

Hope in Christ: The Incarnation
Ephesians 1:11-14
Luke 1:26-38, 46

I. Intro

- A. Our HOPE is in Christ, and Christ alone.
- B. We have a great promise, and a great hope
- C. It pleases God to show His sovereign will and favor to us!
- D. It pleases God to bless us, and sustain us!
- E. The blessings of God do not run out:
 - 1. Think of Niagra falls, 3,160 tons of water ever second
 - 2. Yet it never runs out, it just continues pouring out.
- F. Blessings may not be in the form of what we think they should be, Blessings come in the form God's intends for them to be.
- G. We have hope today, and that is a huge blessing.

II. Text

- A. Ephesians 1:11-12
 - 1. We have obtained an inheritance
 - 2. Having been chosen by God
 - 3. According to the purpose of HIS will
 - 4. And the counsel of HIS will
 - 5. Those who hope in Christ are to the praise of His glory
- B. Ephesians 13-14
 - 1. Sealed with the promised Holy Spirit
 - 2. The Spirit is the guarantee of our inheritance
- C. Now let's read about what this looks like in action
- D. Luke 1:26-38
 - 1. Mary is Chosen by God for a task
 - 2. She is referred to as "Favored one of God"
 - 3. She is told she has "found favor with God"
 - 4. She is confronted with truth, and reminded that nothing is impossible with God!
- E. Luke 1:46: Mary's response: My soul magnifies the Lord!

III. Points

- A. Favored one of God
 - 1. The have God's favor is a beautiful thing!
 - a) Psalm 5:11-12 11 But let all who take refuge in you rejoice; let them ever sing for joy, and spread your protection over them, that those who love your name may exult in you. 12 For you bless the righteous, O LORD; you cover him with favor as with a shield.
 - b) Psalm 90:17: 17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us, and establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!
 - c) Psalm 30:4-5: 4 Sing praises to the LORD, O you his saints, and give thanks to his holy name. 5 For his anger is but for a moment, and his favor is for a lifetime. Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes with the morning.
 - 2. The favor of the Lord protects us, sets us to work, and is promised for a lifetime.
 - 3. Mary was chosen by God and found His favor!
 - 4. What a blessed relationship and life!
 - 5. How do we relate?
 - a) You also have been chosen for a task
 - b) You have been set on mission, and by faith, have found favor!
 - 6. Our task is different than Mary's task, but is no less important:
 - a) We carry the truth of the gospel with us
 - b) We have the presence of the Holy Spirit in us, and working through us
 - c) We are sent out by God to fulfill our responsibility to the gospel work.

B. The Lord is With You

1. For Mary, the Lord was with her in a very special way.
2. She was found WITH CHILD, and that child was the Lord.
3. God's plan was not up to chance here, she was chosen for this task, and the Lord was going to see it through!
4. Then Mary is reminded that nothing is impossible with God...
 - a) Some of the events that were happening seemed to be impossible
 - b) This story is a reminder to us, just as it was a reminder to Mary, that nothing is impossible for God.
5. The key to this favor, and to this choice of God is that He is with us!
 - a) Our savior is never away from us, though we find ourselves not listening to Him at times.
 - b) Paul reminds us in Ephesians that the Spirit of the Lord is with us, and the angel reminds Mary that the Lord is with her:
 - (1) This provides confidence
 - (2) This builds trust
 - (3) This allows for peace
 - (4) This causes dependance
6. The confidence that God provides us through His indwell Spirit, and the confidence Mary had in navigating the complexities of life carrying Jesus, allow us to be effective lights in this dark world.
7. Story: I had a student one time that could not handle the concept of the world being dark, but without the light of the gospel, all we have is darkness.

C. My soul magnifies the Lord

1. The light of hope and truth produce a praise response
2. You respond to the Lord in a way connected to the:
 - a) Need for the Lord: We go to Him with our needs, and He hears us.
 - b) Desire for the Lord: When we desire fellowship, He never turns us away.
 - c) Dependance on the Lord: When we recognize our dependance, our Lord is there to sustain us.
3. Mary's song begins with a beautiful statement: My Soul Magnifies The Lord!
 - a) This is what is happening when we properly encounter God: We magnify
 - b) How? What?
 - (1) To magnify is to make something appear larger
 - (2) In science things are magnified in order to properly study small things that cannot be seen otherwise.
 - (3) The Spiritual sense is a bit different
4. To Magnify the Lord is to make His impact in the world larger through the actions of the person of faith.
5. Mary was making much of Her savior by her soul MAGNIFYING Him!
6. Our challenge: Magnify the Lord:
 - a) We have been chosen, so magnify Him
 - b) We have favor, so magnify Him
 - c) We have hope and promise, so magnify Him
 - d) He have life! SO MAGNIFY HIM!

IV. Close