

Favor: The Gift of Grace

"In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, 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. The virgin's name was Mary.²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him 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 Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"³⁵ The 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.³⁶ Even 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.³⁷ For 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." Luke 1:26-38

Christmas will never die in our hearts because we need hope !

The Christmas story begins with a very young woman who received God's grace. (vs 28)

Grace is...

- ... undeserved favor from God.
- ... God's ability to provide what we need to fulfill His will.

I. What kind of person receives God's favor?

"I meet the qualifications to receive God's favor!"

II. How did Mary respond to God's favor?

She asked a question (vs. 34)

The importance of the virgin birth. (see Luke 1:1-4)

C. "Let it be to me according to your word." (vs. 38)

Application: Grace comes to anyone; particularly to those who feel unworthy. The only response God is looking for is belief that He will do it!

Small Group Questions

1. Why do you think Mary's initial reaction before she could even say a word is apparently one of fear? (Vs. 29)
2. Share your understanding of grace outside of "saving grace?" In other words, how else does grace operate in your life? (See definition)
3. Why do we tend to eliminate ourselves for being used by God? What does Mary teach us about the kind of person He can use?
4. Mary's response to the angel's description of what would happen was a simple word of obedience and submission. (We do not have to make God's will happen, He will bring it to pass!) Describe what "active faith" means to you and how you would exercise it.