Intro: Middle of the Xmas season, but doesn’t feel like it. 50+ outside feels more like spring.

* Looking at birth of Christ from different points of view
* Joseph > Shepherds
* Today – most important woman in history
  + Begins with the first woman: Eve
  + God created world, Adam, Eve > dignity, value, community, great worth
  + Disobeyed, sinned against God – God pursued them as he pursues us today
  + Gen 3:15 – protoeuangelion (first gospel): “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel.”
    - What is the answer to rebellion and sin? A son – battle, Savior wounded, but victorious
  + God’s people waited for that son
* 700 yrs before the birth of Jesus, Isaiah 7:14: “The Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.”
  + Cannot, should not, will not miss the most significant birth because mom: virgin

Familiarity can cause us to skip, to gloss: prayer – God, I pray you would open our hearts and minds to what you have for us. That we would not be calloused to this text because we are familiar to it. That your Spirit would convict us of our sin and help us to grow in the likeness of your son, who we read about today. Amen

Luke 1:26 – Nazareth is an insignificant town

* 40-50 no more than a few hundred people: Pelican or Tenakee Springs
* Simple town with poor people. Nothing significant never came from Nazareth
* Jn. 1:46 – Nathaniel “Can anything good come from there?”

That’s where the angel shows up – Nazareth – to a virgin

Vs. 27 – Mary

* Young girl – 12, 13, 14 yrs old. No older than 16
* Gets lost on us – art depicts Mary as some flawless skinned woman in her 30’s
* Mary is a pimple-faced middle school girl engaged to Joseph
* Illiterate, simple, poor
* Thinking about her wedding, planning it – small event, but on her mind

Vs. 28-30 – Angel appears and speaks to Mary

* Scared – angels always frighten people in the Bible
* Message: highly favored and blessed
* Charis – grace – unmerited favor (Anna’s middle name)
  + God has chosen you, elected you, looked over the world and picked you

Vs. 31-33 – Describes the greatness of Jesus

* Isaiah’s prophecy will be fulfilled through you
* Remember hearing the scroll read in synagogue? That’s happening Mary

Vs. 34 – Mary doesn’t doubt – asks a good question

Vs. 35-37 – The power of God

* Not polytheistic, not a sexual experience
* Power of God to accomplish his purposes

Vs. 38 – Mary’s response

* Theological balance between God’s sovereignty and his covenant mandate
* God planned and initiated > Mary cooperated

Excited about this news and that her cousin was pregnant > goes to visit Elizabeth

* 80-100 mile journey
* Elizabeth was 6 months pregnant when Mary arrives and the baby leaped in her womb. Elizabeth recognized something unique

Vs. 42-45 – Elizabeth’s words

Vs. 46-55 – Mary’s response to all this: The Magnificat – Praise about what God had done

* Not about her, all about God

Mary remained with Elizabeth for about 3 months and then returned home

* Obviously pregnant and not married
* Having not committed adultery, but appearing so

Last week – Joseph gave up – Mary far more

Mary is a middle school girl, planning her life when God shows up and re-writes the script

* Engaged, lovely wedding, marry Joseph, have babies, not be embarrassed, be well thought of, not be an embarrassment to my family…
* Scratch that > response is the Magnificat > incredible faith

Doesn’t idolize her plan, marriage, comfort, security

* Law: could be beaten and mocked in front of everyone as example
* Knew Jesus would grow up being teased “at least we know who our dad is”

Mary doesn’t blink – simple faith – total trust in God

* Poor middle school girl is trusted to birth and raise God
* Mary is a great example of faith
  + Roman church: pray too her
  + Protestants: underemphasize
  + Not object, but example
* Teens are capable of far more than we expect
  + Adolescence is a modern construct where we excuse stupid behavior
  + Churches bought in > youth group
  + Do you want to see your kids have faith like Mary’s? Model it for them

Amazing opportunity to walk in faith

* RC > RCMat-Su
  + Caleb and Tracy Richardson
  + May > Mat-Su
* Support – not flush with cash, but Elder’s want to operate under faith more
* Discipleship opportunity for faith and giving

Sacrificing comfort is a part of discipleship/sanctification > we give because God gave first

Mary gave up her comfort and reputation so Jesus could come and save us