

Pastoral REFLECTIONS

December 12, 2021

I have enjoyed studying for this series of messages; "In the Wild". This is because many times we are glad to be saved, but are we living out our salvation in the midst of all the obstacles we may encounter throughout our lives (Philippians 2:12-18)? This season is another reminder of the last days of birth pains before Christ's return and He is not promising it will get any better. He is saying that it gets worse (Matthew 24). How do we navigate through these difficult times so that it makes our faith in Christ deeper, so that it produces His character in and through us (Romans 5:1-5)?



In a fair wind, every person may sail, but wise behavior in a storm commends the wisdom of the pilot. To endure adversity with a positive attitude is both the sign and glory of a brave spirit. As there is no worldly gain without some loss, there is no worldly loss without some gain. If you have lost your wealth, you have also lost the trouble that often comes with wealth. If you are degraded of your honor, you are also freed from the stroke of envy. If sickness has blurred your beauty, it has also delivered you from pride. Set your gains against your losses, and you will find no great loss. He who loses little or nothing keeps the favor of his God and the peace and freedom of his conscience. (From Practical Bible Illustrations from Yesterday and Today Copyright © 1996, 1998 by AMG International, Inc. All rights reserved. Used by Permission.)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains by itself alone; but if it dies, it bears much fruit. He who loves his life loses it; and he who hates his life in this world shall keep it to life eternal. If anyone serves Me, let him follow Me; and where I am, there shall My servant also be; if anyone serves Me, the Father will honor him." (John 12:24-26; NASB)

In this series what we have seen is that those who concentrated on how strong the enemy was, and how difficult the road ahead was, never made it to the Promise Land. However, those like Caleb and Joshua who were completely surrendered to the will of God no matter the obstacles, forgot what was behind them and stretching forward by faith, made it through the walls of Jericho, the giants of the Promise Land, and gave God glory, while experiencing His blessings.

The greatest success in life is not what we have gained, it is what we have lost for the sake of Christ (Philippians 1:21; 3:7-11; Galatians 2:20; Colossians 3:1-4). I pray that this series and the series for the new year, prepares us for the road ahead.

UPCOMING Events



LWFC Kids & Community Christmas Party
Living Word will host a Christmas Party for LWFC Kids Ministry & the Community on Sat., December 18th 10:00 A.M. - 12:00 P.M. in LEGACY Sanctuary- **MASKS REQUIRED**. Please donate toys \$20 and under for this events. Donate your unwrapped toys in the bin in the foyer or children's wing no later than December 15th. Thank you so much for your donations to the children of Living Word & our community! Register on our events page of the website!



Ugly Christmas Sweater Sunday
Join us in-person or online for a special Sunday Service on **December 19th!!** You are invited to dress up in your favorite Ugly Christmas Sweater during church service. Take your picture and upload it to the church's Facebook or Instagram page tag **#UglyChristmasSweaterLWFC**



CHRISTMAS PROGRAM EVE SERVICE
DECEMBER 24TH AT 6:00 P.M.
Living Word family join us for a Christmas Program like no other. The LWFC Drama Ministry & Creative Jams Present "Returning to Your First Love" featuring music, dance, and a dynamic story about a family that has lost their way and Christmas brings them back together. Bring the entire family for a Living Word Christmas family tradition.



Urban Missions Team Outreach
Come serve with the U.M.T on Christmas morning to serve the homeless in Downtown Houston near Minute Maid Park by handing out Packs of Love (toiletry items) and praying with them. The event will take place on **Saturday, December 25, 2021**, meet at Living Word at 8 am and we will arrive near Minute Maid Park by 9am. the event will last until 11 am, returning to the church right after. Children & Youth (10 years old and up) and Adults are welcome to join in serving Houston's homeless. Contact Natividad Smith at 832-701-4281 for more information.



Prayer Revival 2022
Join Living Word Fellowship Church as we bring in the year of at our annual Prayer Revival!
January 4th-6th | 7:00pm
Mark your calendar!



ORDER OF WORSHIP

- Announcements
- Communion
- Visitor's Welcome
- Worship In Giving


Offering boxes are located at all perimeters under crosses

Special Music

The Gift
Luke 1:30-38

Full sermon notes available online at www.lwfellowshipchurch.org
Click on the "Resources" tab and click "Sermon Notes"

Call to Discipleship
Please remain seated at this time
Benediction



Children are now required to check-in upon arrival. Please report to the registration desk located in the children's wing.
Ages 2—6th grade



MIDDLE SCHOOL - HIGH SCHOOL

2:30 4:00 & TUESDAY NIGHTS

SUNDAY @ 7:30 PM

SERMON OUTLINE

The Gift

Luke 1:30-38

A. The Giver of the Gift (vs 30-31):

1. Gabriel delivered a message (order) that is only going to be told to Mary.
2. Mary seeing the angel, became dreadfully afraid because of the awesome presence of one of God's key angels. The meaning of this word implies that in her heart she could have been in such awe of the angel that she contemplated hiding herself or running away.
3. After God's careful and thorough scrutiny, He decided to extend to Mary His free- hearted, generous, and extraordinary bountiful grace.
 - a) The favor found by the bearer of the message (vs. 30):
 - Her morality
 - Her spirituality
 - Her humility
4. This bountiful grace is provided by the Creator who is sovereign over everything. It is His will, in His time, for His purposes, who chose Mary (without consulting anyone) to execute His divine will.
5. Gabriel is careful to say that in the near future the baby Mary will have will come from her womb.

B. The Nature of the Gift (vs. 32-34):

1. Jesus is divinely set aside to partake in the holiness of God, separated from the world, while in the world, for a divine purpose.
2. Jesus is related to God, has the likeness of God's nature and character, and will divinely work to execute the will of His Father, the Lord God.
3. Jesus's nature and character are therefore determined by the Greatest of the Greatest.
4. Jesus will be established on the throne of David by the One who has all authority and power, and is supreme overall and is Creator of all. So, there is no possibility of all that is being described to not be instituted.
5. The Lord God is going to permanently cause Jesus to possess a place of authority over all things (Ephesians 1:22-23; Phil. 2:9-11).
6. Jesus will rule as a royal leader, with supernatural power over Jacob's house eternally.
7. Jesus is going to be in the place where God's sovereignly rules in all His glory; supreme over all evil forces, so that even though He is born of a woman, He has the supreme power of God.
8. Mary did not challenge whether or not God could do all that Gabriel is saying. She is questioning how it can be done through her when she has not experienced intercourse with a man.

C. Gift Exchange (vs. 35-38):

1. Gabriel did not accuse Mary of a lack of faith; he rather sought to provide the understanding she lacks by summoning her to listen to his explanation.
2. Not only is God involved in this process but the Holy Spirit also.
3. It is the supernatural, mighty capability of God that has inherent ability to get this done.
4. The supernatural capacity of God is great because He is Highest of the Highest, the Supreme One overall.
5. The presence of the Lord God will possess Mary like a cloud resting over her.
6. Jesus has God's complete nature and being. He is the subject (nominative, singular) that defines this story, not Mary.
7. Jesus is divinely called to be in the likeness of God's character.
8. Since God is the One who is making Mary pregnant, and He is the Lord God who has authority and the power, there is no possibility that He shall lack any power to overcome any obstacle.
9. "Bondslave" used by Mary, is a strong statement that depicts her heart. She is defining herself as a slave, humbly willing to no longer be a free woman focused on doing what she desires. She views the will of God as superior to her will and the Lord is now her Supreme leader that she is totally obligated to.
10. Mary is totally convinced because she tells Gabriel that he can create in her what he is saying will take place.
11. Mary believes that God can do exactly what He said He can do through Gabriel.
12. The angel was a messenger of God so Gabriel's job is done; as a result, he leaves Mary. No timeline, no powerful bright light; he is gone in a flash. Mary has no worries because she has accepted his word. We know that for sure because she goes to her relative Elisabeth who is miles away.
13. We want God to give us a timeline, but because Mary is the Lord's bondslave, God's Word is enough.



PRAYER REQUESTS

Grieving: Randy Hadnot & family, Eunice Johnson & family, Lula Walker & family, Carlton Lopes & family, and Carolyn Hadnot & family.

Health and Healing: Lurlean Lane, Florence Wiggins, Retha Amos, Octavia Scott, Margaret Baptiste, Cici Sharpe, Eunice Johnson, Jeffrey McQueen, Brittany Bullock, Barbara Gordon, Ella James, Pat Crawford, Lisa Roberts, Birdie Williams, Jon Heard, Lakessia Davis, and Rutha Patrick.

THE GIFT

Luke 1:30-38