
“He Chose A *Virgin*”

Luke 1:26-38

6 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said,

"Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her,

"Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. 31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 He 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, 33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

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

35 The angel answered,

"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. 36 Even Elizabeth your

relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her

sixth month. 37 For nothing is impossible with God."

38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."

Then the angel left her.

Luke 1:26-38 (NIV)

Sermon:

A college English class was instructed to write a short story in as few words as possible. The instructions were that it had to include Religion, Sexuality and Mystery. One student, a girl, class was the only one who received an A+ for her response. This is what she wrote: "Good God, I'm pregnant, I wonder who did it."

That is the story of Christmas. But we know who did it. God did. And He did it because of love for us.

It seems that the most important circumstances in our life are often not our decision. They are not dependent on us. We can't choose the day we die, we can't select our children, you can't decide whether or not you want to pay taxes...and we can't choose our own childhood.

But if you could choose your childhood, your parents and the circumstances in which you would be born and the family in which you would be reared, what would you want? Perhaps you might want...

?? A caring mother who loved you and always had cookies and milk on the counter for you;

?? A healthy father who loved you and your mother and the whole family;

?? Brothers and sisters, either older or younger...or perhaps none;

?? A family that was wealthy or, at least, financially comfortable;

?? A home in a good neighborhood...or somewhere on a farm; and, last but not least,

?? A truly Christian home in which both parents and all children exercised their faith as a family.

Perhaps that’s what we would choose...if we could. But we can’t choose. So all of us have grown up in a household not of our own choosing. And, it seems, perhaps we’ve all made the best of what we had in the best way we could think of.

God didn’t give us a choice. But Jesus did have a choice. He could have chosen any kind of lifestyle, any kind of home, any kind of parents and family He wanted. But what did He choose?

- ?? He chose a father, Joseph, who was an honorable man but not really ready for fatherhood;
- ?? He chose a family who would be living in fear as they fled to Egypt to be safe from King Herod;
- ?? He chose a birthplace that was the poorest of the poor...with animals. How many of us would choose to be born in a barn or cave and then, instead of a crib, be placed in a animals hay feeding rack?

The conditions Jesus chose to be born were of such that the our state’s child welfare department would have had the child removed from his parents immediately. The parents would have been charged with neglect and the child would have been moved to a foster home. Certainly, this is not what I would have chosen for my childhood home!

Of all the choices that Jesus made when He chose to come to earth, perhaps the most remarkable choice was to be born of a virgin. This is not only remarkable, but for us it’s unthinkable. Why? Because it’s impossible...at least for us. Who of us could imagine or even think of being born to a woman without any other human or scientific intervention!

But perhaps that’s why Jesus chose to be born of a virgin. Because it was unnatural, unthinkable unimaginable and unprecedented. What do all these “Un-”s point to? They point to something we had never seen so clearly before in all history: the pure, *unhindered* action of God’s grace working among us “face to face.”

His virgin birth was nothing short of a miracle. It was...

unnatural. It was beyond the scope of what anyone thought could happen on earth;

- ?? Unthinkable: who could have ever thought that something like that could occur.
- ?? Unimaginable: who would have ever imagined that God would choose to have a child born outside the rules; and it was
- ?? Unprecedented: never before had anyone been born of a virgin. Never had anyone even thought of choosing this for themselves. And never again would a child be born of a virgin. It was unprecedented...and unrepeatable.

Ah, that’s what grace is: wondrously unthinkable, amazingly unimaginable and remarkably unprecedented. God’s love is so indescribably different, superior and amazing that only God’s unthinkable, unimaginable and unprecedented choice to be born of a virgin could really show that God was going out of His way—beyond the call of duty—to show His love for you and me.

Gaining our salvation was not just another thing to do on God’s list of “honey do’s.” It was a singularly unique working of God...unthinkable, unimaginable and unprecedented...for unworthy, unwilling and unsuspecting sinners like you and me.

Why did God choose to be born of a virgin in such an unthinkable, unimaginable and unprecedented way? Because sin, too, is unthinkable, unimaginable, and unprecedented. Sin had corrupted the world since Adam and Eve first sinned. It's consequences over the thousands of years the earth existed were unthinkable, unimaginable and unprecedented. And, as God saw sin continue to destroy the earth, He was unwilling to let His creation be destroyed. He saw that you and I were uncontrollably and inescapably on our way to hell. To God, this was thoroughly unacceptable.

And so, to show His love and grace for us, God did the unthinkable, the unimaginable and the unprecedented. He chose a virgin, Mary, to be His mother.

?? She had no experience. After all, she was only thirteen or fourteen years old.

?? She had no husband. And,

?? She had no holiness. She was, like us, looking for the one who would be her Savior.

But there is one thing she did have. She had faith. When she heard the angel's words which described how she would become the mother of Jesus, she said, "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." (Luke 1:39)

She didn't question God's choice. Why? Because she knew that God's grace is best seen when He works among us in unthinkable, unimaginable and unprecedented ways. No matter how extraordinary God's action might seem, the one thing Mary knew is this. "Nothing is impossible with God."

Knowing this, she responded in an almost unthinkable, unimaginable and unprecedented way to God's working. "May it be to me as you have said."

Perhaps, on further thinking, it's not all that unthinkable to respond in faith. Or is it? I guess it depends on one thing: are you, like Mary, willing to submit, accept and enthusiastically embrace God's working in your life—no matter how extraordinarily unthinkable, unimaginable and unprecedented? One sure-fire way to find out is to ask yourself,

"If God came to me to make a choice that would allow Him to use me as He chose, what would I say?"

What would you say? "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said?" Or would you say, "No thanks, Lord."

God chose a prophet, a messenger and a virgin. In grace, He made the unthinkable, unimaginable and unprecedented choice to save you.

Now, as we anticipate the celebration of Jesus' birth next week, it's our turn. Let's hope that as we respond to God's great love for us in Jesus Christ that we make the unthinkable, unimaginable mistake of turning away from Him. Instead, let us make the choice that Mary did. "Lord, use me. Whatever Your will for me, let it be to me as you have said."

Make your choice today to serve Him! Amen.