

Living Lent | Day 21

Great Things with Small Beginnings

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!"

But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end."

Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?"

And the angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God. Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible."

Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26–38 RSV

Encouragement for the Lenten Journey:

There are very few landmarks that had as huge an impact upon the development of the United States of America, as the Mississippi River. Travel and trade were impacted by what happened on the Mississippi.

But it has such a humble beginning. In Northern Minnesota there is a small lake name Itasca. The little stream that flows out of Lake Itasca is the headwater for the

Mighty Mississippi! It begins a journey that goes for 2340 miles and empties into the Gulf of Mexico. Along the way, it gathers water that is the watershed for huge areas of the USA. By the time it reaches New Orleans, it is the second largest river in the world!

God's great plan of Salvation, the opportunity to be forgiven of our sins, and to enter eternity with Him when we die, had such humble beginnings. This passage of Scripture tells us about a young lady who did not understand totally what was being asked of her. She was troubled, and the angel had to calm her fears.

Small beginnings for a plan that would save billions of God's Children. She would give birth to the Son of God, Who would establish His throne. Those who studies the Scriptures understood what this meant, but to this young lady it meant that she would receive a miracle from God, and His Son would be her Son.

How could this possibly be? Only because with God all things are possible. The great and mighty river of God's grace was going to begin with one young lady. Would she be willing?

Can you imagine the creek that flows out of Lake Itasca refusing to be the beginning of the Mississippi? So Mary, after having some of her questions answered, said the words that would mean everything to you and me: "Behold the maidservant of the Lord, Let it be to me according to your word."

The rest of the Story is about the great river of God's Love, shown to us through the Birth of Jesus Christ, and His willingness to be the means of our Salvation. God doesn't need our abilities, He needs our availability.

Contributor and Contributing Body of Christ

Pastor Jim McIlrath retired in 2017 after 40 years of service in the United Methodist Church. Since his "retirement" he has served as the Supply Pastor at Taylor's United Methodist Church at 766 Old Jesup Road in Brunswick, Georgia. With such a long-standing service record to the people of God, Pastor Jim obviously understands and appreciates the work that is completed at Morningstar for the Children of Brunswick and beyond.

*It takes a lot of everything to **create home and healing** for the foster children, our neighbors, served at Morningstar Children's Home.*

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