

# GraceCity Advent Study

## A Holy Night



Week #2

December 4-December 10, 2017

"A Holy Calling" (Luke 1:26-45)

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In the Christmas story, Mary, the mother of Jesus, enters as an unmarried, young woman from a poor family that likely had no expectation for anything but a simple life. That all changes when the angel Gabriel, sent by God, appears to her. Gabriel gives Mary her holy calling to bear a son, the very Son of God! After the birth, Mary continues as a faithful servant and mother all the way through Jesus' life and is part of the early church. In this advent study as we anticipate the coming Christmas day, we look at the anticipation a pregnant Mary felt leading up to that holy night when our dear Savior would be born.

### Preparation:

The lineage of Jesus in Matthew 1:1-16 that ties Jesus to David and to Abraham includes four women in addition to Mary: Tamar (*see Gen. 38*), Rahab (*see Josh. 2*), Ruth (*see Ruth 1-4*), and the wife of Uriah (*see 2 Sam. 11:1-12:25*). In light of the patriarchal society of the time, highlighting women is unusual. What do these women's stories say about whom God uses in His story?

**Read:** Luke 1:26-45

### Looking at the text:

1. What do we learn about Mary in v. 26-28? Why might she have been chosen to bear Jesus? (*See also Isaiah 7:14*)
2. The angel appeared to Mary "in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy" (v. 26). Who is Elizabeth and who is her child? (*See Luke 1:5-25*)
3. What is seemingly impossible about both Mary and Elizabeth's pregnancies? Why do both occur in spite of these reasons? (*Consider v. 37*)
4. The angel told Mary that she was "highly favored" and that "the Lord is with you." What is Mary's initial response in verse 29? Is that the response you would expect? What is Mary's response later in the passage?
5. What do we learn in this passage about who Jesus is?

### For discussion:

1. What does it mean to have "found favor" with God? What misconceptions are there about what having favor with God looks like? Is God's favor something that is earned?
2. In verse 38, Mary declares herself to be the Lord's servant. How do you juxtapose this idea of being a servant with that of being an heir as discussed last week?
3. Read Mary's song in Luke 1:46-55. How do her allusions to the Old Testament, in particular to Hannah's prayer in 1 Samuel 2:1-11, further display the depth of her faith at a young age?
4. Mary's presence is noted throughout Jesus' life and death and with the apostles on the day of Jesus' ascension (*see Acts 1:12-14*). What example does Mary set for us as a follower of Jesus?
5. Remember a time you faced a situation that seemed insurmountable. What was your response? What can hold us back from fully embracing our call?

*\*\*\* Praise God for how He has placed you in this time and place for His purposes. Pray for eyes to see the favor God has bestowed on your life. Pray that you would embrace whatever call with the same unwavering faith and joy as Mary.*

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This study has been developed for personal reflection and group discussion. To participate in the conversation, join a GraceCity small group. For more information on times and locations, email [smallgroups@gracecitybaltimore.org](mailto:smallgroups@gracecitybaltimore.org).

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