The Expectant Mother

Luke 1:26-38

As the calendar approaches December 25th, we draw near to the day that most Christians have decided to celebrate in remembrance of our Lord Jesus’ birth. In honor of the tradition of Christmas, I like to share from the scriptures that are closely related to the earthly birth of Jesus.

Today, Christmas Eve, and the Sunday after Christmas my preaching will be **“All about the Christ Child.”** It is amazing how the chain of events in the pregnant mother’s life relates to our lives as believers. God became flesh and lived among us, so that He could relate to us and empathize with us in every way.

Think about the best and worst bosses you have ever had…The worst bosses have no empathy and seem like they have no idea how difficult your job is. They bark orders from their high and mighty position and they have lost touch of what it really looks like to be in the trenches. The best bosses, on the other hand, understand the difficulties of your job and appreciate what you are doing because they have been there, in fact, they might even get down in the trench next to you and help you from time to time.

Occasionally, I still work on construction sites, most often with two of my brother in-laws. They frame houses and the superintendent that they work for is incredibly good at showing appreciation for what they do. You know why? Because he had been a framing contractor. And because he had been a framing contractor he understood how hard the job was and what it takes to frame houses day in and day out. On the flip side of that, it means that you aren’t going to be able to sneak anything past him because he has been there and done that.

Not only is God our Creator, who has known everything about us before we were born, He also personally understands the difficulties of life, because He has been here and done that. The more I study the Bible, it becomes clearer to me that God truly understands the human condition and even the process of a baby coming into the world is evidence that points to God’s connection to us.

In order to explain I will present four connections, over the next three sermons…

**The expectant mother**—Believer’s who are expecting the fulfillment of God’s promises

**The Birth pains**—The trials and tribulations of this life.

**The Joy of giving birth**—The joy that comes from the awareness of God’s plan (even though it is in infancy)

**Children are the light of parents (especially of mothers) lives**—Jesus is called the light and life of all things. In fact, He is the light in the darkness, as well as the continual light which will light up the New Heaven and New Earth for all eternity.

Christmas and our lives are all about the child, who was God among us! And the birth of this Child would mark the beginning of a new phase of history and a new kind of hope for those who were looking for encouragement in dealing with the hardships of life.

Please open your Bible’s, or phones, or pads with me to the first chapter of Luke beginning with verse 26…

**Luke 1:26-38**

**26In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. 28The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”**

**29Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”**

**34“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”**

**35The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37For no word from God will ever fail.”**

**38“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.**

*Whoa!*This is quite the exchange. Not your average day. Have you ever had an angel appear to you and give you a message about your life? God sent the angel Gabriel…

Gabriel, whose name means “God is Great,” is only recorded to have spoken to Daniel (DN 8:16); to the priest Zechariah (Luke 1:19); and to Mary as we see here in Luke 1:26.

Mary must have been more than a little caught off guard. Daniel had fallen on his face when he had seen Gabriel, and it says of Zechariah “He was startled and gripped with fear.”

So this is nothing to take lightly and, it seems, that the presence of the Angel Gabriel would help to increase the intensity of Mary’s expectancy.

Going back to Luke 1:28…

**. 28The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”**

**29Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.**

Good that the messenger told her that she was in a favorable position. It seems that even after Gabriel assured her of her favor she was still troubled enough that he had to tell her again.

Then God’s messenger goes on to tell her why he is there and why she should consider herself favored. He says:

**31You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”**

Okay, Mom’s out there, just consider if someone you really trusted told you that your child was going to cure cancer. More than that, what if a clearly heavenly messenger came to you and gave you and told you that your child was going to cure cancer?

I bet you would really be looking forward to seeing it come to pass, wouldn’t you?

Mary’s child was going to be called the Son of God and His kingdom and reign would never end!

Hope and expectation can carry us through huge amounts of difficulty. In a past sermon, I told you that “No good thing ever happens unless someone does a hard thing.”

A sculpted body comes from hard workouts and disciplined eating.

A beautiful building has countless hours of design and labor efforts.

A bacon, eggs, and hashbrown breakfast doesn’t just appear on your plate. Someone had to raise the hogs, take care of the chickens, harvest the eggs, and grow the potatoes…And all that was before it was trucked to the store…purchased and then prepared.

For every good thing…Somebody did a hard thing.

And a child, arguably one of the best things in life, is no exception.

Before the glorious birth of a child there is going to be some pain. Now in this particular case, I am a little bit like the bad boss who doesn’t know exactly what it feels like…because I have never experienced labor pains.

But I was with my wife 5 times as she gave birth. My wife is one of the toughest people I know, I have seen her do a lot of hard things. And all five times that she went through labor pains, I was terrified. It looked excruciating.

So why go through it five times?

Wouldn’t you just learn your lesson after one?

It didn’t seem to work that way. Because after our babies were born, my wife seemed unconcerned about the hard labor that she had just gone through.

Our child was worth all the pains. In fact, what seems to be true is that the more kids a mother has, the more their expectancy helps them to get through the pain. You might be able to say that their faith in the outcome helps them deal with all of the difficulties.

This is why Jesus (God in the flesh) was born to a human mother and lived life among us with all the usual hardships. And this is why God has made sure that that scriptures have been passed down to us. So that our faith and the faith we see in others (past and present) can help us to believe enough in what’s to come that it keeps us going.

As the scriptures say…

**11**Faith shows the reality of what we hope for; it is the evidence of things we cannot see.

We do hard work with the expectation of compensation.

We go hiking to see an incredible view or because of the health benefits or to commune with nature.

We do good with the faith that what we do will help others and encourage them to do the same.

The Angel Gabriel was sent by God to help prepare Mary for the difficult road ahead and the most important part of that was telling her what to expect.

This is the main reason that God has given us the scriptures, to help us know what to expect, so that we will not lose sight of the good things to come. As Jesus once said to His disciples:

John 16:32-33

**32**But the time is coming—indeed it’s here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. **33**I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

Or as Luke wrote, in the book of Acts…

**22**strengthening the disciples and encouraging them to remain true to the faith. (Paul and Barnabas said) “We must go through many hardships to enter the kingdom of God,”

So today, that is what I am trying to do. I am trying to help you and me, have faith and the right expectations so that we can do the hard things knowing that those hard things will bring about good things.

It is going to happen over and over again in our lives.

Is there any parent here that would say, “Oh yah, after your child is born the difficult part is over?”

No, our lives are a cycle of expectation, difficulty, joyful fulfillment, and then the expectation and difficulty moves to another aspect of life.

When my wife and I’ s third child started to get close to knowing how to walk, I would sometimes pick her up and set her back down on the floor.

You want to know why? Because I knew what came next. As soon as she was walking, my life would enter a more difficult stage of watching and sometimes even chasing. Eventually I embraced the next step realizing that the good far outweighed the inconvenience of trying to keep tabs on our daughter.

Remember, how I said that God came and lived among us kind of like a good boss would get down in the ditch with you and work side by side with you. He gets us, and He knows our struggles and He even knows our typical excuses for our weaknesses…The apostle Paul wrote:

Galatians 6:7-10

**7**Do not be deceived: God cannot be mocked. A man reaps what he sows. **8**Whoever sows to please their flesh, from the flesh will reap destruction; whoever sows to please the Spirit, from the Spirit will reap eternal life. **9**Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. **10**Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.

We can’t sneak things past God, as we do the difficult things in life, and endure hardships with faith…We can expect good things to come from it.

Or as was written to the Thessalonian church…

2 Thessalonians 3:11-13

**11**…we hear that some of you are living idle lives, refusing to work and meddling in other people’s business. **12**We command such people and urge them in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ to settle down and work to earn their own living. **13**As for the rest of you, dear brothers and sisters, never get tired of doing good.

I’m not going to sugar coat life for you. Life is full of hardships and pain, but remember that the scriptures encourage us:

Philippians 4:8

**8**…Whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things.

Don’t think about the labor pains, think about the baby.

Use the difficulties of life to remind yourself of the expectation of the good things to come.

Good things only come about by someone doing hard things.

I will leave you with the words of Jesus who said to His disciples:

John 16:20-22

**20**Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. **21**A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. **22**So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.