

“What If You Received the Gift of One Wish?”

Text: Luke 1:26-38

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Park Boulevard Presbyterian Church (www.pbpc.org)

Oakland, California

Rev. Chris Gelini

Read Luke 1:26-38

PRAY!

This morning we continue the series I'm calling “Great Gifts for Christmas”. The theme verse comes from John 3:16 where Jesus says, *“For God so loved the world that He gave...”* God is the greatest Giver and Christmas is the season for giving. We are looking at the Christmas story in Luke 1 for great gifts for Christmas.

- Last week we saw through the story of Zachariah the first gift, the gift of silence.
- This week we're going to look at the second gift, “The Gift of the Impossible.”

If you could receive the gift of one wish what would that be? The parameters are that you can't ask for more wishes.

- Get ideas from congregation.

Let me tell you the story of a man who needed an impossible gift from God.

- Chinese scholar from UCLA

The key verse from the passage read to us this morning is Luke 1:37, *“For nothing is impossible with God.”* This is not a new concept. We see over and over again in the Bible that nothing is impossible for God.

- The Red Sea – Story of the elementary teacher explaining away the miracles of the Bible. One student asked about the children of Israel crossing the Red Sea. The teacher said that when they did this the Red Sea was at its lowest level of only a few feet so it was easy for the Israelites to cross the Red Sea. There was no parting. The student then said, “Then the greater miracle is that such shallow water destroyed the entire Egyptian army?”
- The sun not setting – Joshua asking God to keep the sun still so the Israelite army could defeat the five kings of the Amorites. The sun stopped in the middle of the sky and delayed going down about a full day.
- Jeremiah 32:27 – Jeremiah's prayer to God, *“Ah, Sovereign Lord, You have made the heavens and the earth by Your great power and outstretched arm. Nothing is too hard for You.”* Another word for God's power is omnipotence. He's all-powerful. That's why nothing is impossible for Him.
- Then, we have the miracles of Jesus, especially His death and resurrection.
- Is this the God that you know in your life – “Nothing is impossible for God”? And if not, why not? Is not God the same yesterday, today and forever?

Another way to look at this is to ask the question, “Does God still do miracles today?”

- Plaque in our home that says, “We don’t just believe in miracles, we rely on them.”

Let’s look at the story of the Angel and Mary. There are three miracles that we can see in this story:

I. THE MIRACLE OF GOD COMMUNICATING WITH HUMAN BEINGS.

A. Luke 1:26-28, “*God sent the angel Gabriel... to a virgin...Mary.*”

The same angel that was sent to Zachariah is sent to Mary with another message from God. Does God still reveal Himself to us today?

1. Angels (dreams & visions)

- The focus needs to be on God and not the messenger.

2. The Bible – The angel refers to the prophecy given to King David (2 Samuel 7) in his proclamation to Mary. Luke 1:32-33, “*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.*” God’s promises are always yes. What does God say about His word?

- Hebrews 4:12, “*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*”
- The Bible is God’s word to us through Jesus Christ. God speaks to us through His Living Word, the Bible.
- One Year Bibles for everyone.

3. Holy Spirit – Luke 1:35, “*The angel answered (Mary), ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.’*”

- Holy Spirit and power
- Acts 1:8, Jesus says, “*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you.*” You receive the power of the Holy Spirit when you ask Jesus to come into your heart. Then, the Spirit of God is within you to guide you into all truth. If you haven’t received Christ, I encourage you to do so. God’s power is available to all who believe in His Son, Jesus.

B. Angels, the Bible, the Holy Spirit are about being in a personal relationship with God. And in that relationship, Jesus shares His power with us. God wants to communicate with us; the gift of the impossible.

II. THE MIRACLE OF GOD USING HUMAN BEINGS TO FULFILL HIS PURPOSES.

A. Luke 1:30-31, “*The angel said to her (Mary), ‘...Mary you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus.’*”

1. God has always chosen to partner with people to fulfill His purposes.
 - Acts 4:13, *“When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.”*
 - 12 apostles - changed the world. Jesus, *“As the Father has sent me, I am sending you.”*
 - William Carey – Father of Modern Missions (cobbler and part-time teacher, pastor); India, 18th century
 - Young American Showcase
 - Mary – young (13?), woman, poor – God chooses Mary to be the mother of His son, Jesus.
 - God takes the ordinary to do something extraordinary.

B. Let me ask you some questions:

- Who wants God to use them? Who wants their life to count for something? God uses the ordinary to do something extraordinary.
- Is there anyone here today asking themselves, “Why would God want to use me?” God uses the ordinary to do something extraordinary.
- Are you asking God to use you for His purposes? Say this prayer, “God, I want to be used by You for your purposes. Take ordinary me and do something extraordinary for Your glory.” And then watch what God does.
- The gift of the impossible – God, Creator of the universe, wants to use you.

III. THE MIRACLE OF OBEDIENCE

A. Luke 1:38, *“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.”* Mary’s response is incredible.

1. A young unmarried girl who became pregnant risked disaster.
 - Unless the father of the child agreed to marry her, she would probably remain unmarried for life.
 - If her own father rejected her, she could be forced into begging or prostitution in order to earn her living.
 - And Mary, with her story about becoming pregnant by the Holy Spirit, risked being considered crazy as well.
2. Yet Mary despite the possible risks says, *“I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said.”* Mary risked everything to serve and obey God. Little did she know the tremendous opportunity that was before her. She placed her trust in God with whom nothing is impossible and said “yes”.
3. God calls us, also, to a life of obedience. Are you willing this morning to live your life trusting God and His word, knowing that living for God is to say “no” to the world? Do you understand the risk involved in obeying and following Jesus? Jesus said, *“Everyone will hate you*

because of me.” That’s why Jesus says to count the cost before following Him. Know the risks involved.

- friend
 - Risky? Yes, especially in this economy.
 - Yet he believes that nothing is impossible for God.
4. With God’s commands comes God’s power.
- Witnessing
5. Is God calling you this morning to do something in obedience to Him that you have been putting off?
- Is there someone with whom you need to reconcile?
 - Is there someone whom you know is in need and whom you can help?
 - Is there someone you know who could benefit from hearing about Jesus Christ? Invite them to PBPC?

“With God nothing is impossible.” Do you believe that? How our lives will change for good when we say to God as Mary did, *“I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said.”* Let this Christmas season be the time for trusting God, receiving the gift of “Nothing is impossible with God.”

PRAYER