

Crossway Life Group, Week of December 8, Second Sunday of Advent

See sermon notes on [CMC's webpage](#) for background information

Community

Take time to share and pray for each other's concerns and joys.

Scripture: Luke 1:26-56 Sermon: "Humble Servants"

Reading & Discussing Scripture

Think for a moment about what kind of person we think is likely to bring real change for good in our communities and in our world. We often think of someone who is a good person who also has access to lots of money, has many connections of influence, has great abilities, and has the skills to be a success in the world. In the story of Jesus' birth, life, and death, we see something quite different.

- **Read Luke 1:26-38.** What might society's perspective (both Mary's and ours) be about the wisdom of choosing Mary to be the means by which God's Son would enter the world?
- **From these same verses, what are we told about the Son to be born to Mary?** How does that contrast with the setting into which He was born, and even the fact that He entered the world as a helpless baby?
- **What is significant about Mary's response to the angel?** How is this similar to and different from Zechariah's response (see Luke 1:18-20)? In what ways is Mary a model for how people are to respond to God?
- **Read Luke 1:39-56.** What does Elizabeth emphasize about Mary and about the baby that Mary would bear? What does Mary emphasize in her song?

The Big Idea

**God's greatest work
is through humble trust and complete submission
to His Word and will
by His Son and by His children by faith**

Application & Reflection Questions

- How might we miss the work of God when we overlook the lowly and obscure people (perhaps including ourselves) and things in the world?
- What makes it challenging for you to humbly trust in God's Word and will, including the times when His will leads to lowly and challenging circumstances?
- Jesus called His disciples to take up their cross and follow Him, which for many people involved leaving their wealth and sources of security (see Luke 9:57-62). How might God be calling you to "put a hand to the plow" and not "look back"? Consider both "big" and "small" ways of following Him.
- Sometimes God's call means literally leaving sources of wealth and security behind. Sometimes it means keeping these things yet living "as if not engrossed in them." (1 Corinthians 7:29-31) What would it look like to live that way?

Growing in Cultural Understanding

Different cultures honor different qualities. Some cultures honor the young while other cultures honor the elderly. Some cultures honor the courage to be a strong individual while other cultures honor the courage to sacrifice for the sake of family and community. In your cultural experiences, what are some of the qualities that God highly values while your culture does not value them (or even judges them)? What helps you pursue God's values and not get pulled into your culture's view of them?

Serving beyond ourselves

What are ways that your group can be for the benefit of people beyond yourselves?

Would your group consider **praying for our church's nominating committee**? This team is responsible to review people who are suggested as possible nominations for Board Member, Board Member/Elder, Nominating Committee member, and search committee member. Please pray for this committee:

- For wisdom about people and the Spirit's leading
- That they would not delay, and that they would not rush
- For God's provision of the right leadership for our church at this time

You can learn more about recommending people to be considered by going to

<https://crosswaymchurch.org/members/nominating-committee/>. **The deadline is December 17.**

Luke 1:26-56: The Birth of Jesus Foretold

²⁶ 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.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!"

Mary's Song

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

"My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.

⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him,

from generation to generation.

⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;

he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones

but has lifted up the humble.

⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things

but has sent the rich away empty.

⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,

remembering to be merciful

⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever,

just as he promised our ancestors."

⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.