



DAY 3

Tuesday, December 4
(Candle of Hope)

LUKE 1:30–32

“But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High...’”

God’s Greater Purpose

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Sandy and her husband, Jon, live on the North Shore and have been attending Park Street for five years.

When I was younger, I romantically envisioned this scene. Mary is told by an angel of the Lord that she is going to have a baby and that He will be called “The Son of the Most High.” What exciting news! I pictured Mary jumping up and down as a woman may after seeing a positive pregnancy test.

But now that I am older, and hopefully wiser, I envision a much different picture: that of a scared young woman, whose dreams and plans for her life have just been taken away. She now knows that God’s plan for her life is very different than her own. Whenever a person faces this reality, there is an initial sense of loss and fear of the unknown. Mary would have especially felt this fear, living in a culture that could condemn her to death.

We all face these disappointments when we realize that what we had always planned and hoped for is not in God’s plan for our lives. Even when we know in our hearts that God’s purpose is best, we feel disillusioned and we mourn for our dreams as we lay them to rest. It is comforting in times like these to read how the Lord provided for Mary after revealing to her His very different plan for her life. He led her to another woman, her cousin Elizabeth, who was experiencing a similar situation. Elizabeth was a great comfort and encouragement to Mary. God reveals His plan to Joseph and saves Mary from public ridicule and disgrace. Then we read in Mary’s Song (Luke 1:46–55) about the eventual overwhelming joy and peace that he places in her heart. Though she still does not fully understand, she knows that God’s purposes are far greater than she could comprehend.

During the Christmas season and always, let us be assured of God’s greater purpose for our lives. We can trust this promise because we know His love for us, displayed so clearly in the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. When the Lord interrupts our plans, He will guide us and provide for us just as He did for the mother of Jesus. He will be our steadfast strength and provide for our earthly needs as He leads us along the path He has chosen specifically for us, even before there was time. Is there really any other path we would rather take?



RESPOND:

DO: Remember the times in your life that God changed your plans, and thank Him for faithfully fulfilling His will and purpose for your life, even if you still do not understand why His plan was better than your own.

PRAY: For those who are in the midst of a trial, making the Christmas season an especially painful time. Pray that they would experience the Lord more this Christmas than they ever have before.