

Critical Condition: The Prescription

December 18, 2011

Vol. 1 Num. 31

LUKE 1:26-56; 2 SAMUEL 7:8-17

This Week's Core

Competency:

Hope- I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ.

We have this hope as an anchor for our lives, safe and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain. Jesus has entered there on our behalf as a forerunner, because He has become a high priest forever in the order of Melchizedek. (Hebrews 6:19-20)

Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.

Introduction

Across the barren, rocky Arizona landscape, a tall thin plant clings to the dry earth. It looks like a dead stick. One could easily mistake this for a once living cactus that languished in the parched earth before surrendering to the cruel and unyielding climate of the Sonora Desert. But...this is not a dead stick. It is a promise, if you will, of ephemeral beauty. You see, this plant has blooms that will open only once a year, for one night. Those who wish to behold the wonder of this magical flower must patiently wait and carefully watch for its quiet much-anticipated arrival. The flower will open, without announcement, into the darkness. As its delicate white petals unfurl, it emits a soft, warm floral scent that perfumes the air up to a quarter of a mile away.

In many ways, this flower reminds me of the birth of Jesus. The days of strength and renown, under Israel's greatest kings, were a distant memory. Hundreds of years before, David's royal line had been cut off and God's covenant promises seemed broken. As far as the eye could see, Israel's future seemed to stretch out in a landscape barren of hope. Yet, into this darkness, a tender green shoot grew from the dried-up stump of Jesse. Like the desert flower blooming in the night, Jesus was born. Light and life quietly dawned on those living in the land of the shadow of death. God fulfilled his covenant promise to David, hope was unveiled and salvation came with quiet beauty. That night, God's heavenly flower bloomed and God released the aroma of life.

This Week

As you study this passage, think about God's faithfulness to keep his promises. All of his covenants, bound together by his redemptive purposes, culminated in the birth of Immanuel, God with us. This season, rest from the hectic pace of life and humbly rejoice in God your Savior.

① EXAMINE His Word

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the passage.

Read Luke 1:26-56

26 In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth,

27 to a virgin engaged to a man named Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

28 And the angel came to her and said, "Rejoice, favored woman! The Lord is with you."

29 But she was deeply troubled by this statement, wondering what kind of greeting this could be.

30 Then the angel told her: Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

31 Now listen: You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will call His name Jesus.

32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.

33 He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end.

34 Mary asked the angel, "How can this be, since I have not been intimate with a man?"

35 The angel replied to her: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the holy One to be born will be called the Son of God.

36 And consider your relative Elizabeth—even she has conceived a son in her old age, and this is the sixth month for her who was called childless.

37 For nothing will be impossible with God."

38 "I am the Lord's slave," said Mary. "May it be done to me according to your word." Then the angel left her.

39 In those days Mary set out and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judah

40 where she entered Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth.

41 When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped inside her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 Then she exclaimed with a loud cry: "You are the most blessed of women, and your child will be blessed!

43 How could this happen to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

44 For you see, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped for joy inside me!

45 She who has believed is blessed because what

was spoken to her by the Lord will be fulfilled!"

46 And Mary said: My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,

47 and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior, 48 because He has looked with favor on the humble condition of His slave. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed,

49 because the Mighty One has done great things for me, and His name is holy.

50 His mercy is from generation to generation on those who fear Him.

51 He has done a mighty deed with His arm; He has scattered the proud because of the thoughts of their hearts;

52 He has toppled the mighty from their thrones and exalted the lowly.

53 He has satisfied the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty.

54 He has helped His servant Israel, mindful of His mercy,

55 just as He spoke to our ancestors, to Abraham and his descendants forever.

56 And Mary stayed with her about three months; then she returned to her home.

2 Sam. 7: 8-17

8 "Now this is what you are to say to My servant David: "This is what the LORD of Hosts says: I took you from the pasture and from following the sheep to be ruler over My people Israel.

9 I have been with you wherever you have gone, and I have destroyed all your enemies before you. I will make a name for you like that of the greatest in the land.

10 I will establish a place for My people Israel and plant them, so that they may live there and not be disturbed again. Evildoers will not afflict them as they have done

11 ever since the day I ordered judges to be over My people Israel. I will give you rest from all your enemies. " "The LORD declares to you: The LORD Himself will make a house for you.

12 When your time comes and you rest with your fathers, I will raise up after you your descendant, who will come from your body, and I will establish his kingdom.

13 He will build a house for My name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

14 I will be a father to him, and he will be a son to Me. When he does wrong, I will discipline him with a

human rod and with blows from others.

15 But My faithful love will never leave him as I removed it from Saul; I removed him from your way.

16 Your house and kingdom will endure before Me forever, and your throne will be established forever.’ ”

17 Nathan spoke all these words and this entire vision to David.

EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN?

1. What two things does the Gabriel say to Mary as he greets her in verse 28?
2. What do you think it means to be highly favored? Is this the same as being blessed in verse 45?
3. a) How is Mary’s response to Gabriel in verse 38 remarkable and how is it an example for you?

b) How do you respond to God’s plan for you, particularly if it alters what you thought your life would be like or if it involves difficult circumstances?
4. How is Mary connected to King David’s line?

5. Compare Luke 1:32-33 with the Covenant God made with King David in 2 Samuel 7:8-17. List all five prophetic elements from Luke 1:32-33, list the verses from 2 Samuel 7 that correspond, and explain how Jesus fulfilled each.

| Luke 1:32-33 | 2 Samuel 7:8-17 | How was this or will this be fulfilled? |
|--------------|-----------------|---|
| 1. | | |
| 2. | | |
| 3. | | |
| 4. | | |
| 5. | | |

6. a) How are the Davidic Covenant and Immanuel (Isaiah 7:14) linked? How are both of these connected to the Abrahamic Covenant (verses 54-55)?

b) What are God's covenant purposes?

7. Consider the great lengths to which God went to be in relationship with you. How should you respond?

8. a) In verses 46-47 Mary says, "My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior." As we approach the remembrance and celebration of Jesus' birth, what can you do to glorify God? (Be as specific as possible).

b) What are some practical ways that you could rejoice in God, our Savior?

③ EMBRACE His Word

Why does this MATTER to me?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage:

In one statement, write what God wants you to KNOW...

In one statement, write how God wants you to FEEL...

In one statement, write what God wants you to DO...

Sermon Notes

30 CORE Competencies

10 Core Beliefs

Trinity *2 Corinthians 13:14*

I believe the God of the Bible is the only true God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Salvation by Grace *Ephesians 2:8-9* I believe a person comes into a right relationship with God by His grace, through faith in Jesus Christ.

Authority of the Bible *2 Timothy 3:16-17*

I believe the Bible is the Word of God and has the right to command my belief and action.

Personal God *Psalms 121:1-2*

I believe God is involved in and cares about my daily life.

Identity in Christ *John 1:12*

I believe I am significant because of my position as a child of God.

Church *Ephesians 4:15-16*

I believe the church is God's primary way to accomplish His purposes on earth today.

Humanity *John 3:16*

I believe all people are loved by God and need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

Compassion *Psalms 82:3-4*

I believe God calls all Christians to show compassion to those in need.

Eternity *John 14:1-4*

I believe there is a heaven and a hell and that Jesus Christ is returning to judge the earth and to establish His eternal kingdom.

Stewardship *1 Timothy 6:17-19*

I believe that everything I am or own belongs to God.

Biblical Community *Acts 2:44-47*

I live life with other Christians to accomplish God's purposes in the world.

Giving Away My Time *Colossians 3:17*

I give away my time to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Money *2 Corinthians 8:7*

I give away my money to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Faith *Ephesians 6:19-20*

I give away my faith to fulfill God's purposes.

Giving Away My Life *Romans 12:1*

I give away my life to fulfill God's purposes.

10 Core Virtues

Joy *John 15:11*

I have inner contentment and purpose in spite of my circumstances.

Peace *Philippians 4:6-7*

I am free from anxiety because things are right between God, me, and others.

Faithfulness *Proverbs 3:3-4*

I demonstrate loyalty in my relationships with others in response to God's loyalty to me.

Self-Control *Titus 2:11-13*

I have the power, through Christ, to control myself.

Humility *Philippians 2:3, 4*

I choose to esteem others above myself.

Love *1 John 4:10-12*

I sacrificially and unconditionally love and forgive others.

Patience *Proverbs 14:29*

I endure patiently under the unavoidable pressures of life.

Kindness/Goodness *1 Thess. 5:15*

I choose to do the right things in my relationships with others.

Gentleness *Philippians 4:5*

I am thoughtful, considerate and calm in dealing with others.

Hope *Hebrews 6:19-20*

I can cope with the hardships of life and with death because of the hope I have in Jesus Christ

10 Core Practices

Worship *Psalms 95:1-7*

I worship God for who He is and what He has done for me.

Prayer *Psalms 66:16-20*

I pray to God to know Him, to lay my request before Him and to find direction for my daily life.

Bible Study *Hebrews 4:12*

I read the Bible to know God, the truth, and to find direction for my daily life.

Single-mindedness *Matthew 6:33* I focus on

God and His priorities for my life.

Spiritual Gifts *Romans 12:4-6*

I know and use my spiritual gifts to accomplish God's purposes.