

Lk1:26 Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth,

1:27 to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

1:28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

1:29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.

1:30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

1:31 "And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus.

1:32 "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

1:33 "And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

1:34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

1:35 And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.

1:36 "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren.

1:37 "For with God nothing will be impossible."

1:38 Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

From Today's Sermon.

While older births are rare, virgin conception is understood in medicine as something that can never happen.

The angel said, "Blessed woman, congratulations, the Lord is with you. The angel said, "Blessed woman, congratulations, the Lord is with you. She was deeply perplexed and disturbed. Then she is told something that is not supposed to happen to her.

The path God leads us on. It can sometimes be a path of deep perplexity, confusion, and a bad feeling. It may be a path of danger, difficulty, and fear.

We know this from the thoughts of our betrothed Joseph: "My husband Joseph is a righteous man. Joseph, her husband, was a righteous man, and he did not like her to be made public, so he decided to divorce her in secret" (Matthew 1).

This was a separation. More than that, for Mary, it was an event that was like meeting the penalty of adultery.

But Mary did not ask for any explanation for these concerns. She simply said that there were no possible factors. Without fear or unwillingness to accept it, she asked how such a thing could come to pass.

Nothing is impossible with God," was the answer. The words of grace that we should accept as they are: "Blessed woman, congratulations, the Lord is with you," "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have received grace from God," "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. These are words of grace that we should accept as they are.

Good morning everyone.

It is finally a snowy morning. The highway has been restricted to use winter tires. I changed my tires just last weekend, so I was able to get away with it, but I guess snow in early December is a little earlier than usual. Please be careful when driving and walking.

We now have two candles for Christmas. The week after next, we will celebrate Christmas. It has been warm and sunny all year, so it doesn't feel like Christmas or the end of the year, but this morning, snow was falling and the roofs turned a little white, so it is starting to feel like Christmas.

Last week, we talked about Zacharias and Elisabeth. The long-standing question of why our prayers were not heard, why we were doing our best to advance before God and yet our prayers were not heard, was suddenly resolved one day. But Zacharias also felt that it was too late. In effect, time was running out for him to say that his prayers had been heard. He must have felt as if he were scoffing at the thought that even at his old age, even if he was told that his prayer had been heard, it would be nothing more than an empty, empty picture.

But God's work is different from how and when we humans think it is the best thing to do. I hope we will keep this in mind. We may have a narrow-minded viewpoint and casually assume that only this time is best, or only this way is best, but God sees things differently. This is exactly what this verse in Philippians 4 says.

4:5 Show your forbearance to everyone. The Lord is near.

4:6 Do not be anxious about anything. But in everything, with thanksgiving, with prayer and supplication, present your requests to God, and he will give you what you seek.

4:7 And the peace of God, which no man can possibly know, will guard your hearts and your thoughts in Christ Jesus.

Now, it says that Zacharias and Elisabeth were “both already old,” but regardless of how old they were, even today, very old births are rare, and there are records of births to women over 60 years of age. Although this is very difficult, it has not been ruled out by medical science. However, as for Mary, whose conception was announced today, it was a virgin conception, which is something that would be considered completely impossible in terms of medicine. So, what can I say, the bar for miracles has been raised. I think it is fair to say that the hurdle for the season has been raised, which means the hurdle for believing has been raised as well.

When Zacharias was told that he was going to give birth at an advanced age, he said, “How can I know such a thing? I am an old man and my wife is old,” he complained. Now let us read the beginning and end of the Annunciation to Mary.

1:26 In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a virgin in the city of Nazareth in Galilee.

1:27 This virgin was sired by a man named Joseph, of the house of David, whose name was Mary.

1:28 And the angel came to her and said, “Blessed woman, congratulations, the Lord is with you!

1:29 At these words Mary was greatly disturbed, and she wondered what this greeting was about.

The fact that a virgin would give birth to a baby is considered an improbable event, but the fact that this improbable thing would happen is a miraculous sign, a miracle of the birth of Christ the Messiah, as we read in Matthew 1 and Isaiah 7.

Matthew 1:18 The birth of Jesus Christ was like this: “And Mary, his mother, betrothed to Joseph, and they became one flesh. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they were yet together, she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit.

1:19 Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man, did not like that her affairs should be made public, and secretly determined to disown her.

1:20 While he was contemplating this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and

said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be anxious, but take Mary as your wife. For that which is conceived in her womb is by the Holy Spirit.

1:21 She will give birth to a son. And name him Jesus. He will be the one to save his people from all their sins.

1:22 All these things have come to pass in fulfillment of what the Lord has said through His prophets. 1:23 "Behold!

1:23 "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son. And his name shall be called Immanuel. This means, "God be with us.

1:24 And Joseph, after he had awakened from sleep, took Mary to be his wife, as the angel of the Lord had commanded him.

1:25 But he did not know her until a child was born to him. And he named the child Jesus.

1:26 And she said to him, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and his name shall be called Immanuel. His name shall be called Immanuel.

7:14 Therefore the LORD will give you a sign from Himself. Behold, a virgin shall conceive and bear a son. And his name shall be called Immanuel.

But Mary had no way of knowing this at the time.

When the angel suddenly appeared and said to her, "Blessed woman, congratulations, the Lord is with you," she "felt a terrible stirring at these words and wondered what this greeting was all about. The Bible tells us that she had an intuitive feeling that she was involved in something terrible, and that she was terribly perplexed. But she did not immediately feel the urge to dismiss, bury, ignore, or run away from the angel's words, which were so disturbing and perplexing in her emotions, but instead continued to wonder and ponder, "What is this greeting about?

The Lord's inexplicable intervention and workings. A terribly heartbreaking development. I think it also describes all the inexplicable, painful, bewildering, uncertain, and sometimes evil events in our lives, in which we struggle without knowing the full extent of what is happening.

Matthew 14:25 About four o'clock at dawn Jesus went toward them walking on the sea.

14:26 When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the sea, they were bewildered, saying that He was a ghost, and they cried out in terror.

14:27 But Jesus immediately called out to them, saying, "Hold fast, it is I; do not be afraid.

Do not be afraid.

14:28 Then Peter answered and said, "Lord, was it you? Then command me and let me cross over the water to you.

14:29 Jesus said, "Come," and Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water to Him.

14:30 But when he saw the wind, he became afraid and was about to drown, so he cried out, "Lord, help me!

14:31 Jesus immediately stretched out his hand, seized him, and said, "O man of little faith, why did you doubt?"

14:32 When the two of them got into the boat, the wind ceased to blow.

14:33 Those who were in the boat worshipped Jesus, saying, "Truly, truly, you are the Son of God.

The Lord Jesus is the One who is able to make us walk on water as well. God created everything in the world with Jesus. He is the creator of human life. He is the eternal One, without beginning or end, whom no one can imagine. He made the heavens, wisdom, and the sea. He made the water, the vine, and the wine. He is able to make wine out of water, to calm storms, to walk on water, to multiply bread and fish and distribute them to many people. He who created the first man without using his mother when He created man, can also easily create a person from nothing.

We are invited by grace only so that we can believe in Him. The world is a dark place, and our path is not an easy one. The world is full of events that are terribly disturbing, extremely difficult, and perplexing. But the Lord speaks to us through his angel: "Blessed woman, congratulations!

Congratulations, blessed woman, the Lord is with you.

We receive comfort and strength from these words. Let us savor them together in our hearts and chew them over.

Congratulations, blessed woman, the Lord is with you.

1:30 Then the angel said, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have received grace from God.

Let us also savor these words. Do not be afraid, for you have received grace from God.

1:31 Behold, you will conceive and bear a son. Name him Jesus.

1:32 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will

give him the throne of his father David,

1:33 He will rule over the house of Jacob forever, and his dominion will be unlimited.

The Lord Jesus was sent into the world of men, revealing His will to raise up the saved on earth by grace and forgiveness, and to bring about the coming of the Kingdom of God. Mary longed for the Lord's salvation on earth, as is evident in the hymn that follows. She must have been excited to hear about the coming of the Lord's salvation. She must have been excited about the salvation of the world and her own salvation that the angel was telling her.

1:34 Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be? How can this be? I have no husband yet.

Instead of pleading with the angel to convince herself how she could know such a thing, or timidly fleeing from the horror of such a thing, saying, "Do not disturb my peace," she said, "Tell me how it is possible, how and by what means and along what way, and how it can be done. Please tell me how, in what way, along what path, and how this is possible, even though I have nothing to do with childbearing. Mary's faith is well expressed here. Mary is a simple, honest, and flexible woman. When she is told not to be afraid, she is not afraid; when she is told that she is a blessed woman, she believes that she is so. When she is told that the Lord is with her, she believes it. When God says, "Don't be afraid, Mary, you have received grace from God," she believes it.

1:35 The angel answered and said, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you. Therefore the child that is born will be holy, and will be called the Son of God.

1:36 Your relative Elisabeth is also pregnant, though she is old. She was said to be barren, but she is now six months old.

1:37 There is nothing that God cannot do.

Verses 31-35 are a parade of future tense. God has numerous and gracious plans for us for the future, saying that this will happen, this will happen, and this will happen. God has many gracious plans for us in the future, and there is nothing He cannot do.

The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will cover you," so that through faith you may dwell in the Lord and live by receiving God's indwelling presence. And through us, we manifest our Lord Jesus to the world. We, too, are blessed to have Jesus

conceived in the depths of our souls. And we are the ones who reveal and witness Jesus to the world, the ones who give birth to Him, the ones who convey His incarnation, the meaning of His birth, His redemption and forgiveness. The Holy Spirit comes upon us, and the Cousin helps us in whom the Lord Jesus dwells. There is nothing the Lord cannot do.

1:38 Then Mary said, "I am the Lord's handmaid. May it be done to me according to your word. And the angel went away from her.

The Word of the Lord is pure and perfect.

Psalm 18:30 It is this God whose ways are perfect, and His words are true. The LORD is a shield to all who lean on him.

Psalm 18:31 Who is a god but the LORD? 18:32 Who is a rock besides our God?

18:32 He hath girded me with strength, and made my way safe.

18:30 God, his ways are perfect. The word of [the Lord] is pure. The Lord is a shield to all who avoid him.

Let us walk this week hanging on to this Word. Congratulations, blessed woman, the Lord is with you. Fear not, Mary, for you have received grace from God. The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the Most High will cover you. There is nothing that God cannot do."

Amen, Lord, thank you. We love your Word. We trust in your protection. Please guide us all the days of our lives. We follow you. Amen.

Prayer: Heavenly Father, thank you for today's worship. The path of life that is perplexing, deeply perplexing, confusing, incomprehensible, and thought-provoking. Thank you that even when we wonder if this path of difficulty and danger is really led by you, you speak words of encouragement, remove our fears, and give us your best guidance. Please guide all sufferers into God's salvation and peace. Bless our families and our community. Use us. We pray in the name of the Lord Jesus. Amen.