

MARY CHRISTMAS! RECEIVE JESUS: GOD'S SURE HOPE

DECEMBER 3, 2023

WORSHIP

Emmanuel God With Us,
Hark the Herald Angels
Sing/King of Heaven, O
How Great, O Come All Ye
Faithful, Be It Unto Me

WELCOME

What was your childhood
dream? What dreams do you
have today?

WORD

LUKE 1:30-38

(READ LUKE 1:26-56 FOR
CONTEXT)

³⁰ 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 name Him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; ³³ and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.” ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” ³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.” ³⁸ And Mary said, “Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

In the Bible, “hope” is something absolutely sure, backed up by the character, promises, and word of God. We are living in dark times globally, nationally, and personally, we need a sure hope in Jesus.

Today we’re going to talk about an amazing young lady whose example we should follow, whose character we should emulate, and whom we should look upon with respect and admiration. Mary was the young girl that God chose to bear His Son, Immanuel. She was living in very dark times under Roman domination. People wondered when will the Messiah come to liberate them. But God had far bigger plans for His Son, Jesus. If Mary were here today, she will tell us Christmas is all about Jesus. Our response is to receive Jesus—God’s sure hope.

I. GRACE “I don’t deserve this!” (LUKE 1:26-38)

In Jewish tradition and law, engaged couples were practically husband and wife (**vv.26-27**). You could only cease the union through death or divorce. The only thing they did not do was live under the same roof and have physical intimacy. Joseph, a descendant of David had a message of hope about the Messiah (**Jeremiah 23:5-6**). People were looking forward to His coming because we do not have the righteousness it takes to get to heaven. We need the righteousness of God through Jesus—His pure, holy, and perfect righteousness to be transferred or imputed into our spiritual bank account. That is the only way we can be sure of going to heaven. It has nothing to do with us. It has everything to do with the Messiah. That is grace.

In the Bible, the appearance of angels was always scary because they are superbeings, thus, the opening line “do not be afraid” (**vv.28-30**). The more important word is “favored”. God chooses us by His sovereign choice. That’s why “favored” means grace or kindness. It had nothing to do with Mary qualifying for anything. The nature of grace is to be granted or be given, not earned. Many people believe that Mary was chosen because she had no sin or that she was a perfect person. Nothing in the Bible says that about Mary. Mary becomes an even better example for us. If she’s an ordinary person, then we do have hope in Jesus (**Romans 3:23**). Only Jesus did not sin (**1 Peter 2:22, 1 John 3:5, Hebrews 4:15**). All of us, including Mary, need a Savior. **Ephesians 2:8-9** is clear, salvation by grace through faith alone. Eternal life is a free gift to us because of the sacrifice of Jesus; never by any work, action, or accomplishment that we may have done. Mary understood that.

Even the name of the Messiah was clear (**v.31**). Joseph was told to call Him “Jesus” for He will save His people from their sins (**Matthew 1:21**). That was the mission of Jesus; not to save a nation from political domination at one point in history. He came to save, from the dominion of sin, anyone who would put their faith in Him as Lord and Savior. That is true even today.

Jesus is God and the king of the Jews (**vv.32-33**). He is not an earthly king who would reign only for a certain number of years. He is God Incarnate. He came to rescue us from our sin. Mary asked, “How can this be, since I am a virgin?” (**v.34**); it was a matter of life and

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death for her (**Deuteronomy 22:20-21**). The angel told Mary it had nothing to do with her, Joseph, or anything (**v.35**). But the work of the Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus is holy and sinless because He was not subject to the sin nature that came from Adam. Jesus was purely the work of His Heavenly Father, and Mary had the privilege of bearing Him within her womb. Even her cousin, Elizabeth, old and barren, was pregnant because nothing is impossible with God (**vv.36-37**). Mary responds to the grace of God—for God to do whatever He wants with her life (**v.38**). While Jesus came to live in Mary in a physical sense, the Spirit of Jesus came to live within her in a spiritual sense. In the same way for us who received Jesus as Lord and Savior, Christ lives in us (**Galatians 2:20**). We belong to Christ (**Ephesians 1:13-14**).

We must receive God's GRACE.

II. GOOD NEWS "I must tell someone!" (LUKE 1:39-45)

Mary went on a long trip to see Elizabeth (**vv.39-40**) and tells her the good news. Even Elizabeth acknowledged that the Messiah was her Lord (**vv.41-43**). She blessed Mary, and Jesus in her womb. When someone comes to know Jesus, we should be happy for them as angels rejoice in heaven over one sinner who repents.

More importantly is telling people who don't know about Jesus (**vv.44-45**). When we believe in grace and put our faith in Jesus, we are truly blessed.

We must share the GOOD NEWS.

III. GLORY "I will praise God always!" (LUKE 1:46-56)

Mary's own admission was that she, an ordinary human needed a Savior (**vv.46-48**) like other people (**vv.49-50**). God is holy and will not tolerate sin yet benevolent and gracious enough to send His Son. We need a Savior and are helpless and hopeless without Him. When we have a proper view of God and ourselves, we experience His mercy from one generation to the next. Things that are prophesied about the future are expressed in the past tense because God's word and promises are sure to happen (**vv.51-53**).

Finally, Mary said of God giving help to Israel (**vv.54-56**)—something that is sure to happen. Jesus will come to Jerusalem; He will fight the final decisive battle and He will win, be victorious and reign on earth forever.

Christmas tells us Jesus came the first time but He will come again and every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that Jesus is Lord (**Philippians 2:9-11**)!

We must always give God the GLORY.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

(Leaders: Please choose questions that are appropriate to the level of spiritual maturity of your members)

1. Self-Check.

Have you admitted your need for God's grace to be forgiven and saved from sin? Why or why not? Briefly share your spiritual journey.

2. Setting It Right.

With whom can you share your faith in Jesus? When and how will you do it?

3. Living It Out.

In what area(s) of your life do you need to give God the glory, and what will you do about it?

WORKS

PRAY CARE SHARE IN ACTION

Pray for all people including the nation of Israel who have not yet come to know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior. Give your time, talent, and treasure in evangelizing the non-believers and discipling the believers. Don't keep the good news to yourself—share it!

WEEKLY PRAYER POINTS

I. Thanksgiving

- Worship God for who He is, what He has done, and what He will do in our lives.

II. Country and the World

- Upright and moral governance of public servants; repentance and salvation for government leaders and citizens for a Christ-centered Philippines.
- God's help and comfort, salvation for Israel, wisdom for their leaders in government, military and their soldiers as they defend themselves against terrorists' attacks. PRAISE GOD for the release of hostages so far! Continue to pray for the release of the remaining ones.
- War in Ukraine to end, loss of lives prevented; conflict in African, East Asian and Middle East countries to stop.
- Middle East countries to stop.

III. Church

- CCFers would honor and love God and make disciples.
- Elders, pastors, deacons, and families (holy, humble, harmonious, happy, heart-working).
- Ministries and churches expansion worldwide.

IV. CCF Facilities

- Worship and Training Center
- Prayer Mountain

V. Personal Concerns

- Deeper intimate relationship with God.
- Righteous living.
- Salvation of family and friends.

MEMORY VERSE

LUKE 1:37

For nothing will be impossible with God