An Angel’s Christmas Preparations December 17, 2017

*Luke 1:26-38 Series: Preparing for Christmas*

Intro: This passage is about a young teenage girl who is offered the world’s first Christmas gift. But the gift is on God’s terms. It’s not the kind of gift that might ordinarily excite a teenage girl. She struggles to first understand what God is offering her, then to understand how, and finally to respond in faith. We face the same struggles today. But as we lay hold of God’s gift in faith, we see what good gifts God really gives.

1. Consider the gift that God has offered you. (vv. 26-33)
2. Slow down to understand God’s gift.

v. 28 Mary struggles to understand how she is “favored.”

v. 29 … *tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.*

1. Appreciate what God has given you in His Son.

v. 31 The Son’s name is Jesus.

Matthew 1:21 *She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.*

v. 32 Jesus is the “*Son of the Most High*.”

v. 33 Jesus rules over an eternal kingdom.

1. Don’t let the gift you had hoped for get in the way of the gift you’ve been offered.

It’s so easy to focus on our own wish lists and minimize God’s gifts.

* What are some ways we can “try to discern” the riches of God’s gift to us today?
* What was “good news” about the angel’s announcement?
* How can our wish lists keep us from God’s gift? How can we keep this from happening?

1. Deal with the difficulties that keep you from enjoying it. (vv. 34-37)
2. Mary was more confused by the virgin birth than we are.

v. 34 *“How will this be, since I am a virgin?”*

Tim Keller: You might have a scientific worldview that makes it difficult to believe in a virgin birth, but she was a Jewish woman. Those were the last people on the face of the earth to have believed God through his Holy Spirit-power could come in and impregnate her.

1. God provides answers to those who seek Him in humility.

v. 35 *And the angel answered her*

v. 35 *The Holy Spirit will come upon you*

v. 36 *this is the sixth month with her who was called barren*

1. Most of our doubts stem from a denial of God.

v. 37 *For nothing will be impossible with God.*

Genesis 18:14 *Is anything too hard for the LORD? At the appointed time I will return to you, about this time next year, and Sarah shall have a son.”*

Nothing is impossible for an all-powerful God.

* Why is the virgin birth so hard for people to believe today?
* Why would the virgin birth have been even harder for Mary to believe?
* How does she deal with her confusion about the virgin birth?
* What are some of the difficulties we need to deal with in order to fully enjoy God’s gift of salvation?

1. By faith, accept that God has given you the best gift. (v. 38)
2. Faith submits willingly to God.

v. 38 *And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord;”*

Leonard Bernstein, on which instrument is the hardest to play: "Second fiddle. I can always get plenty of first violinists. But to find one who plays second violin with as much enthusiasm … now that's a problem!”

1. Faith trusts wholly in God’s Word.

v. 38 *let it be to me according to your word*

Oswald Chambers: It is the continual assertion of individuality that hinders our spiritual development more than anything else; individuality must go in order that personality may emerge and be brought into fellowship with God.

1. This time, the angel is speechless.

Martin Luther: There are three wonders here. One, that God should become man. Another, that a virgin should bear a child. And the third, that Mary believed. And this is the greatest of the three.

v. 38 *And the angel departed from her.*

* Mary wasn’t just saying “Yes” to God’s gift, she was also saying “Yes” to all the difficulties that accompanied it. How do we find the courage to trust God like this?
* When you said “Yes” to God’s gift of salvation, what are some of the things you most struggled in submitting to?
* Where do you most need to apply this passage in your life?

Study ahead: Next week, we’ll study Luke 1:39-56.

Notes