

“Christmas 2022 – The Greatest Present”

Dr. Geoffrey Plummer
Calvary Baptist Church

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Scripture

Luke 1:26-55

“Now in the sixth month **the angel Gabriel** was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. And coming in, he said to her, "**Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.**" But she was very perplexed at this statement and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was.

The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; **for you have found favor with God.** "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and **you shall name Him Jesus.** "**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; and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.**"

Mary said to the angel, "**How can this be, since I am a virgin?**" 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.

"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. "**For nothing will be impossible with God.**" 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.

Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And she cried out with a loud voice and said, "**Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb!**" And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? "For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, **the baby leaped in my womb for joy.**" And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord."

The Magnificat

And Mary said: "**My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.** "For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on **all generations will count me blessed.**

"For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name.

"**AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.** "He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. "He has brought down rulers from their thrones and has exalted those who were humble. "HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS; And sent away the rich empty-handed. "He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever."

What was the best Christmas present you ever received?

Mary, Did You Know?

Mary, did you know that your baby boy...

- Would one day walk on water?
- Would save our sons and daughters?
- Has come to make you new? -> This child that you delivered, will soon deliver you
- Will give sight to a blind man?
- Will calm the storm with his hand?
- The blind will see, the deaf will hear -> **Isaiah 35:5**
- The dead will live again -> **Isaiah 26:19**
- The lame will leap, the dumb will speak -> **Isaiah 35:6** -> the praises of the Lamb
- Is Lord of all creation?
- Would one day rule the nations? -> **Isaiah 9:6-7**
- Is heaven's perfect Lamb?
- That sleeping child you're holding is the great, I Am

She has an **unjustly**, bruised reputation in Protestant circles

Meaning of Immaculate -> "Clean, neat, or tidy" -> "your kitchen is immaculate"

In Roman Catholic theology -> "perfect, free from sin"

Was Mary free from sin?

Romans 3:23

"For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God"

What did Mary know?

We'll learn a little bit about that today

"Greetings, Favored one!"

Gabriel, an archangel, appears to Mary

Charitoó – "favored one" means "to be endowed with grace"

The same word is used by Paul to describe us:

Ephesians 1:3-6 (KJV)

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ: **According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world**, that we should be holy and without blame before him in love: Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will, **To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved.**"

Mary was a **recipient of God's grace** just like we are if you believe in Jesus -> not a dispenser of grace

"The Lord is with You!"

Mary was perplexed -> she never heard that greeting before

She didn't know about God's favor or God's grace -> much like us before we came to know about Jesus

"you have found favor with God"

How did Mary find favor with God?

What did she do to deserve God's favor? -> **Nothing**, just like we can do nothing to deserve His favor

She will conceive a Son

A little shocking to her, since she was a virgin -> "How can this be, since I am a virgin?"

What would the world think about her?

What would her parents think?

What would Joseph think? -> she's done evil, she's betrayed her vows

In some cases, there is a relationship risk when you come to Jesus

"You shall name Him Jesus"

Jesus means "Yahweh Saves" or "the Lord is salvation"

"will be called the Son of the Most High" -> the angel says that Jesus will be equivalent with God

He will have a heavenly or spiritual reign -> He has this now -> **Matthew 28:18-20**

"the throne of His father David" -> promised in **Isaiah 9:7**

He will have an earthly reign -> this reign is coming -> **Revelation 19**

"His kingdom will have no end" -> promised in **Isaiah 9:7**

His spiritual and earthly reign will be everlasting and eternal

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you"

A Holy Spirit conception -> completely unique in the world, unlike pagan cohabitation with angels/women

Overshadow means God's presence will be your shadow

Also seen in the Transfiguration:

Luke 9:32-34

"Now Peter and his companions had been overcome with sleep; but when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men standing with Him. And as these were leaving Him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here; let us make three tabernacles: one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah"-- not realizing what he was saying. While he was saying this, **a cloud formed and began to overshadow them**; and they were afraid as they entered the cloud."

God's presence is indicative of His overriding care and protection of believers

Psalms 139:7

"Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or **where can I flee from Your presence?**"

When Jesus is our Savior, we get the Holy Spirit in our life -> His presence with us -> just like with Mary

The angel says, **“Nothing will be impossible with God”**

Luke 18:26-27 (after the interaction with the Rich, Young Ruler, the disciples asked)

“Then who can be saved?” But He said, “The things **that are impossible with people are possible with God.**”

God is the One that brings salvation to us!

We have no chance on our own -> we cannot save ourselves

She goes to see Elizabeth, her relative, since she is pregnant with John the Baptist

Elizabeth’s baby leaps for joy hearing Mary’s voice

There is joy in the Presence of the King -> believers should have great joy at all times with Jesus in our lives

Elizabeth says to Mary, **“Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb!”**

Is this true? Do people think Mary was blessed among women?

Blessed -> the Greek word “eulogeo” where we get the word “eulogy” -> good words spoken about someone

Good words spoken about Mary as well as Jesus!

Are good words spoken about believers, too?

Luke 24:50-53 (The Ascension)

“He led them out as far as to Bethany, and **He lifted up his hands, and blessed them**. And it came to pass, while he blessed them, he was parted from them, and carried up into heaven and they worshipped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy: And **were continually in the temple, praising and blessing God**. Amen.”

Jesus blessed all of His followers before His ascension

Believers blessed God in return in the temple after the ascension

The Magnificat (or Praise to God)

Luke 1:47-55

And Mary said: **“My soul exalts the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.** “For He has had regard for the humble state of His bondservant; For behold, from this time on **all generations will count me blessed.** “For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name. **“AND HIS MERCY IS UPON GENERATION AFTER GENERATION TOWARD THOSE WHO FEAR HIM.** “He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. “He has brought down rulers from their thrones and has exalted those who were humble. **“HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS;** And sent away the rich empty-handed. “He has given help to Israel His servant, in remembrance of His mercy, As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever.”

Mary learns from the angel and believes in what the angel tells her -> she has faith in God, just like believers

“My Soul Exalts the Lord”

Mary’s soul exalted (or magnified) God -> she has been changed by the Presence of God

“My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior”

Mary realized that she needs a Savior

She did not view herself as “Immaculate” -> not at all close to immaculate -> quite the opposite

“The Humble State of His bonds slave”

Mary showed her humility as she comes to faith in God -> she knows her place as a believer

“All Generations shall count me blessed”

Mary was blessed just like all believers are blessed -> she is like us if we believe

“His Mercy is upon generation to generation toward those Who Fear Him”

Mary quotes Psalm 103:

Psalm 103:17-22

“But the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children

To such as keep his covenant, and to those that remember his commandments to do them.

The LORD hath prepared his throne in the heavens; and his kingdom ruleth over all.

Bless the LORD, ye his angels, that excel in strength, that do his commandments, hearkening unto the voice of his word.

Bless ye the LORD, all ye his hosts; ye ministers of his, that do his pleasure.

Bless the LORD, all his works in all places of his dominion: bless the LORD, O my soul.”

“HE HAS FILLED THE HUNGRY WITH GOOD THINGS”

Mary quotes Psalm 107:

Psalm 107:1-9

“O give thanks unto the LORD, for he is good: for his mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the LORD say so, whom he hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy; And gathered them out of the lands, from the east, and from the west, from the north, and from the south. They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way; they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty, their soul fainted in them.

Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble, and he delivered them out of their distresses. And he led them forth by the right way, that they might go to a city of habitation. **Oh, that men would praise the LORD for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men!**

9For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.”

A Christmas Verse (Charlie Brown learns from Linus)

Luke 2:14 (KJV)

“Glory to God in the highest, and **on earth peace, good will toward men.**”

Here is an example where the KJV leads to a misunderstanding

Luke 2:14 (NASB)

“Glory to God in the highest, and on earth **peace among men with whom He is pleased.**”

Luke 2:14 (Holman Standard Bible)

“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and **peace on earth to people He favors!**”

Let me be clear:

The only people who will have peace on Earth and those that place their faith in Jesus Christ and Him alone.

God only has goodwill toward those He favors!

To those He favors, He gives His presence!

But here's your chance – today can be the day of salvation

The Greatest Present is His Presence!

Mary's greatest present was His Presence in her

It can be our greatest present

Prayer of Salvation

If you have made Jesus your Savior and asked Him to be your Lord, **you can have Joy in This World**

Benediction