Welcome to our Christmas Celebration!

We are glad you chose to join us today to worship our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. We hope that your stay will be both meaningful and memorable.

Our Mission

We are a church that seeks to bring glory to God, to build the local church through discipleship and to fulfill the Great Commission.

Announcements

We will be continuing our Christmas sermon series entitled, **"Away in a Manger,"** where we are looking at the Christmas story from the perspectives of five Biblical characters – Isaiah, Mary, Joseph, Shepherds and the Wise Men.

Mark your calendars for our 2020 week-long **Prayer & Fasting** to be held on **January 20-24, 2020**. Let's start the new year by coming together as a congregation in prayer as we seek God's favor for our church and for our lives.

How Can We Pray For You?

It is our privilege to pray for you. You may send your prayer requests by text, by writing them on the prayer cards provided or by sending us a private message on our FB page!

Discover Life in the Small Groups

We are passionate about community.
We encourage you to join our small groups where we cultivate meaningful relationships and grow in our relationship with God together.
To join a group, you may inquire from our volunteers at the Information Booth.

Stay for Fellowship & Refreshments

We invite you to stay for coffee and fellowship after the service. Take the opportunity to meet new friends or inquire about our small groups or about the church.

Our weekend Services are held at the Café Corazon (2nd Floor), Bai Hotel, North Reclamation Area, Mandaue City, every Sunday 10AM-12NN and 1PM-3PM.

** The Living Word NRA Center is located at the 2/F Northgate Centre, Banilad (across Country Mall and beside University of Cebu-Banilad).*

Get in touch with us:

info@livingwordnra.com
www.livingwordnra.com
032.517.5991 (Office)
0927.505.2413 (Text only)
www.facebook.com/livingwordnra

THE GOD OF OUR IMPOSSIBLE

Luke 1:26-38

Dani Tan (Intern) | December 15, 2019 | 10AM & 1PM

sermon notes

SERMON THEME/BIG IDEA

MY NOTES/HIGHLIGHTS

DAY 4.
WHY ME?

Read: Luke 1:23-25, 39-45.
"It's the most wonderful time of the year," says an old Christmas song. But for some of us who are reading these words, today may be far from wonderful. Maybe your life has been devastated by disease, or you have recently lost a loved one, or some other painful event is causing you to cry out, "Why is this happening to me?"

Elizabeth knew such pain. She was old and childless, and in that culture she was therefore disgraced (Luke 1:25). Long ago she had probably given up all hope of becoming a mother. Imagine the talk in her village: "What do you think she did to make God punish her this way?" God actually didn't operate that way, but people often made that wrong assumption.

Soon after God's promise that she and her husband would have a son, however (Luke 1:11-17), Elizabeth became pregnant. Then, six months later, her cousin Mary came with even greater news: an angel had said Mary would become the mother of God's Son (Luke 1:31-32)! Elizabeth was not disappointed or jealous. Full of excitement, she exclaimed, "Why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?"

Today let each of us, no matter our circumstances, look in awe at Christ and ask ourselves, "Why should I be so blessed that Jesus has come to save me and fill me with the hope of eternal life?"

Why? Because God loves you!

Reflect & Apply.
1. While you begin to see the disappointment that Elizabeth and Zechariah went through, is there anything in the story or on how they responded that encouraged you?
2. What does it look like for you to endure disappointment in a healthy way? How are you most likely to deal with disappointment in unhealthy ways?

DAY 5.
THE RISING SUN

Read: Luke 1:67-80.
"Because of the tender mercy of our God … the rising sun will come to us from heaven to shine on those living in darkness and in the shadow of death…" (Luke1:78-79)

Today's Scripture recites the Spirit-led song of Zechariah. As he reflects on the role that his son, John, will have in preparing the way for our promised salvation, Zechariah includes images and phrases from the Psalms and Prophets. Our verse contains the hopeful phrase found also in Isaiah 9:2 about light shining on people lost in the dark.

Darkness itself is hard enough to take. That is why we have nightlights and flashlights. But darkness is a metaphor for all that troubles us: despair, loneliness, sin, worry, depression.

Zechariah sings that John will go before Jesus to get people ready for his coming, announcing that help is on the way. The day is dawning. God will rescue his people and help them to live as they were meant to live. Just as our Christmas carols and lights remind us, Jesus is the "light of the world" (John 8:12; 9:5).

This image of "the rising sun" is especially hopeful because it indicates that God's new day is just beginning. Many people feel that things wind down after Christmas. But isn't the opposite true? After Christmas, we can begin to use and enjoy our gifts.

Let's remember that on Christmas Day. This is just the beginning—Jesus is "the rising sun"!

Reflect & Apply.
1. You've read of God's faithfulness from Zechariah and Elizabeth's testimony of this experience. How have you seen God work recently in your life?
2. As you read through Zechariah's song (Luke 1:67-79), it seems like he used his experience not just to comfort himself, but also to speak to others about God rescuing his people. Christmas can be a tough time of year for people. Who do you know who needs some encouragement? Is there anything that you can do to speak hope into their fears and disappointments?

Living Word NRA
Worship God. Advance His Kingdom.

"CHRISTMAS IN THEIR EYES"
December 15, 2019

Questions for Personal Study & Reflection

This 5-day devotional includes readings with brief commentaries that builds upon the weekend sermon. You are encouraged to take the time to read the Bible passages and meditate on them. On average, you will need 20-30 minutes to complete them.

Reflection questions and applications are intended to invite you to slow down and mediate on the truth that God is teaching you. Daily application steps are also given to help drive the message in practical ways.

DAY 1.
GOD'S PONDERING SERVANT

Read: Luke 1:26-38.
Mary had her share of struggles. Her wedding plans were made, and she looked forward to living a normal life with her husband in Nazareth. Then one day God stepped into her life and told her she would be the mother of the Savior, the Son of God. Mary responded in faith, "I am the Lord's servant … May your word to me be fulfilled." She was all in, no matter where God's adventure would take her.

Mary's journey took her with Joseph to Bethlehem. She gave birth there and placed her firstborn son in a manger. In obedience to God, they named him Jesus, because he would be the Savior of the world. A group of local shepherds showed up without an invitation, babbling about a bright light in the night and a choir of angels, and then they rushed off with shouts of praise. Wow! Mary reflected on these things, struggling to put them together.

Mary kept on pondering: they received a visit from "wise men" from the East and escaped a massacre by the local king (Matthew 2), and later she watched her son die on a cross. Because Mary responded in faith, the Bible calls her blessed, for she believed what the Lord had said (Luke 1:45).

Are you willing to take God at his word, no matter your circumstances, and believe in Jesus as your Savior? God's love, displayed for all the world in Jesus, will never let you go.

Reflect & Apply.
1. How does the angel encourage Mary in verses 28-31? Have you ever experienced God's grace or favor in an unusual way?
2. Why is Mary frightened? Is her fear reflective of unbelief? Why is it so hard for us to accept being a servant? Why do we have such trouble being submissive to God?
3. Has God asked of you a hard thing? Take the time to reflect on what God is leading you to do in the coming year. Pray for a heart counts it an honor to be to serve.

DAY 2.
A FAITHFUL WORSHIPPER

Read: Luke 2:36-38.
Another "family friend" in Jesus' story was the prophet Anna. She was eighty-four years old and had been widowed after just seven years of marriage. Anna was from the old Israelite tribe of Asher, one of the ten tribes that had split away from the rule of King David's line long ago (see 2 Chronicles 10). So she represented a remnant of God's followers from those earlier times, showing that God's promise was for them too.

The Bible says Anna never left the temple but worshiped there night and day. Perhaps she noticed the commotion caused by Simeon—or maybe she too was "moved by the Spirt" (see Luke 1:27)—and suddenly she saw Jesus. By grace, her eyes of faith were opened to see that this child was the Christ who fulfilled all of God's promises. And immediately she began to give thanks.

In a few weeks, we will celebrate Christmas. Jesus, the Savior of the world, has come. Have you stopped to give thanks because of God's good news? In him we have forgiveness of sins and hope for the future. Thank you, Jesus!

And there is more! Anna immediately began telling others that, with this child, salvation had come. Many people today are looking for love that forgives and brings joy to their lives. Will you tell them that Jesus has come to do that? You don't have to be old; any believer, even a child, can share the good news of salvation!

Reflect & Apply.
1. How do you see yourself (in a similar and in different ways) to the prophetess Anna? What do you find in her that's "heroic"?
2. If a person is fully devoted to God, do you think he or she should go into "full-time" Christian service? Why/why not?
3. Would you consider yourself a dedicated servant of Jesus? In what ways have you failed? In what ways have you been faithful? Take the time to reflect and let the Holy Spirit speak to on this today.

DAY 3.
BELIEVING THE UNBELIEVABLE

Read: Matthew 1:18-25.
Joseph of Nazareth, a small-time carpenter from Nazareth in Galilee, had just received the worst news of his life. The woman he was to marry had told him she was going to have a child, and he knew the child was not his. Even though he could hardly believe that Mary could have betrayed him, it seemed the evidence was there.

To keep her from public shame and humiliation, Joseph decided to divorce her quietly and send her away so she could raise her child as a single parent.

But then he received an even greater shock. An angel came to him in a dream and explained what had happened to Mary. Joseph was asked to believe the unbelievable: Mary had conceived a child from the Holy Spirit, and this was not just any child—it was the One who would save his people from their sins. They were to give him the name Jesus, which means "Savior."

The news the angel brought to Joseph would turn his life upside down. Some of his dreams would be put on hold. But Joseph believed, and when he woke up, he did what the angel had commanded. Because Joseph believed the unbelievable, he was permitted to see the Savior and have a part in God's plan of salvation.

All who believe the Christmas message are caught up in God's saving work. How about you?

Reflect & Apply.
1. How did Joseph respond and what does this show about him? How can we make a godly decision in a crisis like Joseph?
2. What are Joseph's steps of obedience in faith to God's Word in his life? What stands out to you most? What would have been most difficult for you in that situation?
3. In your life, do you need to take a step of faith in any specific areas of obedience? Take the time to consider and to write down any areas of obedience that you need to deal with in your life and pray for faith, joy and a willing heart to obey.