

Wonder of Christmas – 12-17-23 – Pastor Bill

wonder: a feeling of surprise mingled with admiration, caused by something beautiful, unexpected, unfamiliar, or inexplicable.

1. In your opinion, what is one of the most interesting and wonderful aspects of the Christmas story?
2. Why do you think that Christmas is so significant to so many people around the world?

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. Luke 1:28-29

3. How do you think that Mary felt in this encounter with the angel?
4. How would you feel if you encountered an angel?

Luke 1:30-35, 38 - 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.

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

5. Why do you think that in most encounters with angels, the first thing angels say is, "Do not be afraid."?
6. What do you think about Mary's response in verse 38

But after he had considered this, 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, because what is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus, because he will save his people from their sins. All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means "God with us). When Joseph woke up, he did what the angel of the Lord had commanded him and took Mary home as his wife. But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus. Matthew 1:20-25

7. Why do you think that Joseph was visited by an angel?
8. How would you feel if you were Joseph in the situation that he found himself?
9. How did Joseph respond to the angel's visit?
10. What ongoing struggles do you think that Mary & Joseph had in the next nine months until Jesus was born?
11. What struggles do you find yourself in this Christmas?
12. How can the wonder of Christmas and the advent of Jesus impact your Christmas?

1 Peter 1:10-12 - ¹⁰ Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of the Messiah and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

13. Peter tells us that angels long to look into salvation and Christ's forgiveness. Why do you think that Pastor Bill included these verses in his message?
14. Why do you think that angels desire to look into salvation?
15. How are you wowed by God's forgiveness and salvation through Jesus?
16. How can you bring the wonder of Christmas, and God's offer of salvation to others around you?
17. How will you pause and experience God's wonder this Christmas?