

## “Love on Display”

- Introduction - Advent: “Down to Earth”
    - What is Advent - Page 20 quote= “Advent is a spiritual bestation-waiting, preparing, anticipating, at the same time knowing that right here , right now there is life-real life-growing inside of us.” -Rachel Billups, *Down to Earth*
- Tension: Easter vs. Christmas; Christmas greatest miracle and demonstration of love - God’s willingness to put on flesh and move into the neighborhood**
- Verses from Luke are well known verses - the beginning of the redemption story that makes known just how much God loves us as God chooses a simple girl named Mary through whom God would bring Jesus into the world - historians say:
    - Mary was probably pretty young...”according to Roman law of the day, minimum legal age for marriage was 10, which was probably similar for Jews, and most girls married before age 13” (bizarre to us, but the ‘norm’ then)
    - Not much in the way of ‘status’; from a small, ‘nothing’ kind of town in a region far removed from the center of Jewish life; her locale alone conveys she is not a person of wealth or status; as one scholar suggests, ‘she is common, ordinary, of little account in her world, not what you would consider the ‘stuff of legends”

### Luke 1:26-38

- Scripture says Mary isn’t troubled by the fact that an angel that just popped in, she’s troubled by his greeting, if had to guess, it was probably the ‘favored’ part— after all, that words tends to trip up a lot of us—’who, me? Favored?’ Most people have a pretty hard time thinking of themselves as ‘favored’ or anything special (but you are loved by God and special to God)

### Luke 1:30-33

- Outstanding news—Jesus’ reign; Jesus Kingdom is NEVER EVER GOING TO END! And through faith in his name we are clothed in His righteousness, we are children of the Kingdom—our future, our very lives, are intertwined with Jesus now and forever more; if you are in Christ Jesus, you are on the winning team! Jesus is victorious, through His work on the Cross, and the power of his redeeming blood, we are victorious. If you are in Christ Jesus, you’re on the winning team. Don’t live defeated

### Luke 1:34-38

- **V. 35**The angel replied, “**The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you** [not a stumbling block for my analytical brain—God made man out of dirt—God can snap God’s fingers and bring new life in Mary, life that is both human and Divine],
- “**Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.**” Mary’s response here is one of the most beautiful responses to a Divine Encounter in all of Scripture..it’s an example set forth before all of God’s people throughout time as she responds to this Divine Encounter *with* sweet, sweet surrender—Mary becomes an example of the type of surrender and trust that it takes to follow her Son. She exemplifies the ideal Christian; humble; trusting; obedient; she believes that the Word spoken to her will be

fulfilled, She embodies faith and faithfulness, even with the potential for personal peril and loss; Author Rick Morley states, “Mary becomes the patroness of all who dare say yes to God”

- God’s love would ultimately be ‘on display’ through the Son because a girl named Mary said ‘yes’. While 2000 years may have past, that’s still the way that God’s love is conveyed, through followers who are willing to say ‘yes’. And love is to be the defining mark of a Christian’s life; that was reality at least in the centuries following Jesus birth
- One of the fathers of our faith, a man named Tertullian when writing about Jesus followers at the end of the 2nd century conveyed how love was displayed by Christians when he wrote, “it is mainly the deeds of a love so noble that lead many to put a brand upon us. ‘See how they love one another...see how they are ready even to die for one another’.

Christians were labeled, branded, because of how well they loved one another - is that still the case?

- Doesn’t seem like it..
  - “Have to be Right”; Competition / Win
  - Self-glory (doing works so that we get accolades)
  - Don’t have to agree, but not let our differing opinions diminish the love we have for one another (Big change for me!)
  - “Jesus declares it’s not about choosing a side or winning an argument, it’s about love on display not matter who you are or who is in need.”
- When say ‘yes’ to Jesus, also saying you are okay with ‘being second’
  - Greatest Commandment - put self second
  - Mary was ‘second’
  - What would it look like if we put ourselves 2nd this Advent season, not only to God, but to those around us?
  - “We are united in love because we know that Jesus saves, heals and redeems - not our right beliefs, but the gifts of grace that each and everyone of us has received through Jesus’ birth, life, death and resurrection.”
    - Love and Unity found in Jesus
- Later in Luke, we find another Bible story exemplifies the kind of love, mercy and compassion that we are to display because of God’s love in Jesus: Good Samaritan...
  - Despised half-breed rejected by the ‘religious faithful’ cleans wounds, rents a room, comes back to check on him, and saves the man’s life
  - His ‘Love on display’ Went beyond ‘check writing’ to acts of compassion and mercy
    - We are Call to ‘do love’; to go beyond ‘check writing’...
      - Step beyond a nice gesture...? Beyond the surface
        - Towards whom has God placed a compassion (supernaturally?)
        - Outdo each other showing honor
          - Humility
      - A heart thing...’forgive them, they know not what they do’ even though He chastised them...

**Closing**