

EQUIPPED FOR THE UNEXPECTED

Home for Christmas, #4

Pastor Dennis Clanton

Sunday, December 20, 2020

“In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, “Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!” Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. “Don’t be afraid, Mary,” the angel told her, “for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!” Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.” The angel replied, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail.” Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her.” (Luke 1:26–38, NLT)

Embrace the Unexpected.

“Fierce troubles came down on the people of those churches, pushing them to the very limit. The trial exposed their true colors: They were incredibly happy, though desperately poor. The pressure triggered something totally unexpected: an outpouring of pure and generous gifts.” (2 Corinthians 8:2, Message)

Faith Equips Me to Deal with the Unexpected.

“Mary responded, “I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.” And then the angel left her.” (Luke 1:38, NLT)

My Older Friends give Me Perspective in the Unexpected.

“A few days later Mary hurried to the hill country of Judea, to the town where Zechariah lived. She entered the house and greeted Elizabeth. At the sound of Mary’s greeting, Elizabeth’s child leaped within her, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth gave a glad cry and exclaimed to Mary, “God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy.” (Luke 1:39–44, NLT)

“The glory of the young is their strength; the gray hair of experience is the splendor of the old.” (Proverbs 20:29, NLT)

“The city gate is empty of wise elders. Music from the young is heard no more.” (Lamentations 5:14, Message)

“Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months and then went back to her own home.” (Luke 1:56, NLT)

I will Sing in Worship in the Face of the Unexpected.

“Mary responded, “Oh, how my soul praises the Lord.” (Luke 1:46, NLT)

“See, God has come to save me. I will trust in him and not be afraid. The LORD GOD is my strength and my song; he has given me victory.” (Isaiah 12:2, NLT)

GROWTHWORK

1. Read the Book of Proverbs for wisdom about living a prosperous and productive life.
2. Read the Book of Ecclesiastes, Job, and the Gospels for wisdom that requires discernment.
3. What has the adversity of COVID-19 taught you about what matters most?
4. Who is someone you would like to emulate? Why?
 - a. What adverse life situations have they faced with courage, love, kindness, and perseverance?

b. No matter how well prepared you need a mentor / discipler.

“Dear brothers and sisters, pattern your lives after mine, and learn from those who follow our example.” (Philippians 3:17, NLT)

5. Listen without filtering.

6. Do Understand. Do Not Judge.

“The one whose heart is open let him listen carefully to what the Spirit is presently saying to all the churches. To everyone who is victorious I will let him feast on the hidden manna and give him a shining white stone. And written upon the white stone is inscribed his new name, known only to the one who receives it.” (Revelation 2:17, PT)