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SERMON TITLE: Sound the Trumpet! A Baby Announcement
SCRIPTURE: Luke 1:26-35
DATE: December 5, 2021 ADVENT ONE
 Online service at www.fpcd.org/live-stream

Read also Isaiah 9:2-7. Check out the service at www.fpcd.org.

Do you remember the television series “Touched by an Angel?” The starring angel was Monica. She brought messages from God to people who were at a crossroads in their lives. She provided guidance and hope. This series ran for nine years because its message of hope resonated with people.

Think of Gabriel’s appearances in the same way. Gabriel is sent with a message from God. The people are unsuspecting. Gabriel guides the people he speaks to (or tries to!) and brings very good news indeed.

Here’s how his conversation began with Mary: Good morning! I’m glad to see you! Rejoice, be glad; welcome, good day, hail to you!

He is a happy angel!

Then he added: Favor has been bestowed on you; you have been favored highly.

Not only does Gabriel bring a message to people but he illuminates something about God. If we open our hearts we can see it. It is in the call to do something different.

One thing we learn in these two stories about Gabriel—he loves God. He lives in God’s presence. He serves. He puts himself at God’s disposal. He realizes God’s greatness. He has experienced the outcome of God’s powerful voice. He knows God’s plan will be accomplished at the right time.

What Gabriel does not understand is human doubt. He was stunned that Zechariah did not believe his words, *which will be fulfilled in their time*. And they were!

What would it be like for Mary?

Six months after visiting Zechariah in Jerusalem, Gabriel went to Nazareth. READ Luke 1:26-35

In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The

Lord is with you!” Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.

“Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!” Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.” The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.”

Now Mary knew the Bible. In Israel, both Jewish boys and girls were taught to read and write. She would have been familiar with Psalm 89:

The highest angelic powers stand in awe of God.

Angels would have been easy for her to accept.

She would have celebrated a Feast of Lights so when Isaiah was read, she would have connected that feast with these words:

“The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine” (Is 9:2).

This celebration was for the rebuilding of the temple. The temple was a light pointing to God. Mary taught Jesus to celebrate this feast which it took place in the winter around the time of Jesus birthday. It is now called Hanukkah.

Is our church a shining light to this city, especially at Christmastime? How do we make it that way? Reach out, invite. What do you do when you have a baby or a new grandchild or a wedding or a great upcoming event? You send out an announcement. You have a party.

Isaiah was sending out an announcement 700 years early:

For a child is born to us, a son is given. The government will rest on his shoulders. And he will be called: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. . . . Its peace will never end. He will rule with fairness and justice from the throne of his ancestor David for all eternity. The passionate commitment of the LORD of Heaven’s Armies will make this happen! (Is 9:6-7)

Those early announcements would strengthen Mary’s faith in Gabriel’s message.

The church's tradition is to keep records. The church records marriages, births, baptisms, confirmations, and deaths. In Europe's churches, you will find records that reach back for centuries, predating civil records. If you do your genealogy, one of the places to start is churches.

Both Mary's and Joseph's family genealogies are recorded in the Bible. Matthew records the family of Joseph. Luke records the genealogy of Mary's family. So I took a look. They were both from the tribe of Judah.

Where did their families converge? They converged at the line of David. They were both part of David's family. When Israel split into two nations, their genealogical lines split.

Let's take a look at some of the people listed in both genealogies:

- King David's great grandmother was Ruth. She had great faith and because of that Boaz was attracted to her and married her.
- Boaz's mother was Rahab. Rahab had been a pagan prostitute who became a believer in Israel's God. She had great faith, enough to risk hiding the Israelite spies and then asking them to save her.

Why is this important? Families have traits that carry on from generation to generation. In this case what is mentioned here is FAITH.

Faith was a family "badge in both Mary's and Joseph's family lines;" a distinctive mark; a sign of allegiance.

- ✓ *"I will serve your God,"* Ruth said to Naomi.
- ✓ Rahab is in the Hebrews 11 Faith Hall of Fame: *"By faith the prostitute Rahab welcomed the spies, and hers was the only life spared"* (11:31).

What is your family badge? What distinguishes you? Who holds your allegiance? How is your faith?

Mary's was strong. When she heard the message, she only had problems with the logistics. ("How does a virgin get pregnant?")

After the angel gave her an answer about the Holy Spirit that she could not possibly understand, she made an entirely life-changing statement:

*"Here am I, the servant of the Lord;
let it be with me according to your word."*

That is a statement of discipleship.
That is a statement of high-level trust.
That statement would lead to adventure.

Many of us aspire to that statement but few have confidence.

How did she do it? Perhaps she remembered these words of Gabriel's:

Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

Did you know that Jesus Christ has the same attitude toward you?

He says, "You are the light of the world." That is incredible confidence which your Savior has in you.

To be that light is fulfilling and terrifying, because we know our weaknesses.

But Gabriel departed with words for Mary: "Mary, *remember*, nothing will be impossible with God."

Mary was touched by an angel and the trajectory of her life was changed forever. During this season for drawing close to the Lord and listening for your call to be a light in your sphere of influence, *remember: You have been given God's favor, and nothing will be impossible with God.*

AMEN