

Luke: *The Bethlehem Moment*

I. Introduction/flow/questions to ponder

- A. Can you recall the first time you **heard the name of Jesus**, when you began to wrestle with God? (a time when you were aware of this reality that Jesus wants to save you)
- B. Do you remember a time when you knew that **trusting God in a decision** was going to cost you something? (you may have felt distressed or in some turmoil, but knew it was a good decision)

There must be a Bethlehem moment in the spiritual history of every believer

II. Overview of Luke – Title “The Bethlehem Moment”

- A. In the Gospel Luke is laying the foundation with the key “ingredient” being -humility/service to Christ
- B. Luke is describing for his readers the greatest crisis that has ever been...
- C. What Gabriel announced was a huge claim that was both political and theological crisis (ruler and son of God)

2 Sam 7:12 When your days are complete and you lie down with your fathers, I will raise up your [c]descendant after you, who will come forth from [d]you, and I will establish his kingdom. **13** He shall build a house for My name, and I will establish the **throne of his kingdom forever**. **14** I will be a father to him and he will be a son to Me;

- D. But the fact that a young virgin from simple Nazareth was chosen to be the mother of God – reveals the crisis of a Bethlehem moment. *IN MARY –*

Illustration: Jason -Walk with his dog- dog was attacked by another dog- broke his knee trying to break it up- surgery – undetected blood clots for a while -1st attempt to remove clots was unsuccessful put into icu- 2nd attempt was successful -lost blood and was weak and anemic- wife was wheeling him around one morning – to the same spot where the attack happened – 3 thoughts formed in his mind as he was there-

1. Self-I don't know – I don't know what my future looks like whether I will walk again
2. Self-I cant – I am helpless, I cant do this on my own
3. From God – my grace is sufficient for you -

Jason was able to go on because of this last thought – Gods grace is sufficient – this does not take away the reality of the first 2 thoughts, Jason knew that he was deeply and fundamentally ok.

True change happens when we give it over fully to God in our Bethlehem moment.

Transition: Our Bethlehem moment is found in John Chapter 3 (must be born again) But what Luke is describing is the Bethlehem moment of Mary.

come in low - Renounce our Agenda...

Define: A Bethlehem moment is a metaphor that describes a moment when we choose Jesus over our own life either for the first time and become born anew or, any other moment we decide to be all in.

III. Read Luke 1:26-30 – What is Mary's crisis moment

Have you ever had a panick moment – a time where you knew you were powerless against circumstances – trust!

- A. Why Mary? Right lineage, Right partner, Virgin, From Nazareth
- B. Nazareth was a small non-descript little village that was famous for only one reason...Jesus / Acts 24: 5 -Luke was aware that Nazareth was like a small redneck town – unpolished dialect, lack of culture, irreligion and lack of morality
- C. Why did Mary respond the way she did to Gabriel? -Perplexed, troubled
 1. This was Mary's Bethlehem moment- She was aware that this was going to cost her everything “Charitoo”

8 Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death [h]on a cross.

2. She knew what it would cost to have a child without a husband (*the world never gives divine meaning to such a supernatural event*) Its likely rumors were flying
3. Consider Jn. 8:41 –“We were not born in iniquity” Mary knew what that meant – rumors flying around
4. The words “don’t be afraid” were probably such divine refreshment -Gabriel read the story of her soul

IV. Read 31-33 - What was the Divine moment of fulfilment?

- A. This is that moment – The ruler of the world and son of God is to be born – so many prophecies
- B. Both theological and political (Jesus is being identified with God in a unique way)
- C. 1st time Jesus is mentioned in Luke! The Kingdom of God is near, here

V. Read 34-37 – Mary needs more faith capacity – request

- A. Consider the difference between Mary and Zack
 1. Lk 1:18 “How will I know for certain” , - Prove it first, then I will go along with it
 2. “How can this be” - Will you help me to understand
- B. Gabriel explains the process – Of course the Holy Spirit is in the middle of it all “enabling her to do what she could not do on her own”
- C. This was not some pagan god influencing roughly and inappropriately in the affairs of mortals.

VI. Rd vs 38 – Mary’s decision

38 And Mary said, “Behold, the [a]bondslave of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

- A. Mary is not the object of our worship – she is simply the great example and model of a Bethlehem moment
- B. Mary humbled herself, laid down her own agenda, her own fears, her own limitations
- C. She said Jesus , I will serve you no matter the cost!

VII. Closing thoughts

- A. Do you need to have your Bethlehem moment – yield yourself to Christ?
- B. Mary received the right encouragement from Gabriel to continue on forward – do you need encouragement today?
- C. Are you faced with any hard decisions today?