

Advent 4, December 23, 2023

Text: Luke 1:26-38

Theme: Mary Couldn't Find Her Glasses

As laser surgery is perfected, there may come a day in our lifetimes when the word myopia is no longer known. But unfortunately, we are not there yet and all of you with myopia – that is, near-sightedness, know the joys every morning of having to feel around for your glasses before you can even see the clock on the nightstand, much less read the time. And those of you who wear contact lenses, like I do, know the horror of forgetting your glasses when you go on a trip. When that has happened, I am faced with near blindness from the time I take my lenses out at night until I get them back in the next morning. I hate forgetting my glasses.

The good news is that there is no myopia in heaven. Imagine that! Perfect eyesight – something I have not had since I was in Kindergarten. Myopia, and all vision problems for that matter, are a product of sin. Once sin is removed from the world; no myopia, no presbyopia, no hyperopia, no opias at all. Now maybe sin is just random and chaotic. I mean who would ever think about making one of the results of sin that our eyeballs would be too long or too short for the lens so that everything is out of focus? But then I wonder. Is it possible that God somehow uses this strange affliction to show us something about our faith?

It seems that our faith is as myopic sometimes as my vision. If you read through the Bible, it is amazing how many times people can't see any further than the ends of their noses. It is as though they can't find their spiritual eye glasses and all they can see is that which is right in front of them. Sometimes, we can't see the big picture because we are so consumed with our little piece of the pie. We cannot see the forest for the trees.

God went to Moses and told him that he had been selected to go before Pharaoh, the ruler of much of the known world at that time. That humble old Moses, 80 years of age, a shepherd in Midian, was to be the representative of the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and was to tell Pharaoh that he must release God's people. And furthermore, he was to lead the WHOLE PEOPLE of God, back to the land promised to Abraham. And what did Moses say,

"I can't talk too good God. Pick someone else."

David was made King of Israel and was told that God would use his line to bring forth the Messiah who would save God's people and reverse all the consequences of sin in the world. David's great, great, many times great grandson would be the very son of God and that Messiah would dwell forever in the hearts of his people. And what did King David say?

I think I'm gonna build you a house God and by the way, don't that Bathsheba look nice?

Mary was told that she had been chosen by God to be the mother of the Messiah. She was told that her son would inherit the very throne of King David. She was told that God's whole plan for the redemption of the world was about to come together through her baby. And what did she say?

But, God, I'm a virgin. SO WHAT? You think maybe the God who can call light out of darkness, part entire seas and raise the dead might be able to bring forth a baby any way he wants? Mary is so focused on what is right in front of her face that the big picture eludes her. Her faith was myopic and she couldn't find her glasses to save her life. Like Moses, like David, like us, Mary too forgot that she was dealing with God who works in ways beyond our understanding or even imagination.

I know that sometimes people get upset with me because I give so little credence to human worries but the fact is – God is at work all around us, but if we are so absorbed with this or that puny care, we might completely miss what God is doing at any given time. I cannot tell you how many church meetings I have sat through where the big concerns are how much something costs and what the constitution says for any given situation. Who cares? We wrote the

constitution not God and if it needs changing to do the work we need to do for the Lord then we'll just change it. And about money, do you think God won't provide for what he calls us to do?

I know that some people get frustrated with me because of the way I think. I think Worship and Bible Study and God's work in this world are the primary events and I honestly could care less when the Bears, the Cubs, the White Sox or the Bulls are on TV. Whether your thing is sports or crafting or gardening, the fact is that we could all fill our days with all kinds of things that will not matter in the end. And then we begin to worry and fret over the things that do not ultimately matter. Find your spiritual glasses and open your eyes because God has an amazing plan laid out before us if we could ever look beyond our noses. He has gifts to offer that surpass our dreams. His plan is complete, starting with wherever we are and ending in paradise. He fuels us with His Word, with Baptismal waters and his own body and blood and if we can just find those illusive spiritual glasses, we might just be able to see the path he has laid out before us through this community and into eternity.

Mary finally found her glasses. When the angel had had his say, Mary replied with words we could do well to memorize and repeat often. She had been called the favored one by the angel. Mary knew that what we translate as "favored" meant "one endowed with

God's grace." In the greeting of the angel, the Lord had handed her her spiritual glasses. She would not be alone. She was endowed with God's grace. Mary answered in faith.

"I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said."

During this hectic Christmas season in a very chaotic world, put on your glasses and look at God's big picture. Ask him, where is my role, Lord? What would you have your servant do to serve you? The answer might surprise you. You might be tempted to answer myopically, like Moses and Jeremiah and King David and even Mary – but catch yourself, put on your spiritual glasses and look for the bigger picture. "I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." Service to Him is amazing, and the big picture is beautiful.