



# REJOICE IN THE PROMISE OF GOD

Read aloud the passages for this week:

LUKE 1:26–38

## Head

OBSERVE THE TEXT AND THE AUTHOR’S MAIN POINTS.

1. Discuss the number of variables involved in the narrative found in vv. 26–27. What do these details tell us about the incarnation and how it is connected to God’s promises to His people?
2. Where in this passage, and particularly in the words of Gabriel’s announcement to Mary, do you see affirmation of Jesus’ humanity? Where do you see the affirmation of His Divinity?
3. What emotions might Mary have experienced in this passage (vv. 29, 34, 38)? What does v. 38 show about her belief in God and what He can do?

## Heart

ENVISION HOW THE TEXT—WHEN APPLIED—MIGHT TRANSFORM YOUR INNER LIFE IN TERMS OF YOUR THOUGHTS, ATTITUDES, AND BEHAVIORS.

1. Notice Gabriel’s departing message for Mary in v. 37: “For nothing is impossible with God.” Discuss whether you believe this is true. In times of doubt, ask Him for the faith that Mary shows in v. 38.
2. In what surprising or overwhelming circumstances have you experienced God’s faithfulness and favor?
3. What gets in the way of you fully surrendering to God? How does that impact your use of time, talent, and resources?

## Hands

APPLY THE TEXT BY MOVING FROM INWARD REFLECTION TO OUTWARD ACTION LOOKING FOR WAYS TO LIVE THE TEXT OUT IN OUR LIVES. THESE ARE SPECIFIC, CONCRETE EXAMPLES BUT THEY ARE NOT THE ONLY WAY—THEY ARE IDEA-STARTERS FOR HOW TO PUT THE WORD OF GOD INTO PRACTICE.

### Reaching Upwards: Growing in Your Relationship with God

- It is easy to get caught up in the “busy-ness” of the Christmas season and neglect our own spiritual growth. Make some downtime for yourself and use it to dig into a spiritual question or subject that intersects with the Christmas story.<sup>1</sup>
- Timothy Keller observed that much of our focus at Christmas is on what God has done for us, and not on what our response should be.<sup>2</sup> Keller believes that Luke writes so much about Mary because she is a model of what “a responsive Christian faith looks like.”<sup>3</sup> What does your “responsive Christian faith” look like? Where is the Holy Spirit nudging you to be available and surrender to Him like Mary did?
- Where has God been faithful in keeping His promises to you? Where do you struggle?

## Reaching Outward: Investing in Your Neighbors

- **Alpha:** Fall Morning Alpha concludes soon. Pray that those who are attending are drawing closer to God and will continue to be involved in the post-Alpha community.
- During the holiday season, look for opportunities to build relationships with neighbors that can lead to spiritual conversations.

## Reaching Beyond

- Support ministry partners in a fun way by making purchases at the 22nd Annual FPC Mission Market (December 3, 10, 17 from 8 AM–1 PM, Palm Court). To learn more or sign up as a volunteer for one of the Sundays, please email Mary-Floye Federer at [mffederer@fpchouston.org](mailto:mffederer@fpchouston.org).
- For holiday season volunteer opportunities at FPC local ministry partners, contact Madie Weir, Missions Coordinator at [mweir@fpchouston.org](mailto:mweir@fpchouston.org) for more information.




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### GOSPEL-CENTERED PARENTING TAKE-AWAY

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This story shows us a magnificent picture of parenthood—two sets of parents who come face to face with the reality that their child is not their own. God chose Elizabeth and Zechariah & Mary and Joseph to raise their sons in the wisdom and knowledge of God Himself. Though you may not have received a message from an angel about your own child, there is no doubt that God chose you to raise him or her. **How can this truth—that your children are gifts from God—give you comfort and assurance as you raise them?** Consider turning the angel Gabriel’s message and Mary’s responses into your own prayer this week: “For nothing is impossible with God” and “Behold, I am a servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your Word.”

*Example: Lord, nothing is impossible for you, even the \_\_\_\_\_ that my child is struggling with. Even the truth of Scripture (about me, my child, etc.) that I am struggling to believe. Do not remain silent; instead, turn Your ear to us as we declare once again...nothing is impossible for You. Take some time to list (out loud, in your mind, or with pen and paper) all the things in your kids’ lives and your own that seem impossible and pray over these with the hope that NOTHING is impossible for God. Consider inviting your kids to join you in this prayer time.*

*Example: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, you gifted me with such unique children. This Christmas, may I be reminded of Your love for them and me. And may I boldly accept Your promise of love and in turn share that with my children. May I joyously be Your servant and trust the Truth of Your Word. Amen.*