



LC STUDY GUIDE “Peace Be With Us”

The Passage: Luke 1:26-39

December 11-24

Leader Note

It's that time of year when many groups are meeting for Christmas parties. But if you are reading this, you are either meeting for study or including a time of devotions in your holiday party. I'm always grateful for leaders and groups dedicated to their growth and also want to encourage you to use this meeting as a time of connecting with each other as this year comes to a close. So consider your time on the study, limit the questions, and do your best to listen to what's going in one another. Thank you for all you do. -Tim

Introduction

We are continuing in our Advent Series, “Peace Be With Us” and this passage looks at one of the greatest heroes of Scripture. In many evangelical settings, Mary, the Mother of Jesus, doesn't receive the attention and respect that is due to her. We do not encounter many people in the Bible who respond so quickly to God's calling. Here we have a true model of Christian obedience.

Luke 1:26-39

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. 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.

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. 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.”

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. 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.”

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

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea...

O – Some of us have heard this passage each December for many years (some several times a year). Whether this is the hundredth or the first, what words and images jump out at you?

O – What might a normal reaction be to an angel appearing to a teenager girl in the “country land” and telling her that she is going to miraculously conceive and give birth to the Messiah? And then describe Mary’s reaction.

I – Verse 35 reads the “power of the Holy High will overshadow you.” The same Greek word for “overshadow” is also what Luke uses to describe Jesus’ transfiguration. What might this indicate about what God is doing through Mary?

I – Immediately Mary and Joseph knew this was going to radically change their lives and so they headed out for Bethlehem. They also knew that Jesus was going to be a threat to both the Roman and religious establishment. Though they likely felt the skepticism of some, and though they knew great suffering was likely, they also now had calling and mission. Describe how this might have made them feel during the journey to Bethlehem, and the decades and seasons after.

A – Have you ever felt called to something that carried a sense of risk or was a dramatic departure from your plans? How did you deal with it? What did you end up learning from it?

A – What can we learn from Mary’s example of obedience and what can we apply to our lives today?

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- a. Please note that not all these questions are to be asked in a single meeting. Take some time to prayerfully discern what will serve your LC the best. Select and reword the questions that best fit your voice and your Life Community group.
 - b. Complement these questions with “process questions” (what else? what more? what do others think?)
 - c. When you ask questions, give people ample time to think and respond. Wait. Take your time; don’t rush people but encourage participation. Avoid answering your own questions!
 - d. Application: Pace the study to conclude with difference-making application.
 - e. Secondary texts—use other texts sparingly, even if they are relevant. Such texts will push you into “teaching” rather than facilitating, causing people to feel distracted or de-powered.