

Advent Four (B)

December 21, 2008

Luke 1:26-38

“Nothing Is Impossible”

In Jesus name. Amen.

Service in and service out we say these words. *And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.* Every Sunday we say those words or words very similar. Many of you don't even have to look in the hymnal. I often find that I don't realize what those words are saying. Do you? The mystery of Christ's coming in the flesh. That God, the all knowing, ever present, all powerful God, has been born in human flesh. Jesus didn't have to do that. It was because He wanted to. He loved us so much that He took on human flesh to be our Brother and Savior. He loved us so much even though we continue to sin and rebel against Him.

In Nazareth, that is where Christmas began. Back on April 25th, that is where Christmas began. When Gabriel came to Mary and announced to her that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her and she would conceive even that day. Nazareth a place so insignificant that many believed nothing good could come out of it. But that's exactly how God works. God works in ways that we cannot understand. **For nothing is impossible with God.**

As we read this common Christmas time narrative we take those words too lightly to. Gabriel speaking those words, **Nothing is impossible with God.** I believe them. That Gabriel came and spoke with Mary. That Mary conceived and carried the Christ Child in her womb for nine months. I believe that the Word created faith in Mary that she was able to respond, **Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.** I believe it all. But it's the other stuff. The stuff in my life. The stuff in your life. The stuff that seems to big, to scary, to overwhelming. The sins that we can't be rid of, the failures, the doubts, the questions. God did such great things in Scripture. For we know **Nothing is impossible with God.** So why not here and not now?

For our answer we need to look at our Gospel. Specifically, what our Gospel says. Again we hear the words from Gabriel to Mary, **Nothing is impossible with God.** Those are great comforting words. Yet they aren't the best translation. We can say the same thing about other statements about God. God is love, but does He love you? God saved the world, but does He save you? With God nothing is impossible, but what about for you? Satan tries to use those generalities to separate us from God. Does He really know what is going on at your home? Can I really trust in God to take care of me? Often times our doubts and sin carry us away from the comfort of the Gospel.

Gabriel said to Mary literally, **For no word from God shall be without power.** All the fear and confusion that the Lord

just dropped in Mary's lap will be worked out. Gabriel isn't just stating some general stuff, but that God's Word does what it says! God's Word always contains His power. How can something good come out of Nazareth? By God's Word! How can a 14 or 15 year old virgin conceive and bare a child? By God's Word! How can Mary be this pregnant, how can she face Joseph, how can she be the mother of God? By His Word! God's Word is power. Mary got that. For her response to the angel is, **Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.**

Gabriel then departed. He didn't give Mary all the how's, why's, where's, when's, and what's. Mary may have thought about them but she had what was sufficient. She had the WORD of the LORD! She knew that God is faithful! He intends us to believe His Word. So whenever you are in a situation, no matter how powerless, confused, troubled, or weak you might be; like Mary, confronted with something you can't possibly see working out, you are to believe, that **no word from God shall be without power.**

God spoke to Mary through Gabriel and she bore THE Child. God spoke to Abraham and Sarah that Sarah would be pregnant, and she was. Blind Bartimaeus approached Jesus and Jesus said, **Receive your sight; your faith has made you well. And immediately he regained his sight (Luke 18:42b-43a).** To the synagogue officials dead daughter he spoke, **Child, arise! And her spirit returned, and she rose immediately (Luke 8:54b-53a).** To the man with a

withered hand Jesus said, **Stretch out your hand! And he did so; and his hand was restored (Luke 6:10b)**. To the leper who believed Jesus was willing to make him clean Jesus said, **I am willing; be cleansed. And immediately the leprosy left him (Luke 5:13)**. If our Lord says family problems be solved, they will be. Those words might be at the tip of His tongue. I don't know and neither do you. Mary didn't know how being a pregnant virgin was going to work out and how Joseph was going to react. But she went by the power of God's Word. She went by the promises of the Word that was already spoken to her, not by some unknown word. It is the Words God has spoken to us that give us faith, strength and courage in the face of the world to come.

Listen to what God has already spoken to you in His Word. He said, **Be baptized and you will receive the Holy Spirit**. Just as Gabriel told Mary the Holy Spirit would come upon her and she would conceive a Son, yet the Holy spirit comes you and conceives in you the faith that makes you God's son or daughter. And so you don't have to stress over the future, nor fret about what is going to happen this week. For the Lord has made a promise to you to see that you have all that you need.

God says to you, **I forgive you your sins**. All of your sins have been taken from you and given to Christ on the cross. They are no longer a burden to you. Your sins have been given to Jesus and He has given His righteousness to you! At one moment Mary was not pregnant and the next she was. Mary probably didn't feel pregnant right at that moment. You may

not even feel forgiven. But just because you don't feel forgiven doesn't make it not so. It is GOD'S WORD.

Again you will hear today from our Lord, **Take eat; this is My body. Take, drink; this is My blood.** Just as God's flesh and blood is present in Mary when His Word was spoken His Body and Blood are a present reality on this Altar for you. That you would live in God and He in you. That His Word makes it so even if you don't feel like it or can't believe that God would give it to us over and over. It is His Word and not your faith that makes the Sacrament a Sacrament.

Cling to His Word. **Let it be to me according to Your word.** Place your faith and trust in what God has promised you in His WORD. And not just a spoken and written Word, but in the Word made flesh. To be with us, to save us. And you may be asking, did He? We have His Word on that too, **It is finished.** And so it is. The resurrection of the Word made Flesh proves that, that God's Word has power. And that you will be resurrected from the dead to rest eternally with Him.

Dear friends in Christ, don't get buried under the Christmas holiday avalanche. Don't let the words we hear and say become cliché. Especially God's Word. You don't have to know it all and don't feel guilty of not. Yet as Mary did, cling to the Word, to that promise that is already revealed in Scripture from God. For Christ has given Himself to us. For He promised it in His Word. Because He really wants you. Merry Christmas.

In the name of † Jesus. Amen.