

Blessed are the Meek: Joseph and Mary

Matt 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-45



Background: This Sunday we will continue our advent series focusing on four pairs of people in the infancy narratives of Matthew and Luke. While our world continues to fixate our attention on the rich and powerful, the focus of God’s kingdom is upon the poor and the marginalized, who through their suffering have become humble and hopeful, waiting for the kingdom of God.

Last week Bernard spoke on Zechariah and Elizabeth, who received the news from the angel Gabriel that they would bear a son even in their old age. This week Gabriel is sent to Mary and Joseph with even more remarkable news, but it comes with a price few would be willing to pay. Will they hesitate, waver, or ask for sign like Zechariah? Though you already know the answer, their obedience is designed to galvanize our faith and draw us into the wonder of Christ being formed in us.

Sermon Text: Matt 1:18-25, Luke 1:26-45

Joseph: Matt 1:18-25 (NIV)

¹⁸ This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹ Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law, and yet did not want to expose her to public disgrace, he had in mind to divorce her quietly.

²⁰ But after he had considered this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, “Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹ She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins.”

²² All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³ “The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel” (which means “God with us”).

²⁴ When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵ But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Mary: Luke 1:26-38 (NIV)

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's visit to Elizabeth (1:39-45)

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!"

The Magnificat (1:46-55)

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.”*

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- a. As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
- b. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- c. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

2. Sermon questions (pick 3)

- a. Would you want to be called “meek”? Why or why not?
- b. Think of someone you have known who is humble, gentle and considerate. Why did you find them admirable?
- c. Mary gives us an example of submitting to the will of God and participating in his work in the world. Where are you participating in God’s work these days? Where do you want to participate in God’s work?
- d. Joseph doesn’t say a word in the entire story but he obeys God, which risks his reputation. He is very courageous. What would it look like for you to risk your reputation this Christmas season for the sake of following and obeying Christ?
- e. What encourages you most from the lives of Joseph and Mary?

3. Extra Credit 😊

- a. *“Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth”* (Matt 5:5). What does Jesus mean that the meek will “inherit the earth”?