

“Lord God, you have appointed me as a Bishop and Pastor in your Church, but you see how unsuited I am to meet so great and difficult a task. If I had lacked your help, I would have ruined everything long ago. Therefore, I call upon you: I wish to devote my mouth and my heart to you; I shall teach the people. I myself will learn and ponder diligently upon your Word. Use me as your instrument -- but do not forsake me, for if ever I should be on my own, I would easily wreck it all.”

“Sir, we would see Jesus.”

MARY DID YOU KNOW? YES! GABRIEL TOLD HER

Gospel – Luke 1

²⁸The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you. Blessed are you among women.”

²⁹But she was greatly troubled by the statement and was wondering what kind of greeting this could be. ³⁰The angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, because you have found favor with God. ³¹Listen, you will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to name him Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David. ³³He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will never end.”

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

³⁵The angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”



- i. You’ve heard the sonorous tones of “Mary, Did You Know?” fleeting through the still air of December.
 - 1) It’s one of those song title lyrics that could be answered very easily: “Yes, Mary knew.”
 - 2) It seems that an important part of the Advent account gets swallowed up in the hype.
- ii. Many prattle on about how frighteningly young and unawares Mary must have been.
 - 3) She may have been very young by today’s standards.
 - 4) But her age isn’t all that important.
 - 5) God’s plan called for a woman not yet married to bear His Son, and
 - 6) Mary had kept herself pure and chaste to this point.
 - a) Our culture condones and even promotes moral impurity.
 - b) Our society does not hold up Mary as an example to be followed.
 - 7) But because Mary lived by God’s standards in this respect, she met certain qualifications for something incredibly special,
 - a) a visit from one of the Lord’s angels. Yes,

An Angel Came To Mary

1. To show her God’s grace

2. To prepare her for the birth of the Christ-child

I. To show her God’s grace

- A) Six months earlier, an angel had appeared to Zechariah.
 - 1) Remember that the angel told him that his elderly wife was going to have a child.
 - 2) This child would become known as John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus.
 - 3) So Elizabeth would have been three months away from giving birth to John.
 - 4) At that time, God sent an angel named Gabriel to Nazareth to speak to Mary.
 - a) Naz was a small village about 65 miles north of Jerusalem in the region of Galilee.

- b) Those from the big city tended to look with contempt and disdain on Nazareth.
 - B) It is very likely that people from Naz felt uncomfortable and self-conscious when they went to Jer.
 - 1) If they did not know their way around, they had to ask for directions.
 - 2) Their dialect gave them away and they may have felt inferior to Jerusalemites.
 - a) We may feel this same way when talking about our small synod.
 - b) People tend to give us the brush because of our small size.
 - C) Gabriel came to this young woman named Mary.
 - 1) She was old enough and mature enough to be engaged to a man named Joseph.
 - 2) It is unlikely, however, that she had the street-smarts of her counterparts in Jerusalem.
 - 3) So it is not difficult to understand her being greatly troubled by the presence of an angel.
 - a) No one would feel bold & self-assured in the presence of a messenger from God.
 - b) Because of her low estate in her eyes, she probably felt double-ill-at-ease.
 - D) I can imagine the angel was filled with meaningful joy as he said, "Greetings, Mary, you are highly favored."
 - 1) If Mary was self-conscious, as we suspect, this greeting must have unnerved her.
 - a) Most girls think they are quite plain, not pretty or really attractive.
 - b) What could this greeting mean? Highly favored?
 - 2) Gabriel said, "The Lord is with you."
 - a) What strange words for her to hear!
 - b) No wonder she was greatly troubled.
- ◇ Many women don't take compliments easily.
 - ⇒ They are hard on themselves when it comes to looks, talents, food preparation, household.
 - * They want their hair done right, make-up on, and clothing neat.
 - * They appreciate compliments but often feel they don't deserve them.
 - ⇒ I think many women can identify with Mary's discomfort before this angel.
 - ⇒ But this matter goes much deeper than being a woman.
 - ◇ Mary was not in the presence of some handsome suitor who was courting her.
 - ⇒ She was in the presence of a holy messenger of God.
 - ⇒ Automatically she felt the fear and shame of being a sinner.
 - * We must reject the teachings of papal Rome which say that Mary was sinless.
 - * She was a sinful human being as we are.
 - * Her greatest discomfort before the angel was her sinful nature.
 - ◇ It is only when we see her sin that we can begin to grasp the grace of God.
 - ⇒ If God had to find a sinless woman to bear His Son, He'd still be looking.
 - ⇒ But God's grace is His powerful love that sweeps aside sin and loves the sinner.

II. To prepare her for the birth of the Christ-child

- A) The angel said it again: "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God."
 - 1) "You are going to be with child."
 - a) Being with child after marriage was normal, what Jewish women wanted.
 - b) But Mary correctly understood: This will happen before marriage.
- B) Mary knew the facts of life.
 - 1) She knew that babies don't happen without a man in a woman's life.
 - 2) She was disturbed to hear, "Mary, you are going to have a child."
 - 3) She might well have thought:
 - a) "This is not favor you are telling me."
 - b) "This will be my undoing with Joseph, my family, and all my friends."
 - c) "I will be the ugly talk of the town, scorned and ridiculed beyond belief."

- C) The angel patiently explained: “(Your son) will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever. His kingdom will never end.”
 - 1) This was a bombshell if you ever heard one.
 - 2) Mary may have thought, “You should be talking to a woman in Jerusalem.”
 - a) “You know, someone with well-to-do parents.
 - b) “Someone with a rich upbringing, a socialite, someone better than I am.”
 - 3) There probably was panic in her heart when she asked, “How will this be?”
- D) The angel told her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.”
 - 1) Did Mary really understand and comprehend all this? Maybe not.
 - 2) But in humble trust, she accepted the message without protest or challenge.

- Z. Of course, our attention is focused on Mary.
 - 1. She is the one to whom the angel came, to whom these words were spoken.
 - 2. But we should hear those words as if spoken to us,
 - a) Because this is an extremely important component of the Christian faith.
 - b) We regularly confess, “I believe in Jesus Christ ... conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary.”
- AA. Also, we would not believe this unless the Holy Spirit came upon us.
 - 1. The virgin birth is a stumbling block to many.
 - 2. We believe, not because it’s rational – it’s not; not because we figured it out – we didn’t. Not because we’re better than others – we’re not.
 - 3. We believe because the Spirit came upon us.
 - a) As He planted the Seed in Mary’s womb, He has planted the seed of faith in our hearts.
 - b) May we wholeheartedly believe that Mary gave birth to the Christ-child, our Savior.

In Jesus’ name, Amen.