

## **Christmas series: The Arrival**

**Title** – Bethlehem’s Candle –Hope leads to Faith

**Text:** Matthew 1: 18-24 Luke 1: 26-38

### **Bethlehem’s Candle –Hope leads to Faith**

#### **Introduction**

The stories of birth:

When I was born, the last of six children, a blood transfusion was called for...

When my children were born, I held them up in my hands and gave them to God

I was not present for the birth of my grandson, but prayed through that time

This is the birth story of Jesus

The Roman Empire has no record of that birth nor of the stories surrounding the birth.

The Gospel of John, written later speaks to the deity of Jesus – that He is God

The Gospel of Luke shares the humanity of Jesus and gives a great account of the events surrounding the birth.

Matthew gives insights into the lineage and family of Jesus and speaks to the visit of the Magi.

The Advent candles lay out four aspects around the arrival of Jesus.

- The Prophet’s candle – hope
- The Bethlehem candle – faith
- The shepherd’s candle – Peace
- And the angel’s candle - Joy

Mary and Joseph

#### **The Bethlehem Candle – one of Faith**

Mary’s story / Joseph’s story / The road to Bethlehem

# FAITHFUL PEOPLE ARE CALLED FOR UNIQUE SERVICE

## Luke 1:28, 30

<sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." <sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.

<sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.

## Matthew 1: 19, 20

<sup>19</sup> Because Joseph her husband was faithful to the law...

<sup>20</sup> ... an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife, ...

## UNIQUE SERVICE

1. Noah – searched the world for a faithful man
  - Build an ark and be linked to salvation
2. Abram - His faith was credited as righteousness
  - Go where you do not know and be the father of nations
3. David – His heart for God served him from an early age
  - Face the giants and be anointed for kingship
4. Daniel –
  - Follow God in diet, duty and daily prayer and be elevated even through the lion's den
5. Joseph - His faith in God prepared him for a difficult task
  - Live a life of obedience and be appointed as the earthly father to God's son
6. Mary - Her faith in God found special favor from the Lord
  - Be pure unto the Lord and be called blessed by all mankind

God is looking for faithful (Faith-filled) people NOW!

- Many people say they have not experienced God in great ways or in any sort of spiritual awareness.
- There are countless billions who may never have experienced God's move in their lives
- The reason is that FAITH is the catalyst, the driver, the magnet for God's favor and calling
- Who shall I send? Send me!
- I am yours Lord!

## **Hebrews 11:6**

*And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. ESV*

## **Transition**

Not only are Faithful people are called for Unique Service  
Secondly, ...

## **FAITHFUL PEOPLE ARE SENT WHERE GOD DESIRES**

- The Bethlehem Couple – sent to Bethlehem by decree, to Egypt by a dream and back to Israel by a heavenly messenger

## **Luke 2:4**

*<sup>4</sup> So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David.*

## **Matthew 2:13**

*Now when they had departed, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, “Rise, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and remain there until I tell you, for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him.” ESV*

## **Matthew 2:19-20**

*<sup>19</sup> But when Herod died, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt, <sup>20</sup> saying, “Rise, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel ... ESV*

### **ARE SENT**

- Abram – sent to an unknown land
- Joseph – sent to Egypt
- Moses – sent into the wilderness
- Joshua – sent into conquest
- David – sent into battle
- Prophets – many sent to death and into exile
- Apostles – sent to their death to all lands

Daily – Jesus went where the father led Him

- You and I – sent to jobs, to towns, to missions, to every space
- When we look to God and have faith in Him ... he shows faith in us to be a light in a dark world. Available to be a messenger of Hope in a world that feels hopeless.

### **Transition**

Placing your faith in God positions you for unique service and a willingness to be obedient to being sent to the place where God wants you to be.

Finally, ...

## **FAITHFUL PEOPLE ARE GIVEN A SINGULAR TASK - TO BRING IMMANUEL**

- The Bethlehem Couple – Obedient to God in bringing Immanuel

To Mary

### **Luke 1:31-33**

*<sup>31</sup> You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> 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, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."*

### **Luke 1:35**

*"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."*

To Joseph

### **Luke 1:21, 23**

*<sup>21</sup> She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus,<sup>[f]</sup> because he will save his people from their sins."*

*<sup>23</sup> "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel"<sup>[a]</sup> (which means "God with us").*

## **SINGULAR TASK – GOD WITH US**

- Abram – Obedient to God as His people
  - Light to the nations
- Prophets – Obedient to God as His messengers
- The apostles – Obedient to God on Preaching God with us

You and I - Obedient to God in being the Temple of God everywhere we Go.

### **CHALLENGE**

**Place your faith in God**

**Go where God says to go**

**Represent God with us to all you encounter**