

Wednesday of Ember Week in Advent
St. Luke 1:26-38
December 14th, 2022
Sts. Peter and Paul Evangelical Lutheran Church, UAC
Simpsonville, SC
Pastor Jerald Dulas

The Son of the Most High

In Nomine Iesu!

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

Sermon Text:

And the angel said unto her, "Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favor with God. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name JESUS. He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Most High: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end."

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.

Today we hear the same Gospel that we heard way back in the springtime. In March, on the Twenty-Fifth, we celebrated the Festival of the Annunciation of our Lord. The angel Gabriel appeared to the Blessed Virgin Mary and announced to her that in nine months she would give birth to the Savior of the world. Now here we are almost nine months later, and that narrative is repeated for our ears to hear and our minds to ponder once again. What a great mystery this announcement is! The Blessed Virgin Mary should not be the only one that should be casting in her mind what sort of greeting this was of the angel Gabriel. We should also be throwing this announcement around in our heads. We should contemplate what a wonderful mystery the angel Gabriel is announcing to the Blessed Virgin.

It is especially good that we hear this message announced to us once again just ten days from the birth of our Lord and Savior + Jesus, the Christ. What sort of announcement is this? What sort of greeting is this to the Blessed Virgin Mary? How can she who has not known a man conceive and bear a Son, and not just any Son, but the Savior of the world? How can the Virgin Mary conceive and still keep her virginity inviolate? As the angel Gabriel announced: no word from God shall be void of power. Nothing the Lord God says will not come true. He speaks and it happens.

When the Lord God created the heavens and the Earth. He said, "Let there be..." and there was. He created all things in this world by His Word. The sun, moon, earth, and stars He created. All living things creeping upon the earth; the cattle, birds, and fish. All growing things that can be used for food and medicine; the plants, trees, and the grass and flowers of the field. All these things He created by His Word. No word from God shall be void of power. He even spoken with Himself in making mankind. "Let us make man in our image," He said. Then He did a very wonderful and mysterious thing. He formed man from the dust of the earth, and breathed into him the breath of life. He gave us His very own spirit, so that we would live and breathe.

But mankind disobeyed the Lord God and ate from the tree in the midst of the Garden of Eden from which He had forbade them to eat. They passed on this sin to all their children. Every man born of woman is conceived and born in sin. Every man, or woman, born out of the union of man and woman is conceived in corruption. We have been conceived in corruption. We are full of sin from our mother's wombs. We are born in sin and will die on account of it. We have been born into death. From this we cannot hope to save ourselves. We cannot stop our deaths. We will die and be buried in the grave, because we have all been born in sin. All because we have corrupted the perfect creation of the Lord God. He spoke and gave life. Mankind speaks and contributes only pain and death, especially those who are outside of faith.

Therefore, our Lord God in His great love for His creation; His great mercy for us, has ordained to send to us His Only-Begotten Son, our Lord + Jesus, to be born of a Virgin. The angel Gabriel announces that wonderful gift for us to the Blessed Virgin today, and we hear the message once again before we celebrate the Incarnational birth of our Lord and Savior in just a few days. But how can this great thing happen? The Virgin Mary has not known a man. Sure, she is betrothed to St. Joseph, but unlike engaged people today in our society who think it is alright to engage in sexual relations before they are married, the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph have not consummated their betrothal. Even after St. Joseph takes Mary as his wife, he still keeps her virginity intact, by not having sexual relations with her so that there could be no doubt about the paternity of the Child in her womb. The heavenly Father is this Baby's father, that is clear.

So then, if she has not known a man, how can she give birth to a baby, let alone the Savior of the world? This is the mystery we get to ponder this evening. It is a mystery just like when the Lord God first appeared to Moses in the fiery burning bush. How could the bush be on fire, and yet not be consumed. Just like the three young men in the fiery furnace in the Book of the Prophet Daniel, who were in the fire, but the fire did not affect them. The smell of smoke and fire did not even attach itself to their clothes. They came out of the fire unharmed.

The angel Gabriel gave the answer. No word from God shall be void of power. The Lord has spoken that the Virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and in the womb of the Virgin Mary the Son of the Most High is conceived of the Holy Ghost. What a wonderful mystery! He Who has created the heavens and the Earth; Who is eternal and infinite; being in all places at all times dwells in the womb of a lowly handmaiden. The infinite Creator of the world has taken up residence in the finite womb of the Virgin Mary. All so that He might redeem His people from their sins.

The Baby conceived in the Blessed Virgin Mary's womb of the Holy Ghost is both the Son of the Most High, and He is born of the Virgin Mary. In this we see His two natures clearly shown by Holy Scripture. He is the true Lord God—the Son of the Most High God, begotten of the Father before worlds, God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten not made being of one substance with the Father, by Whom all things were made. And yet, He is also true Man, born of the Virgin Mary. He is both God and man. He is the incarnate Lord God. The Lord God Who has taken upon Himself our flesh. Only the real and true God could become both God and man. Only He could bear our flesh and dwell among us. Only a loving and merciful Lord God would humble Himself to take upon Himself our flesh, in order to dwell with His creation as a part of His creation, so that He might redeem us from the sin which imprisoned us.

Therefore, my dear friends, it is fitting that Our Lord + Jesus should take upon Himself our flesh, and dwell in the womb of the Virgin Mary, all so that we can celebrate His incarnational birth every year on the Feast of the Nativity our Lord. For He takes upon our flesh; He Who is infinite becomes finite in order to redeem us from sin and death. It is especially fitting that He should be born of a woman; a sinful woman that is. This is really the Blessed Virgin Mary's confusion at the announcement of the angel Gabriel. How can a woman who is a sinner bear the sinless Son of the Most High God? How can

the Son of the Most High take up residence in the womb of sinful mankind? Because even as sin entered the world through a woman, the source of the remission of sins will also enter this world. The Lord + Jesus takes upon Himself our flesh in the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, but He is without sin.

For He is conceived of the pure and holy, Holy Ghost. Unlike mankind who are conceived of their sinful earthly fathers, the Son of the Most High is conceived by the Holy Ghost. His Father is the heavenly Father Who is pure and holy. He is conceived of God the Holy Ghost in the womb of the Virgin. Even though she is betrothed to St. Joseph, she has not had sexual relations with him, and so she remains a virgin both physically and spiritually. She remains the vessel that will carry the Savior of the world for nine months. We first heard this announced to us back in March on the Twenty-fifth of the month. Now, almost nine months later we prepare for this wonderful and mystery birth, wherein the infinite has joined Himself to the finite. What a wonderful mystery for us to ponder!

Indeed, my dear friends, we have this mystery to ponder whenever we come to this holy house to receive the remission of our sins through the eating and drinking of our Lord's Body and Blood in bread and wine. The infinite Lord + Jesus through the Word—the Words of Institution—joins Himself to the finite bread and wine. The infinite once again joins Himself to the finite every time we gather at this altar and receive the remission of our sins by our Lord's Body and Blood given to us in bread and wine. If you cannot believe that the Lord + Jesus is truly and substantially present in His Body and Blood in, with and under the bread and wine in the Lord's Supper, how can you possibly believe the incarnation of the Lord + Jesus? For the same mystery takes place. The same infinite Lord God takes up residence in a finite object. Whether that is the womb of the Blessed Virgin Mary, or the bread and wine of the Sacrament of the Altar. The same mystery occurs.

Therefore, my dear friends, let us give thanks unto the Son of the Most High for being conceived in the womb of the Virgin, in order that He might be born of our flesh, so that He might redeem us from the sin which we inherited from our parents. He created us with His own hands, and breathed into us the breath of life. He spoke to Himself that He should create mankind in His own image. On account of our corruption of the perfect creation He made, He becomes a part of His creation to restore us once again to being a perfect creation. We are joined to Him through faith in Him, and on the Last Day He will once again restore us fully to the perfection that He originally created us. This is why the Son of the Most High sends the angel Gabriel to the Virgin Mary, so that he may announce that mankind will receive the gift of a Savior. Let us rejoice and ponder this great gift and mystery, for we are unworthy of this gift, but our Lord and Savior + Jesus Christ comes in our flesh to redeem us and make us worthy once again. In the Name of our Lord + Jesus Christ. Amen.

Prayer in Pulpit after Sermon:

Almighty God, be pleased to accompany Thy Word with Thy Holy Spirit and grant that Thy Word would increase faith in us; bring into the Way of Truth all such as have erred; turn the hearts of the unrepentant; and for sake of Thy Name grant succor to all heavy hearts and those who are heavy-laden, that they may through the mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ be relieved and preserved so that they succumb not to the temptation of despair but rather that they gain the victory over the world, the flesh, and the devil; through the same Jesus Christ, Thy Son, our Lord, Who liveth and reigneth with the Thee and the Holy Ghost, ever One God, world without end. Amen.

The Votum:

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

Soli Deo Gloria!