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Grace...a community church
November 22, 2009

Worship Fully

How do you respond to the Advent?

4 Responses to the Advent:

- **Mary responded with** praise
 - *Luke 1:26-38*
 - *Luke 1:46-55*
- **Joseph responded with** obedience
 - *Matthew 1:18-25*
- **The shepherds responded with** sharing
 - *Luke 2:8-20*
- **The wise men responded with** giving
 - *Matthew 2:1-12*

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³²He 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, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon 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. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing is impossible with God."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

Matthew 1:18-25

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

²⁰But 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. ²¹She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins."

²²All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ²³"The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"—which means, "God with us."

²⁴When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. ²⁵But he had no union with her until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.

Community Group Homework

For the week of November 22, 2009

QUICK REVIEW

Looking back over your sermon notes, was there any particular point or passage of scripture that most challenged, confused or caught your attention?

-How can you apply that your life?

GETTING TO KNOW YOU

How would you describe the best Christmas you ever had as a child? What made it special for you?

What word would best describe what you want to experience this year during the Christmas season? What are some obstacles that get in the way of that happening?

DIGGING DEEPER

1. *Read Luke 2:8-20.* The shepherds are well-known participants in the Christmas narrative. Think about images you have seen on traditional Christmas cards, nativity scenes, or even the way the shepherds are portrayed in a typical church Christmas program. How have we been led to picture these first visitors to the manger?

2. The Shepherds are the first ones to whom the angels announced the birth of Christ. What does that tell us about the heart of God toward social classes? How does this relate to the message of Christmas?

3. The shepherds not only approached the manger in a spirit of worship, we see them moving into their world to proclaim the good news. The announcement that God has given us his Son changes everything. Who still needs to hear the good news? Who can you or your family specifically bring this announcement to? What might that look like this Christmas?

TAKING IT HOME

4. The Advent season is our chance to celebrate the wondrous moment when God entered our world to make things right. It is a season of worship. This is the foundation for our conspiracy. Pray that you and your family will have a fresh encounter with God during this season of Advent. Pray for a desire to worship more fully and for opportunities to enter into the ongoing story of Jesus and his work in this world.
5. Understand what you're doing and why you're doing it. This is not about anger disgust, or guilt. It is about entering the story of Jesus more deeply with a desire to worship more fully. It is not enough to say "no" to the way Christmas is celebrated by many; we need to say "yes" to a different way of celebrating.