

2011 ADVENT ANGEL VISITS: THE ANGEL SENT TO MARY

Luke 1:26-38,

We all would agree this morning that
 Christmas is a busy time of the year,
 And that we rush about trying to get all things ready,
 Sometimes frazzles our minds and.
 We start forgetting things.

Like the lady who had so much to do, she decided to get her husband to help address Christmas cards. She had already arranged all the cards, stamps, envelopes and pen, and then pulled up a chair and said, "Come on, Dear, come give me a hand and let's get these out of the way." Her husband glanced at the table and the stack of cards, turned and walked away into the den, returning moments later with a high stack of Christmas cards, stamped, sealed, and addressed. He said: "These are from last year, I forgot to mail them. Now let's go out to dinner and relax."

That's a wake up call isn't it.
 A good story needs a strong plot
 A good set up and
 An unexpected ending.

That is exactly what the first Advent was about.
 The unexpected happened.
 An Angel visited,
 A virgin conceived,
 And a savior was born.

What will it take to wake us up for Christmas this year?
 What is the unexpected that will help us
 recapture the reason for the season?

We're already getting bored
 Our mail boxes have been clogged with catalogues and advertisements.
 Were already 3 or 4 weeks into Christmas shopping
 City and some home decorations have been up for a month.

I read about a psychologist who had found the perfect
 Formula for getting through Christmas.
"You just put your mind in neutral, and go where you are shoved!"

The danger is that you will end up
 where you didn't intend to go.
 Doing what you didn't intend to do.
 Saying what you didn't intend to say.
 Losing what you didn't intend to lose.
 There were 400 years between
 Malachi and Matthew.
 400 years of silence between the OT and the NT.
 And to wake up his people, God did the unexpected.

I. GOD SENT THE ANGEL GABRIEL came with an announcement.

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. Luke 1:26-27

It says: God sent an angel--

We all expect the relatives to come for Christmas.

And we know their no angel.

God sent an angel.

I was reading about a man who wanted to prove his love for his wife: he swam the deepest river, crossed the widest desert and climbed the highest mountain. She divorced him. He was never home.

Mary was home.

God sent an angel.

Notice that angel Gabriel didn't come on his own.

He wasn't out just using up his frequent flyer miles.

This wasn't a little vacation for him.

God sent the angel Gabriel.

A specific angel with a specific message.

Better than an email or a twitter.

This is faster than Facebook or a phone call.

He instantly appeared in Nazareth, in a town called Galilee,

In the house of a virgin

Whose name was Mary.

26 In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. Luke 1:26

There was no mistake when God

hit "send" on his computer.

No virus attached to this message

It went straight to the place where it was intended.

To Mary, a young devout Jewish girl.

I can guarantee you that when you and I hear God speaking,

In the quiet of his Word,

We don't need to question the origin of the message.

We don't need to quantify the identity of the sender.

We just need to open up our mail and.

Open up our hearts and receive it from God's word.

Compare with me for a moment

Oxygen and the Grace of God

They are similar in one way.

But different in another.

They're similar in that Oxygen and the Grace of God

Both give life.

Without oxygen, there can be no biological life.

We stop breathing and in about 3 minutes we will die.

I remember when I was in the Olivet School, a 5th grade kid decided that he would hold his breath
As long as he could and he would then pass out.
Kids all thought that was funny,
But it is a very dangerous thing to do.
We need oxygen to live.

We also need God's grace to have a spiritual life.
Without the grace of God we are not saved.
Our world doesn't exist.
We do not exist.
It is all by the hand of God.

Now the difference between oxygen and the grace of God

Is that breathing oxygen is automatic,
But receiving the Grace of God is not.
It is by choice.

Not only that we have a defect in our souls
A bent nature that reject and resists Gods grace
Because of our idolatry and self-sufficiency.
It was so great that even the Lord God was disgusted with us.

Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great on the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. The LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. Genesis 6:5-6

But still he loved us and activated his plan to save us.
God sent an angel.

And Mary activated God's grace in her life,
By her acceptance of the angel's message.

**38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."
God sent the angel, but he also**

II. GOD SENT THE ANSWER

MARY ACCEPTANCE OF GOD'S GRACE didn't come without some questions.

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

Mary had questions!

Mary knew the scriptures.

That a virgin would conceive and bear a son.

The messiah.

She was a devout Jewish girl

Maybe named after Moses sister Miriam.

Every little Jewish girl dreamed of being the mother of the Messiah.

But she was greatly troubled because she was already engaged.

Promised to Joseph.

She had already let go of the dream of
being the mother of the Messiah,

to plan her normal life.

This message came when she was planning a wedding.

No wonder she was...

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. Luke 1:29

Did you have any surprises at your wedding?

Probably the biggest surprise was the bill.

I read that most US wedding cost over \$20,000.

Most Midwest wedding range more like \$10,000.

This does not include cost for a honeymoon or engagement ring.

So I did a little research using the Wedding Cost Estimator,

Not to be confused with the Wedding Budget calculator.

Well here are some clues for cutting wedding cost.

1. Check with other brides who are married on the same day and use their same decoration at your reception. (I bet a man came up with that one).
2. Avoid high cost season May through October, Get married in January – March.(Father of the bride came up with that one)
3. Get a three tier cake with a fake bottom two tiers. Great for pictures –no one eats that cake anyway. (Bride's mother).
4. Dress down the Gown, use a lower end satin and save two thirds the money.(Mother of the Groom)
5. Use candy kisses instead of truffles and save \$3.00 per bag. (Wedding coordinator)
6. Call the wedding reception a party instead of a reception and save 25% right off the top. ((Preacher because he figured they already lived together and the honeymoon was over.)

Now that advice is free today, and aren't you glad you came?

By the Way did you hear about the wedding invitation that read:

Phil, Richard, Karen and Allison, and John, Matt and Steve request the honor of your presence at the marriage of their Mother and Father. Because they are combining two households, they already have at least two of everything. So please, no presents! Reception and garage sale will immediately following the ceremony.

SLIDE----Mary was busy with wedding plans and

She was occupied and preoccupied.

She wasn't thinking about having a baby out of wedlock.

She was just lost in the preparations of a future wedding.

And just so she wouldn't miss this first Christmas,

God sent an Angel.

To give her some answers.

He didn't come too early

He didn't come too late.

He came at the right time.

When everything was in place.

So that all of the prophecies

Could be fulfilled.

Concerning the baby who was to be born.

He answered her questions.

Then he said to her

30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.

God sent an angel

God sent an answer

God sent a home.

I. GOD SENT THE HOME THAT JESUS NEEDED.

31 You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 32 He 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,33 and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never Luke 1:31-33

Eye hath not seen nor ear heard

What are the wonders God has yet to perform.

And he wants to do it in our homes as well.

God could not bring the baby Jesus,

The savior into the world

SLIDE-----Without a Godly Mother,

A Godly father,

To raise him in a godly home.

I still believe today we need the same thing.

If you and I are to have Godly children.

We must be godly parents.

And have a godly home.

Lest I tend to bore you with the stories of my home,

At Christmas I do get a bit homesick

- even if we are "home."

I get homesick for my childhood home on the farm,

The smell of live animals,

The bubble lights on the tree,

The house filled with relatives.

The wonderful food.

But I also get homesick,

To hear my Father pray,

And my mother play the piano

And sing the old songs of faith.

Some of us get homesick for homes we never had.

Or homesick for the homes we left behind.

Did you hear about the teary kindergartner on the first day of school:

"You aren't homesick already, are you?" the teacher asked. "No, I'm here sick."

I don't know who first said "home is where the heart is?"

But Home is not just where the heart is.

Home is our main hope of having a heart to begin with.

I know that some of you came out of a messed up home,

And you lost your heart a long time ago.
I'm so sorry.
You deserved better.

SLIDE----Every child today deserves better.
They deserve a mother and a father.
That's why God went to such lengths
That Jesus home was like that.
"Home" is where our soul soars and our spirit is fulfilled?
Home is where children see the
Wonder of Christmas,
And the mystery of the angels,
Home is where we experience the power of God in our lives.

Home was where Jesus learned as a Baby
The wonders of Gods' spirit.
The story of the angels,
Home was where his Uncle Zechariah
And his Aunt Elizabeth came to visit
And share with Mary and Joseph once again,
The stories of angels visit.
And the Love of a heavenly father.
Home is where God came
To change their world.
That is the same way he plans on changing our world today.
What about your home?
Can God use it for his purpose, for his will?

In the year 1809 war was devastating the world.

SLIDE---Napoleon was sweeping through Austria;
blood was flowing freely.
Nobody then cared about babies.
But that same year:

SLIDE---William Gladstone was born who would become one of England's finest statesmen.
That same year,

SLIDE---Alfred Tennyson was born to an obscure minister and his wife.
The child would one day greatly affect the literary world in a marked manner.
On the American continent,

SLIDE---Oliver Wendell Holmes was born in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

SLIDE---And not far away in **Boston, Edgar Allan Poe** began his eventful, albeit tragic, life.
That same year a physician named **Darwin and his wife** named their new born child **Charles Robert**.

And that same year produced the cries of a newborn infant

SLIDE---in a rugged log cabin in Hardin County, Kentucky named **Abraham Lincoln**.

The news broadcast at that time Would have certainly shouted.
"The destiny of the world is being shaped on an Austrian battlefield today."
But in reality, The destiny of our world was being shaped in the cradles
of England and American homes.

What about your home?

God isn't through with your home. God isn't through with you. May we respond with Mary. **"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Matthew 1:38**