

Midweek Advent Vespers 2  
St. Luke 1:26-35  
December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
Sts. Peter & Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC  
Simpsonville, SC  
Pastor Jerald Dulas

## You Will Bring Forth a Son

*In Nomine Iesu!*

In the Name of the Father and of the + Son and of the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### **Prayer in Pulpit before Sermon:**

O Lord, send out Thy Light and Thy Truth, let them lead us. O Lord, open Thou my lips, that my mouth may show forth Thy praise. O Lord, graciously preserve me, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be rejected. Amen.

Grace, mercy, and peace be to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. Amen.

In last Wednesday's reading, we heard about Zacharias' unbelief regarding the proclamation of the angel Gabriel that he and his wife Elizabeth would be granted the gift of a child in their old age. Today, we hear the opposite. The blessed Virgin Mary believes the word of the angel Gabriel. Her faith is evident in today's reading. She hears the message and receives and believes this word from the angel. Her faith is grounded in the fulfillment of the long-promised Messiah. The promise of the redemption of the world that was first given to Adam and Eve, would be found in the womb of the Virgin Mary.

In this respect she represents a new Eve. The mother of all living; the mother of the human race—Eve—was deceived by the serpent and brought death to all her offspring. The devil came to Eve with lying and deceptive words, and in believing the lies, she led all of mankind into sin and shame and death. Now comes the angel Gabriel—a messenger sent by God and with God's word of truth—to proclaim the good news to the Blessed Virgin Mary that she would give birth to a Son who would redeem her and all mankind from their sins; God would fix that which was destroyed by Eve by being born in our flesh so that He could fulfill the Law and offer up His life as a ransom for our punishment.

Eve was the mother of all living that gave birth to children who would die on account of sin. The Blessed Virgin Mary will bear the Child Who would be the Firstborn of all the living. She would bear the Savior of the world. She would bring forth life, where there had only been death before. In this way, the Virgin Mary is like the Church. The Church is pictured as the bride of the Christ. She brings forth those who are born out of faith in the One, True Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ. All those who believe on the Lord + Jesus are brought out of death and sin into life and redemption from their sins. We who believe on the Lord + Jesus are borne out of the womb of the Church through Holy Baptism.

In our Holy Baptism we are buried with Christ, so that just as He is raised again into new life, we too rise to live in His righteousness before the heavenly Father. We who bear the penalty of death inherited from our first parents Adam and Eve, now bear eternal life through faith in our brother, the Lord + Jesus Christ. This is the message of the angel Gabriel that we hear today. We are told, through the proclamation to the Blessed Virgin Mary, that we will be saved from our sins. When the Virgin Mary gives birth to her Firstborn Son, and calls His Name + Jesus, we have a Savior. Even as His name—+ Jesus—bears the meaning of Savior.

The Blessed Virgin Mary believed the message, unlike Zacharias who doubted. Do not let her question fool you into thinking that she had doubts like Zacharias. Even though the questions sound the same. We are told by holy Scripture that Zacharias did not believe the message and that the Virgin Mary did. This should teach us about our Lord God, that He indeed is the only One Who can know and discern the hearts of man.

This should also teach us to believe the Word of the Lord. He gives His promises to us through His Word. Just as He gives His promise to both Zacharias and the Virgin Mary. The promise is the same whether it is believed or not. The promise is just as sure to be delivered whether the hearer believes it or not. This is why we should not doubt when we hear the promises of the Lord, even amidst the lies and deception of the world, which wants to lead us and all who would believe their lies that God is nothing and His Word is doubly so. Blessed are they who hear the Word of God and believe, like the Virgin Mary did.

In the same way that Zacharias and Elizabeth's names informed us about the roles they would play in preparing the way for the Messiah, St. Mary's name also informs us about her role. For, Mary means, "Exalted." She is exalted because of Whom she would give birth. The angel Gabriel even alludes to her name when he greets her. He calls her the "*highly favored one*." She is "highly favored," that is, "favored of the Most High God," because she will give birth to the Lord God in the flesh. The Virgin Mary relishes this announcement. She rejoices at this announcement. "*Let it be to me according to Thy Word*." She is the willing servant of the Lord God. This birth does not violate her in any way. She is a willing and happy recipient of this gift of the Lord God. For, the Son that she will bear, will be her Savior, and the Savior of the whole world, especially of them that believe.

However, because she knows biology; because she knows that in order for someone to be pregnant, it takes one man and one woman to produce a new human being, she has to ask how this will be. She does not "*know a man*." Is she supposed to fulfill her betrothal to Joseph, and in that way give birth to a Son? No. The Holy Ghost will overshadow her, and she will conceive and bear a Son, the Savior of the world.

This is one of those marvelous things that the holy Scriptures does for us. This overshadowing of the Holy Ghost is locked in mystery for many about what it exactly means. But this is exactly like we have been discussing in our Old Testament study that the Old Testament informs the New Testament and vice versa. The Old Testament is full of imagery of the Holy Ghost overshadowing things. The Holy Ghost overshadowed the waters at the beginning of creation. The Holy Ghost overshadowed the burning bush when the Lord God called and sent forth Moses. The Holy Ghost overshadowed the Tabernacle of Meeting in the cloud, when He was present with His people Israel.

This overshadowing of the Holy Ghost, is a picture of the Lord's dwelling with His people in the Old Testament. The Lord God, in the Person of the Son, takes up His dwelling place—His tabernacle—in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary. In the Old Testament His presence among His people is so great and majestic that no one dare approach, except for His called servant Moses, and everyone who saw it lived in fear. But now, the Lord dwells bodily in the womb of His mother Mary, so that we no longer need to fear the Lord and His majesty. He has become like one of us. He chooses to dwell as one of us, in order to redeem us from that serpent who deceived our first parents.

He comes to preach truth and righteousness in Him and Him alone. And even though St. Mary does not ask for a sign, she is given one anyway. The proof that she will bear the Savior of the world; that she will give birth to a Son Named + Jesus is found in her cousin Elizabeth. For, this is the six month of Elizabeth's pregnancy with St. John the Baptist.

According to our Church's year this announcement to the Virgin Mary takes place on March 25<sup>th</sup>, nine months before the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord which we are about to celebrate on December 25<sup>th</sup>. That means that the announcement of St. John the Baptist happened sometime in September, and that Zacharias was serving in the temple around the Festivals of that time of the year. The time when a sacrifice would be made for the whole people of Israel and the Israelites were celebrating the harvest that the Lord God had provided for them.

Our Lord + Jesus becomes the once and for all time sacrifice for the whole world, and through the work of the Holy Ghost, the Comforter, that He sent to us, the Church now brings in the harvest of souls of all those who believe on and cling to the Lord + Jesus in faith.

Let us cling to our Lord + Jesus in faith. For, He has redeemed us by His blood on the tree of the holy cross. He has defeated the serpent that deceive our first parents, especially our mother Eve. He has opened up the womb of the Virgin Mary, to lead us out of death into eternal life with Him. And He opens the womb of the Church through the presence of His Holy Ghost to create and sustain all those who cling to Him in faith. Therefore, let us believe the promises that God would preach into our hears, even as St. Mary did and became the mother of our Lord + Jesus. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

**Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:**

Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy Name give glory! I will extol Thee, O Lord, and I will praise Thy Name forever and ever. Amen.

**The Votum:**

The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus. Amen.

*Soli Deo Gloria!*