

CONVERSATION GUIDE

1. Take 5-10 minutes to discuss last week's sermon, **Doubt & Joy (Responding to the Resurrection)**, covering Luke 24:13-49.

READ Luke 1:26-38

DISCUSS and REFLECT When Elizabeth is six months pregnant, the angel Gabriel appears in Nazareth to Mary (means *exalted*). He tells her that she will have a child whose name will be Jesus (means *savior*), which means 'God saves'. He will be the Son of God. Her Son will be the savior of sinners. The angel tells Mary that she will conceive in her womb through the direct operation of the Holy Spirit, who will overshadow her. Therefore, she will conceive without having had a sexual relationship with a man. Mary commits herself to God and to His word.

What is surprising about the method, the person and the circumstances God chose to bring his son into the world?

God sends Gabriel to Galilee who then makes an announcement to a betrothed virgin, Mary. God will bring an unexpected addition into her family.

Besides the full commitment Mary exhibited, what might be some other reactions to Gabriel's announcement she could have made?

Did Mary earn the right to be chosen?

The portrait Luke paints of Mary is significant. She is a model believer, taking God at his word. She is favored of God, thoughtful, obedient, believing, worshipful and a faithful follower of God's law. It must be emphasized that God's choice of Mary to bear this child springs from his grace, not from any inherent merit that she possesses. She

is the object of God's unmerited, graciously provided goodness. Her description as one who has found favor with God makes it clear that God has acted on her behalf and not because of her. In fact, Mary is totally perplexed by the sudden announcement. She did not ask for or seek this role in God's plans; God has simply stepped into her life and brought her into his service. Her asset is that she is faithful. She should be honored for her model of faithfulness and openness to serve God, but that does not mean she is to be worshiped. Luke wants us to identify with Mary's example, not to unduly exalt her person.

It was a further encouragement to Mary to be told that her cousin Elisabeth was with child.

Is there more to including this reference to another miraculous (not of nature) event in this narrative other than as an encouragement to Mary?

Mary lived in Nazareth, a city in Galilee, a remote corner of the country, which bordered upon the heathen lands and therefore, was called Galilee of the Gentiles. No distance or lowly place presents limits to those whom God chooses to favor. The angel Gabriel carried his message as cheerfully to Mary in Nazareth in Galilee as to Zacharias in the temple at Jerusalem.

Discuss the dilemma for us as we try to decide who God will favor.

Discuss...Christ's mother was a virgin because he was not to be born by ordinary generation.

Why is it said that Jesus comes from the lineage of David when Joseph was not his biological father?

Is God's power able to create life and exercise sovereignty over it?

APPLY

Discuss the role of faith in our lives.

Has God called on you to move in a direction that requires you to move out with little more than faith?

MEMORIZE Luke 1:38

"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

Matthew Henry's Commentary, The IVP New Testament Commentary, The Bible Panorama

