

Dear congregation, when we consider, what man has done, to God's beautiful creation, and even to himself, what misery, what dread, what terrors, this earth is filled with, "but God."

In the midst of all despair and all sin and corruption, we have these words, but God, those words arouse great expectation. But God in mercy, gave His word.

He came to sinful man, immediately, already in paradise.

We read in Genesis 3 verse 8 that Adam and Eve heard the voice of the Lord God walking in the Garden of Eden. The word came, the voice came, to them.

Now, boys and girls, you know that Adam and Eve at that time were not glad to hear it. They went in hiding. They tried to escape, they tried to run away from God.

They were afraid, but God, did not let them run away.

Thanks be unto God, for His unspeakable gift, His word. For He continued after them.

He pursued after them. Where art thou?

And He does that even till this very moment. Where art thou, sinner?

But God gave His word.

With God's help, we wish to meditate on the word of God this morning from Luke 1 verse 31, with the help of God, and we hear God's word to us. Luke 1 verse 31. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus.

Our theme for this word of God in its context is Advent, God's word to Mary and to us.

In the first place, A child conceived.

In the second place, the name revealed.

Advent, God's word to Mary and to us. In the first place, the child conceived. And behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son.

In the second place, the name revealed. And shalt call his name Jesus.

Boys and girls, who is speaking in this text and in these verses that we have read together? You know who it is.

Gabriel. The archangel Gabriel who stands before God. It's the second time he comes to this earth. Six months before he had appeared to Zacharias in the temple. Now, he is not to go to Jerusalem, but to a despised city in the north, in Galilee, named Nazareth.

To Mary, we read, a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And the angel, we read in verse 28, came unto her.

Can you imagine what that must have been? Boys and girls, young people, older ones. If suddenly an angel would come to you and stand before you,

an angel sent by God, we read. No wonder that Mary was afraid.

But Gabriel greets her very kindly and says in verse 28, Hail Thou that art highly favored, the Lord is with thee. Blessed art thou among women. Now, we know that the Roman Catholic Church changed this greeting and made it into a prayer.

And made it appear as if these words, highly favored, were meant to express that she was a special person. But that's not at all what it says there. First of all, it's not a prayer.

It's not a Hail Mary. Not an Ave Maria, as they would sing it and pray to Mary. It's a greeting.

It's a calling to rejoice in the original. It says, Rejoice! Mary, be glad! And the words highly favored simply mean, literally, that she's been graciously accepted. Just as undeservedly as any other of the people of God who are favored by Him.

Because of grace. Accepted in the Beloved. In the Lord Jesus Christ.

She too. She was fully aware of it. As you can read a couple of verses later in her song, when she praises the Lord.

She says, My spirit hath rejoiced in God, my Savior. She needed the Lord Jesus just as much as we all do. And she knew that He was her Savior.

That's why she said, Henceforth all generations shall call me blessed, highly favored.

She was not a special person. She had special grace.

There are no special people in this world. Only sinners. And she was one of them.

She received the Word of God. But at this very moment, when the angel stands before her, she's still very much afraid. Verse 29, we read that.

When she saw Him, she was troubled at His saying. And cast in her mind what manner of salutation, greeting, this would be. The angel didn't pray to her.

He greeted her. He called her to rejoice. Because she was a favored woman.

She was blessed among women.

Fear not, Mary. For thou hast found favor with God, he says in verse 13.

And he goes on to say in verse 31, Behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son. Be not afraid, Mary. He says, you will have a son.

But Mary is afraid. Even though he says, Fear not. Mary is afraid.

And she's bewildered. Blessed?

She? A son?

Shall be called the Son of the Highest? Read in verse 32. Shall be great? Shall be called the Son of the Highest? No wonder that she says in verse 34.

But how can it be? How shall this be? Seeing I know not a man, I'm not married. How shall I have a son? How shall I be blessed among women to have the Son of the Most High conceived in my womb?

She's overwhelmed by it. And you can understand that, can't we? But Gabriel explains it further to her.

He says in verse 35, What that all means. He says, The Holy Ghost, Mary, the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee. And the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee.

Therefore, also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

So, Mary, fear not. You shall not only have a son, but you shall bring forth "the Son of God."

Mary, you're privileged indeed. You're blessed above all women. Thousands of women have longed to have the privilege that is given to you.

To give birth to the seed of the woman. Genesis 3.15. A promise given to Adam and Eve.

That's why Eve was called the mother of all living. But the actual privilege was given to Mary. To give the fulfillment of it.

Dear congregation. What an amazing and glorious way.

By a woman, sin came into the world.

Also by a woman, the Savior came into the world. The remedy for that sin. So the malady came by a woman.

And so the remedy.

God's ways are mysterious ways, aren't they? Paul says in Galatians 4, When the fullness of time was come, God sent forth His Son made of a woman.

You see, what we have here, this revelation in this Word of God, is a greater revelation of a greater act of God than the creation of the whole universe.

What we read in this chapter in Luke 1 is greater than what we read in Genesis 1.

Genesis 1, we read that the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. And that God the Father spoke the world into existence by His Word. Created all things as a triune God.

And now we see something similar. Because we read the Holy Ghost will also come as He came upon this unformed earth, so he comes upon Mary. The Holy Ghost shall come upon her.

And the power of the highest, the power of the God who is in the highest, shall overshadow her and come upon her. Conceiving something that cannot be conceived in our mind. God manifest in the flesh.

God created man and He created the universe. It was a great and glorious thing. But that He created God in the flesh.

Who can fathom it? Bringing forth the living Word. Of course that does not mean that we have here the creation of the Son of God. The beginning of God the Son.

That cannot be. He was God. From all eternity.

And what we read here is that He became man. John 1.1 and John 1.14 sets these truths so plainly before us. In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God.

In the beginning already. Not in Luke, But in the very beginning the Word was God.

But this eternal Word, we read in verse 14 of John 1, was made flesh. And dwelt among us.

You see, that brings that Word of God that Advent promise not only to Mary but to us.

He dwelt among us.

And as the work of a creation was the work of a triune God, so the conception of the Son of God, the conception of Jesus in the womb of Mary, is the work of a triune God. Not only the Father and the Holy Spirit, but also the Son Himself was involved.

It did not only happen, to Him, but also by Him. Hebrews 2.16 we read, For verily He took not on Him the nature of angels, but He took on Him the seed of Abraham. He, the Son, took on Himself the seed of Abraham.

The work of a triune God. To dwell in the flesh. Great is the mystery, of godliness.

But now we read about this Holy Thing. Therefore, v35, also that Holy Thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God. That Holy Thing.

Or you could translate it also as, the Holy One. How can that be? How can something that is holy come forth from one who is unholy? Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean? Job says, and he answers it, Not one. Well, we have to consider a great distinction.

We, you and I, dear congregation, we are born in sin, because we are conceived in sin with David. As you read in Psalm 51, But Christ, as a man, had no sinful human father. His Father is and was God Himself.

The Holy One of Israel. Furthermore the power of the Holy Ghost would come upon Mary, the Holy Ghost, the sanctifying Spirit. Therefore, the angel says, Therefore, also that Holy Thing, which shall be born of thee, shall be called the Son of God.

Therefore,

God Himself is His Father. And the Holy Spirit is His sanctifier. Paul speaks to that in 2 Corinthians 5, verse 21.

He says, For He, that is the Father, has made Him, that is the Son, to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. This is the Word of God to Mary and to us. God Himself who speaks.

God Himself who says, Therefore, this Holy One. And then, Gabriel concludes with the words, For with God, nothing. Nothing shall be impossible.

We stagger at this. We cannot comprehend it. We have a thousand questions.

Even when we do get answers, we don't need them. When God speaks, we believe His Word. And we receive it.

And that's what Mary does. You can believe that. Even though Gabriel explains some of the things, still it was too great for her to imagine how this could ever be.

Notice her response. Though she's overwhelmed, she simply says in v38, Behold the handmaid of the Lord. Be it unto me according to Thy Word.

Dear congregation, What a simple confession of faith. What a simple submission to the Word of God. She could have asked a thousand questions.

She could have set forth a thousand objections to this. But she doesn't do it. Behold, she says, the handmaid of the Lord.

She said, in other words, Lord, I'm Thy servant. Do with me as Thou wilt. Let it happen as Thou hast said.

She simply trusts the Word of God. What a blessing. We see the same thing with Joseph too.

The same simple, humble submission to the Word of God. When the angel also comes to him, later, we read that in Matthew 1. He was about to leave Mary when he found out that she was with child.

But then the angel came and says, Do not do that. For that which is in her is conceived by the Holy Ghost. The child's conception was by the Holy Ghost. Joseph. And then we read in verse 24. That Joseph did as the angel of the Lord had told him.

He did as he was told

. Both Mary and Joseph. Believed and obeyed the Word of God with meekness. God's Word came to them. But God came with His Word.

And what did they do? They received with meekness the Word of God. In spite of all questions. In spite of all objections.

In spite of all impossibilities. They bowed for God. For with God nothing is impossible.

Dear friends. Have you believed and obeyed the Word of God with meekness? Have you received the engrafted Word? The implanted Word in the flesh? Have you said to God, Be it unto me according to Thy Word? What are your Advent expectations? What are your Christmas expectations? Family togetherness? Some time off work? No school boys and girls? What are you looking forward to? What is your expectation? What has your Advent been like so far? What are you looking for? What are you anticipating, hoping for? To make you happy. Is your heart set on things? Or on the giver of things? Especially on His greatest gift.

The unspeakable gift. The Son of God in the flesh. Is that your expectation? Is that your desire? To know Him? Not only in these days.

But every day of the year. But maybe you say, How shall it be for me? How shall I know the Son of God for me personally? How may I know if God will give this great gift to me? I can

understand, maybe you think, that Mary and Joseph believed and obeyed when an angel came and telling them. I can see the word came to them.

But what does it have to do with me? How do I know that that word is also for me? We hope to see that in our second point. When we will consider the name revealed.

Song-

God's word to Mary and to us.

Not only about a child conceived. But also about the name of this child revealed. Behold thou shalt conceive in thy womb and bring forth a son.

And shalt call his name Jesus. That was the commandment given to both Mary and to Joseph. You find the same thing in Matthew 1 verse 21.

Call his name Jesus. Now we know, boys and girls, that the name Jesus is in Greek the very same as the name Joshua or Jeshua in the Old Testament. It's actually a contraction of two words.

Jehovah Salvation. Jehovah saves. Both men, Joshua and Jeshua, were saviors sent forth by God to save His people.

Joshua to lead Israel through the desert into Canaan. And Jeshua is lesser known, but He led God's people out of Babylon. You can read that in Ezra 2 verse 2. Both of these men were saviors sent by God, and so is Jesus.

But Jesus, of course, is far more than Joshua and Jeshua. They were but men. Jesus is man, but He is also God.

He was God, we heard, and He is God. And it's also striking that both in Matthew 1 and in Luke 1, where it is ephetically said, Thou shalt call His name Jesus, that they capitalized the word Jesus. Though there is nothing in the original that indicates that.

There are no capitals only in the original. It's something the translators have done. It's obvious that they want to draw our attention to this name, that it would stand out.

They would realize the connection between the Old and the New Testament. That in this name Jesus, we have the continuation of the great name that was revealed to Moses. Boys and girls, when He stood by that burning bush, it's the very same name.

Do you remember what happened when He stood there? When He had to take the shoes off His feet, because God said He spoke from that bush that He stood on holy ground. Because when Moses asked what His name was, so that he could tell the people in Israel who sent Him, then the Lord said to him, I am that I am. Thou shalt say unto the children of Israel, I am has sent you unto them.

The great I am. The unchanging, everlasting Jehovah. The covenant keeping Lord God.

It's the very same that comes in and through the person of the Son of God and manifests Himself in this name Jesus. As the name Jehovah, the I am that I am was revealed for the first time in Exodus, so the name of the Son of Jehovah, Jehovah's Son is revealed in this very name. Thou shalt call His name Jehovah saves.

He Himself has come to do a work that no man can do. No mere man can do. Man was called to do it, but a mere man couldn't do it.

So Jehovah the Son came. So my dear friends, every time, really, when we then see or hear the name Jesus, we, like Moses, stand on holy ground. Because we stand face to face with Jehovah in the flesh.

Emmanuel, God with us. This time then, this great Jehovah will not send a man, but this time He comes Himself. In and through His Son dwelling among us.

The great Creator becoming creature, humbling Himself to dwell among us, to save sinners. Of course, that didn't mean that this great Jehovah only began to save at this time. He has been the Savior of His people all along.

You know that many occasions in the Old Testament He declares Himself to be I am the Lord thy God from the land of Egypt, and thou shalt know no God but Me for there is no Savior beside Me. The same Lord Jehovah says there is no Savior beside Me. We don't have a new Savior here. He's always been and always shall be the same Savior. The only difference is that now He's manifest in the flesh.

What a privilege we have, dear congregation, that we have this great revelation.

All the people of God in the Old Testament had to through shades and veils and shadows, they had to see through a glass darkly, though we still must see through a glass darkly in a different way. But we have the Word of God. We have seen and we testify, John says, that the Father sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.

Here we have the name yet once again said before us. The name Jesus. We've heard the name already so many times, dear congregation.

The name that expresses who He is and what He does. It speaks about His person and about His work. The work is the long-awaited Messiah, the Anointed One, the Christ, who came to save His people.

From what? Yes. He came to save. Save from troubles, from worries, from fears, from anxieties, from our difficulties.

Maybe that's the Jesus you seek. Maybe you're weary of life. Maybe you have many problems, difficulties.

Maybe you even look at the world and marvel at the way they celebrate Christmas, the emptiness and the vanity of it all.

Parties, mad rush for things that don't satisfy. Yes, you see a need for a Savior.

Being troubled maybe lately very much in your family life or maybe in your health. Maybe at work, home, school, the office. Many troubles.

Oh, you desire to have a Savior from that, to be delivered from that all, from your troubles and from your diseases. Is that wrong then? We may come to the Lord, boys and girls, with all our needs, with all our troubles. Acknowledge Him in all your ways and He will direct your paths.

No need to small and you may bring it to Him. No trouble too big and you can bring it to Him as well. But you see, the Lord Jesus didn't come to just deliver us from our troubles.

That was not the reason of His coming. It is indeed He came to make us truly happy and blessed. But He didn't come to cater to our desires and to our wishes.

You see, He didn't just come to make us feel good, but He came to save us for something way more valuable. You see, if it's all that we expect that we may be saved from our troubles, that we would get through this life or out of this life and enter into heaven, if that's all our desire, then we do not understand, just like the world, why Jesus came. Then we are just like the Jews who expected the Messiah to deliver them from the Romans, from oppression.

Then we are just like the world, really, who seek to be happy without Jesus, because we don't try to be happy and selfish with Jesus, abusing Him for ourselves. You see, then we would like to have Him save us while we are still in our sins. While He came to save His people from their sins.

That's the name that Joseph had to call his son's name Jesus for. When the angel didn't just say to Joseph, Thou shalt call His name Jesus, for He shall save His people. But He said, He shall save His people from their sins.

That's the foremost purpose to which Jesus came upon this earth. Surely, He also came to set His people free from the consequences of sin, but first from sin itself. Also from the consequences like death and sickness and hell and eternal condemnation, but first of all from sin itself.

From the guilt, the pollution of sin, the bondage of sin and of corruption, and the power of sin. You see, many seek happiness in these days, but there is no happiness without holiness. And there is no holiness without this Savior from sin, this Jesus.

Many people in these days do not look beyond this cute manger scene. You see them in many places displayed. And they look upon this gentle and this sweet Jesus, but they do not know, they do not realize, they do not remember that this Jesus didn't just come to be adored and worshipped in an outward way.

But they had to remember that this Jesus would grow up and suffer. Do not see the humiliation. An unspeakable suffering already from the very moment that He was born.

Even from the moment that He was conceived. Oh, consider this. He who inhabits light had to be in a dark womb.

His humiliation and His suffering began at the very moment of His conception. He came to suffer, to die, to shed His blood for enemies and haters of God, for men and women, for boys and girls who did not want Him. Only the benefits.

Health, happiness, prosperity, things. Here we have the perfect Savior for our most dire need. So many hear His name in these days and do not know Him.

The great Jehovah, the almighty Creator of heaven and earth. He gave His only begotten Son so that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish in condemnation, but have everlasting life. He gave Himself for sinners, for sinners.

He gave Himself, though. No wonder that He says of His Son that there is no name like His. None other name given among men whereby we may be saved from sin.

Dear friend, do you wrestle with this truth? Are your sins your greatest burden? Is that what you seek to be delivered from most of all? Above and beyond all other concerns that you might have, and that you may see that those burdens, all the other ones that you have, actually all accumulate in that one root cause, and that is sin. You have sinned against God all the days of your life, conceived and born in it, producing nothing but sin. Do you desire this Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ? Is it your desire to know Him as the Savior of sinners from their sins? Maybe you cry out with Job, Oh, that I knew where I might find Him, so dead, so cold, so sinful.

Thought, word and deed, I cannot repent, I cannot move myself to Him, I cannot do anything to make myself better. Dear friend, turn then to the Word of God, and hear the Word of God as Joseph and Mary heard it, and receive it with meekness. They too were faced with something they couldn't do, they couldn't comprehend, they couldn't fathom.

What was before them was too great for them as well, and they too were but sinners.

Surrender yourself to this Savior, to this Jesus. He came to save sinners, not the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

surrender yourself then to Him to do that for you, that which you cannot and will not do yourself. That's why He came, to do everything for you. This Savior is not only come to suffer and to die, but He is a Prince, He is a King, He has all things in His hand.

Peter says in Acts 5.31, Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Savior, for to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. Surely we are called to repent in order to receive forgiveness of sins, but here we have a Prince and a Savior who not only will give you the forgiveness, but even work that very repentance in you. If you would but surrender to Him and fall at His feet and receive His Word with meekness, without backtalking, without setting before Him all these objections that you could think of, but that you may be more like Mary and say to the Lord, Be it unto me according to Thy Word, according to Thy living Word, according to Thy Jesus.

Dear believers in our midst, have you not found it exactly so? When you came before Him, falling at His feet and surrendering all your sins, all your righteousnesses, filthy rags, all your impossibilities, all your unwillingness, all your inability, everything at His feet. Haven't you come there to rest? That you began to realize that He indeed was a Savior to the uttermost. That there is no qualification for you and for me to come at His feet, but to be the sinner indeed. That's coming to rest at His feet. That's the beginning, the taste, the joy and the peace that passes all understanding. That He truly is what He says He is.

That He truly is what He is revealed to be. Jesus, Jehovah the Savior, Jehovah who saves, it can be translated as, That He indeed will do it.

Everything. From the very beginning to the very end, that means from one eternity to the other. Flowing forth from the love, the eternal love of God the Father.

Through time. He suffered and died for sinners. He earned salvation for you and He will apply it in you.

For He sent also His Holy Spirit.

He has done everything so far and He who has begun a good work in you, my dear trembling believer, if you indeed come to Him, burned with your sins, He will perfect it. He will perform it. He will complete it. For He is Jesus. He is the eternal Jehovah who saves.

And because He is the I am that I am, it shall come to pass. And it shall be completed. It shall be accomplished.

For all those who simply put their trust in Him. This Jesus, conceived in Mary's womb, would be born, would grow up, conquer sin, hell and death. Not only when He suffered and died on the cross, when He arose from the grave, but even today He conquers sin because He conquers the sinners in their heart and causes them to come at His feet.

He promised and He will do it. To save those to the uttermost who come unto God by Him.

You, dear friend, who still halt between two opinions.

Serving God a little and serving the world much. Or maybe the other way around. But you cannot have two gods.

You cannot have two kings. You cannot serve God and the mammon. You cannot serve the things and the God of the things.



It's impossible to have both. You cannot have God's way and the world's way at the same time. One you must break with in order to serve the other.

If you seek to serve both, you are actually serving one. And that is the world. Choose you today whom you will serve.

The word, the living word, the name of the Lord Jesus Christ or the world. In the coming days, it will be a time of great expectation. Great anticipation.

People are running around from store to store to buy the things they need or they don't need. The things they cannot afford. Great expectations.

Great promises. If you have this, if you buy that, you'll be happy. It's a great time of disappointment as well.

Great time of loneliness and despair. Behind many smiling faces, people that say, Merry Christmas, is a heart that is lonely, that's agonizing, that is desperately seeking happiness in the things that cannot supply it. Cannot find happiness, boys and girls and people, in all the toys and the trinkets of the world.

If you had them. It will not supply our basic need that is to be at peace with God. And to be filled with Him.

And it can be done and it will be done only in and through Jesus Christ. That's why His name had to be called Jesus. It's a time, these days, of darkness.

As we walk around, we see many lights.

It's interesting, it is striking, and it's sad too, to notice that as this world further and further plunges into a spiritual darkness, that it seems that more and more they try to compensate it with outward lights. Making it appear as if it could drive away the darkness with man-made lights. How tragic it is while we consider that the light of the world came into this darkness.

And many do not see it. Even among us, still walking in darkness. I'm not talking only about the world.

But so many among us do not yet know this light of the world. Haven't yet come at the feet of Jesus and said to Him, Be it unto me according to thy word.

Some places we see the name of Jesus and of Christ.

The words joy and peace are displayed everywhere. But who shall find it? Who shall find Him? My dear friend, how do you look forward to Christmas?

What is your Advent expectation?

Are you desirous to receive the word of God? And to believe it? To rest in Him? There is no other way to be at peace with God. There is no other way to have a true, peaceful and happy Christmas. But at the feet of the Lord Jesus Christ. Only He Himself can make the difference. Therefore, do not delay.

Repent of your sins. Confess it before Him. Fall at His feet and say like Mary,

Be it unto me according to thy word.

Amen.