

Text: Luke 1:26-38

Theme: It's Just So Illogical

Christmas Eve, 2017

To the average person, many things in life are illogical. A hummingbird flaps its wings over a hundred times a minute and a bald eagle, which is hundred times its size, can travel over a mile before it flaps its wings a hundred times. Is that logical? Then, there's the mosquito. Is anything in its life logical? It's born and dies in twenty-one days if someone doesn't kill it first. All around us, we find the illogical. As we look at our text this evening, we once again find numerous events that are just so illogical. Yet in the midst of what appears illogical, God unfolds His great plan to save us.

I. When you consider the events of Christmas, it all appears so illogical. 1. An angel appears to Mary who is sent by God. Luke tells us, "In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God." Now, is that logical? I mean, why would God bother to send an angel? Wouldn't it have been much simpler for God to say, "Hey, Mary, just so you know, you're going to have a baby?" From our human perspective, God didn't need an angel. He surely didn't need a specific angel who is noted in our text by name. As the events of our text begin to unfold, we find the illogical, God working in ways far different than we would have done if we were in His shoes.

2. Then, there's Mary, who is called the "favored one." Let's put things into perspective. Mary was not royalty, not born into royalty, and not even associated with royalty. In fact, she was on the opposite side of the spectrum. From a poor family, likely only a teenager, engaged to a man who was likely in his thirties. Within the community, Mary was not a likely choice for person of the year. She was a nobody. It doesn't make sense. Mary isn't the logical choice, the person any of us would have chosen, and yet she is called the favored one. Isn't that equally strange? Surrounded by what appears so illogical to us, God prepares to do the amazing.

3. Luke continues to unfold our illogical account as he says of Mary, "The Lord is with you." Imagine what Mary must have thought, "God with me? Why? Why me? Why now? Why any time? I'm not deserving; I haven't done anything to earn His favor. Why would the Lord choose to be with me?" Luke even tells us that Mary was greatly troubled by what she heard. Step into Mary's shoes. If an angel came to you and spoke those words, would it make sense to you? Would you say, "O, I was expecting you," or something more like Mary's response, "How can this be?" As Mary considered who she was, she knew in her mind that those words didn't fit.

4. As the angel continues his message, he says, "Do not be afraid." I think it was a bit late for that message, and a bit illogical. If you had been Mary, wouldn't your first thought have been something like, "It's far too late for those words?" Let's put the pieces together. An angel has appeared to Mary out of the blue, and he speaks specifically to Mary and calls her the "favored one." If you were Mary, wouldn't that have been more than enough reason to be afraid? Any one of those events, illogical as they were, would have been sufficient reason to be afraid. Even so, the angel says, "Do not be afraid." Like all the events prior, this too arrives as so illogical.

5. "You will conceive and bear a son and He will be called the Son of the Most High." Wait a minute! Mary is a virgin, unmarried, engaged, but has never had a child nor could she be with child by means of Joseph. The events just keep getting

more illogical. Mary is going to have a son. How logical is that when she is still a virgin? And how does the angel know that she will have a son and not a daughter? If we stopped there, we would have more than enough reason to say, "That doesn't make sense." But there's more. This child, this Son won't be a typical son. Instead, He will be the Son of the Most High, the Son of God. How illogical, even to Mary.

6. Then there's Elizabeth who was barren and far beyond child bearing age who is now six months pregnant. Does that fit with logical thinking? Why Elizabeth? How can it be Elizabeth? Why did God bother? Do we really need Elizabeth in the story? Wouldn't we have enough puzzling information without adding Elizabeth to the mix? From beginning to end, we're surrounded by events that make no sense to us, events that boggle our minds when we take time to put them together. God, in the midst of the illogical, announces His greatest plan in all history. That's not how we would have done it, but, in the mind of God, it was perfectly logical.

B. So, what do we do with all these events tonight, with all these events that appear so illogical? 1. We depart believing nothing is impossible for God in our personal lives. All these events impress upon our minds so clearly that, with God, nothing is impossible, even in our personal lives. It's easy to say, "Nothing is impossible with God," but those words take on new meaning when we say and believe, "Nothing in my life is impossible with God." If God can unfold the greatest event in history through a series of illogical events, God can do anything in your life, anything in my life. Never underestimate the power and activity of God in your personal life.

2. We also open our hearts and lives to be used by God. Did Mary know? Did Mary expect? We are the Marys and the Josephs of today. We don't know when or how or why, but we believe and remain prepared for God to use us whenever and however He chooses. When we think about God using us, it's logical for us to think, "I can't do that!" In fact, it's one of our most overused phrases. Yet, as we learn from Mary, our proper response is to say, "I am Your servant. Do what You know to be best." As we open our hearts with that mindset, we will experience God using us in ways we never dreamed possible to accomplish tasks we never even dreamed could happen.

3. We depart this night offering daily praise and thanksgiving. The events that unfold in our text seem illogical to us, but praise God He unfolded His plan, that He carried forward His intentions among skeptical people, and most importantly, that He unfolded that plan for you and for me. This account isn't merely a story. It's history; it's a part of your history and my history, a part of our history that has a direct impact on our future. Because His Son arrived in an unlikely manner, because His Son lived among us and died for us, because His Son has made the promise, eternal life is waiting just around the corner. There isn't a better reason for praise and thanksgiving than the One found in the manger, the One who arrived in the midst of so many illogical events, illogical events which also occurred and unfolded in a stable on that first Christmas night. Amen.