

ICE BREAKER

What was a messy experience for you and what did God show you through it? If it is still in process, how is God working in you now?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What part of the message was most encouraging to you? What part do you find challenging?
2. What did You notice about God in the passage? What did you notice about yourself and other people in it?

GOSPEL EXCHANGE (REDEMPTIVE WORK)

Jesus asks us to give Him our burdens (Matthew 11:28-29), whatever they may be (a lie we have believed about God or ourselves, our hurt or negative emotions, or even our concerns for loved ones), so He can carry them for us and give us His peace (wholeness and completeness) in exchange.

What do you want to exchange with Jesus today?

What is the burden? “Lord Jesus, I give you my...”

What’s His gift? “Lord Jesus, I receive your...”

ACTION QUESTIONS

1. What is one step of obedience you can take this week, based on what you’ve learned today? *(NOTE – You might consider stopping and prayerfully asking God to answer this question for you, taking 30-45 seconds to listen in silence for an answer, then write it down.)*
2. During the coming week, who is someone with whom you can share what you learned today? *(NOTE – Consider repeating the same step with this question as the previous question.)*



Sermon Study - Conversation Guide

December 17, 2023

“A Messy Christmas”

Luke 1:26-38

This guide is a discipleship tool for personal reflection, family conversations, for home groups, and for Table Talk on Sundays @10:40 am and 12:15 pm on the Lowell Patio

Coastal Community Church
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The first Christmas was messy. In the middle of the mess, we find Mary, a 14-year-old girl who is still teaching me to this day how to hold onto Jesus, and what it looks like to live through the mess with faith.

1:26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

Already in Luke, there was the story of Mary's aunt, Elizabeth, who miraculously became pregnant for the first time right when she was ready to retire. But Mary was probably around 14 when Gabriel came to her in the tiny town of Nazareth.

1:28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." 29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

Why did Mary feel troubled by the angel's words? Maybe she didn't feel highly favored based on her circumstances. Highly favored in her day usually brought with it the notion of being privileged, wealthy, and successful. That was not Mary's simple life.

1:30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus."

Mary could have thought for a moment, "Joseph and I will have a boy after we're married, and the angel wants me to call him Jesus. Awesome!" But then the angel kept going...

1:32 "He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

Since the angel used the words 'the Son of the Most High,' Mary would have immediately known the angel was saying, "Jesus is the Messiah". That's a crazy idea. Then a crazier idea comes to her. The angel meant Mary was going to be pregnant right then, not later.

1:34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God."

Just as the Holy Spirit came over the waters in Genesis chapter 1, overshadowing them so that something came out of nothing, so too the Holy Spirit created Jesus in Mary. If that sounded crazy, what the angel said next was even crazier:

1:36 "Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail."

Even though the angel's words were meant to encourage her, Mary knew she was going to deal with shame for the rest of her life. When we're dealing with shame, we don't want to be seen. So, we hide. But you can't hide being pregnant! Mary's response, knowing all this, is what makes this 14-year-old my teacher to this day.

1:38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

"Jesus, I'm Yours if I'm misunderstood and judged. Jesus, I'm Yours when I fail and when I'm so broken, I can't find my way out of the darkness." Why can you give Jesus every aspect of your life? Jesus watched what His mother went through with compassion. In His compassion, He willingly carried your shame for you on the cross. He knows your messes because He feels what you feel. He knows your pain and He's with you.

With Jesus, you can make it through your spouse's affair, your child's addiction, disabilities, and even death, and not just make it through, as in survive. No, you'll be the one with faith, love, and hope enough to give strength and direction to others, bringing light into their darkness. So don't give up. Pray with me. "Jesus, I'm Yours."

GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDELINES: Tips for great conversation

- We aren't here to teach/fix each other, but to share our experiences.
- Show respect by listening to one another, asking clarifying questions.
- If you're quick to share, allow space and time for others to speak up.
- If you're slow to speak, your experience is valuable so please share.