

Week 1: *The Impossible Calling*

Week 2: *The Disturbing Dream*
Week 3: *The Unexpected Visitors*
Week 4: *The Desperate Journey*

APPETIZER – A Change of Pace

In this series we are...

- Slowing down
- Simplifying
- Centering



DINE IN – There's Something About Mary

Luke 1:26-38

"Greetings, you who are highly favoured!"

= "*chairo charitoo*" = Lit. "Grace to you! Most graced one!"

GRACE = God giving us what we can't achieve on our own.

The story of Jesus is the story of God gracing us.

God's Invitation:

- To receive, bear and do the hard work of birthing God into the world

Mary's Response:

- Fear and confusion
- Consent – "*Let it be just as you say*"
- Sought companionship
- Praise, gratitude to God

What "yes" meant:

- Having to explain the unbelievable to parents and fiancé
- Risk of misunderstanding, shunning
- Body taken over, long donkey ride, painful birth
- Unknown future pain/suffering

Meditations:

- Is God inviting me to birth Him into the world through my life?
- What are my fears, confusions, unknowns?
- What do I need? Companionship, faith, peace, perseverance?
- What is my response to God?

We are invited, like Mary, to birth Christ into the world we live in – daily. I, like Mary, have a choice. If it does not take place in me, then how will the world know Him? My life's purpose is to give birth to Christ daily.
~ Eckhart von Hochheim (c. 1260 – c. 1328, Paraphrased)

TAKE OUT – Making Room

Matthew 25... Jesus said when you spend time taking care of those who are hurting around you, you are making space for him.

Are you willing to make room for God? In your heart? In your life?

Are you just too busy?

Is there anything you need to take a break from in order to make room for God?

Ephesians 1:6



Home Church Questions...

HANGOUT [Warming Up To The Topic]

1. Has Christmas busyness started for you yet? Are you able to find time for God, or for peace and quiet in the middle of busy times?

HEAR [Listening to God through Scripture]

2. Jesus taught his disciples how to do ministry, and how to take time away from ministry to rest with him. Read **Mark 6:30-32**. This Home Church is for us to spend time resting, talking, and being with Jesus. Our goal will be to focus our attention on his presence, invisible but real, and to let God speak to us out of Scripture.
3. Rather than discuss our primary text right away, we are going to meditate on it first. Settle into a comfortable position, yet try to be alert enough that you don't fall asleep. (But if you do, that's okay too – you obviously needed a nap.) Relax and set your intention to be quiet and listen to God, enjoying His presence. Remember that this whole time – silence, meditating, listening, and conversing – is in one sense, prayer. Begin by spending a few minutes talking to God quietly, “unloading” what is on your heart and mind so you can be attentive to God and others.
4. Now have someone read **Luke 1:25-56** out loud and slowly. Notice Mary's journey from “fear” to “yes.” Spend some time in silence again, imagining yourself in Mary's shoes – what thoughts and feelings can you identify with? Read over your notes again. Think about how you relate to the quote, invitation, response and meditations listed in the notes. What else is God saying to you?

HUDDLE [Making It Personal and Praying Together]

5. Let's debrief. How was the time of silence for you? Weird? Wonderful? Challenging? Hard? Peaceful? Insightful?
6. Share what you feel comfortable sharing about your time with God. What is God's invitation to you today and what is your response?

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Quotes...

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.”

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

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.

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

~ **The Gospel of Luke, Chapter 1**