

Connection

What is one of your favorite things about the Christmas season?

Content

An angel, Gabriel, had visited the priest Zechariah with a message—Zechariah's wife would have a baby, a boy who would prepare the way for the Messiah. The same angel then went to Mary, but her reaction was very different from Zechariah's—Mary believed. When we do the same, when we are faithful even in small things, God will use us in big things.

Mary's encounter with Gabriel teaches us five things about our walk with God.

The Presence of God

Read Luke 1:26-30 about the first moment of Mary's encounter with Gabriel. "The Lord is with you," the angel tells her. Mary is troubled, but the Angel reassures her. "Do not be afraid," he says, because Mary is favored by God.

1. Read Psalm 84:10-12. Mary is not alone in being favored by God. When have you ever had a sense of God's favor upon you?

2. What would you consider the ultimate reward of being favored by God? Suggestion: Read Matthew 5:8.

The Promise of God

Read Luke 1:31-34. The angel conveys a promise. Mary will have a son, Jesus, a king who will reign forever, the Messiah. Mary, though she believes the promise, wonders how it will be fulfilled in her.

3. Mary likely knew of this same promise from Isaiah 9:6-7. What steps can you take to learn the promises that God has made?

4. What promise by God do you need reassurance about today?

The Power of God

Read Luke 1:35-37. The angel is adamant. No promise of God will ever fail. He has made miracles happen to create the world and to fulfill His promises. He can do it again. God is in charge of his creation and He will suspend natural law to show His power. Gabriel says that is exactly what God will do for Mary.

5. Why might it be hard for you to believe God can work a miracle?

The Plan of God

Read Luke 1:37-38. Gabriel's assurance to Mary is all she needs. "May your word to me be fulfilled," she tells the angel. This is a very special place of belief, to know the word of God cannot fail.

6. If you can, describe a time when you felt willing to believe and let God's plan roll out ahead of you?

The Providence of God

Read Luke 1:39-56. Two faithful women meet. God is working a miracle in each of them to introduce Jesus the Messiah to the earth. Their exclamations testify to what God is doing through them and for the future of the entire world. Providence means foresight. It means to see ahead. God sees eternity and acts accordingly.

Throughout the Christmas story, God used angels to make His message clear. Those angels and those people who witnessed them, testify to us today through the Bible.

7. Are you believing their message about the arrival of Jesus to save us? If you have not done so before, will you accept God's gift of salvation right now?

Commitment

Like Mary meeting the angel Gabriel, God wants us to be: Faithful, Available, and Teachable.

8. Mary was these things. Will you be?

Challenge Assignment:

Invite someone this week to share in our Christmas services and pray with them or for them that they will encounter the message of salvation through Jesus.