usher in new possibilities of political peace (Ps. 2).
   - He would unleash the life-giving Spirit of God on all people (Joel 2:28-29).
   - He would give people the supernatural capacity to intuitively love God and others (Ezek. 36:26-27).

5. Notice that where Zechariah responded to the gospel with cynicism (1:18), Mary responded with curiosity (1:34) and willingness (1:38). What's your typical response to the Good News of God's grace when you hear it?

6. How might the Holy Spirit be challenging or inspiring you to model your heart after the heart of Mary?

Prayer Prompts

Most High God, we believe that you are the God who does impossible things. Help us to become your humble, willing servants! We too want to be your favorite people on earth. Use us to bring about your kingdom everywhere we go. Amen.

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