

**ST PAUL'S (RONDEBOSCH)  
FOURTH SUNDAY IN ADVENT  
20 DECEMBER 2020**

**READINGS: 2 SAMUEL 7:1-11, 16//PSALM 98:1-4, 19-26//  
ROMANS 16:25-27// LUKE 1:26-38**

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Let us pray  
O God light of the minds that know you  
Life of the souls that love you  
And strength of the thoughts that seek you  
Bless the words of my lips  
And the meditations of our hearts **AMEN**

**Years ago, a young mother was making her way across the hills of South Wales, carrying her tiny baby in her arms, when she was overtaken by a blinding blizzard. She never reached her destination, and when the blizzard had subsided her body was found by searchers beneath a mound of snow. But they discovered that before her death, she had taken off all her outer clothing and wrapped it about her baby. When they unwrapped the child, to their great surprise and joy, they found he was alive and well. She had mounded her body over his and given her life for her child, proving the depths of her mother love. Years later that child, David Lloyd George, grown to manhood, became prime minister of Great Britain, and, without doubt, one of England's greatest statesman.  
(Source: James S. Hewett, Illustrations Unlimited, Tyndale, 1972, p. 375.)**

The story is about the unsacrificial love of a mother for child.  
The fourth Sunday in Advent is about love.

**This morning I would like us to reflect on how God can use me and you to make his love known in the world?**

Let's turn to our Gospel reading in Luke 1 v 26 we read *"In the sixth month God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph a descendent of David. The Virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said Greetings you who are highly favoured The Lord is with you"*

And in v 30 we read ***“But the angel said to her Do not be afraid Mary you have found favour with God You will be with child and give birth to a son and you are to give him the name of Jesus. He will be great and be called the son of the most high”***

What would you have done if you were in Mary’s shoes? Here you are a young, poor, lowly farm (peasant girl//township) of maybe 13 or 14 years and an angel comes to you from God. This in itself would be enough to shake you up for the rest of your life! But then, this angel named Gabriel greets you with the words ***‘Greetings you who are highly favoured The Lord is with you’***

Blessed are you among women.’ Certainly this greeting would be troubling to you – ‘how am I highly favoured? As we read in v 29 ***Mary was greatly troubled at his words what kind of greeting may this be?***

Why would he say such a thing to a lowly peasant girl?

Me? Who am I? Why am I favoured? How can the Lord be with me? She knows her place. She knows who she is. And this should not be happening. She's a teenager, and from the wrong side of the tracks.

But then for this angel to go on and say the rest of the things that he did! It’s understandable why Mary, would suddenly be seen as highly favoured and blessed among women. To receive news that God had a special plan for you to conceive and bear the long awaited Messiah, the Son of the Most High that would be enough for most of us to pass out at this point.

***What was Mary’s respond to this?***

But Mary appropriately asks in v 34 ***‘how can this be since I am a virgin and have not known a man?’*** Good question, we’d likely ask it too. And the angel answered ***“The Holy Spirit will come upon you and the power of the most high will overshadow you. So the Holy one to be born will be called the Son of man***

***Can you imagine what must have gone through Mary’s mind must I say Yes or must I say NO***

Here she is a young Jewish girl from a small town in the 1st century. She was not yet married and she knew what it would mean for her to be found with child before her wedding day. For her to say "yes" to God meant that she was risking

scandal and scorn. She risked being cast out by society and even the possibility of losing her soon-to-be legitimate husband Joseph, which was the only means of survival and prospect for a decent life for women in 1st century Palestine. If she say “yes” to God it meant for her a life that would bring obstacles and challenges and what was her answer?

In v 38 we read “*I am the Lord’s servant Mary answered May it be to me as you have said*”

And in saying yes God used her life to show us how much he loved us. His son Jesus Christ was conceived in the Virgin Mary.

In John 3:16 we read “*God so loved the world that He gave his only Son, so that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.*” *Jesus shows us God’s perfect love.*

My dear friends God Son Jesus Christ was conceived in the Virgin Mary. He was born in Bethlehem for me and you. He carried our sins to the cross and there He paid the full price for our forgiveness, deliverance, peace, and salvation by His blood and life. He did die for us, and there sealed the payment for all our sins, each and every one, along with all the sins of everyone else who ever has or will live. And Jesus didn’t stay dead. He rose from the dead for you, for the proclamation of His victory over death and the devil, and to give us eternal life.

My brothers and sisters we are sometimes placed in similar situations like Mary. God is continually speaking to us: through the spirit living inside of us that urges us to do something, through the fellow believers around us.

God says to us, ‘you are one of my favoured ones. On you my Holy Spirit has rested and blessed you. Will you be a vessel for me, an agent, a ministry, a way in which my love can come into the world? Will you allow me to work through you to give birth to my love I want to send into the world?’ *We might think there’s no good that we can do in the world in our community, in our church or even in our family.*

You know why our world, our country, our communities, our families is so messed up because there is a lack of love. People are envious of each other they are jealous, selfish, rude, conceited, they keep a record of wrongs, and they gloat over other people’s trouble, but you know if we show love there will not be so much conflict, war and crime, in the world in our country in our community and even in our homes.

We might say ‘I’m just a lowly person with not much going for me – how can God possibly make use of me and work through me in the world?’ We heard Mary ask the same things, but finding courage to trust where God was leading her and how God wanted to make use of her, we heard a very faith-filled response: ‘here I am, your servant Lord. May you work through me as you said you will.’

## **CONCLUSION**

My Dear friends God is calling you to do something or be involved in a ministry in some way, give prayerful consideration to what is being asked of you. Be of good courage, trust in faith, and perhaps your response will be: ‘here I am Lord, your servant. Work through me and help me to do the things you want me to do to help give birth to your love in the world.’

On a more personal level maybe this Christmas God is asking you to be the vessel to resolve the conflict that there is between family members. Or maybe you yourself are not on speaking terms with your brother, sister and God is asking to you to take the first step in asking forgiveness and bring healing by showing love.

Love is patient, love is kind and envies no one. Love is never boastful or conceited, rude or selfish. Love is not quick to take offence. It keeps no records of wrongs, it does not gloat over other people’s troubles, but rejoices in the right, the good and the true. There is nothing that love cannot face, there is no limit to its faith, to its hope, to its endurance.