

DAY 10

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 8TH

Our theme for today: Yet more favor!

Yesterday, we understood, in part, that Mary had been given favor. It was the favor of carrying the Messiah, and also the favor of the very presence of God. That would seem a lot of favor, wouldn't it? Before discovering more of what Luke has, let's pause and consider again Mary's situation this time comparing it with the past.

Scripture

'²⁶ In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be.'

Luke 1:26-29

"³Then the Lord God said to the woman, "What is this that you have done?" The woman said, "The serpent tricked me, and I ate."

Genesis 3:3

Thought provokers

- In Mary, we find her perplexed at her situation. She was surprised, frightened, even confused. No wonder, right? She's approached by an angel. In contrast, we read about another woman, Eve in Genesis, and she encounters a talking serpent! Both events catch the women off-guard, but both have very different faith responses.
 - What similarities or contrasts do you see between Mary and Eve?

Reflections

We've all encountered, at some point in our lives, something unusual. The more dramatic the incident, the more likely we are to be surprised, frightened, even confused. Of course, each of us probably don't think we have many connections with either of these women, after all they are in the Bible and they are kind of super special, right? But really, they are just like you and me. Neither of them is a princess, or priestess, no, they are ordinary people living out their normal lives. Neither of them is described for their special prowess or some exceptional ability – we hardly learn anything of who they are before their encounter experiences. In the world's eyes, they are just plain people.

Now, in the beginning, both these women had a connection with God. But once they face something "*out of the norm*", they both operate very differently. Eve gets caught up in the

serpent's schemes and fails and falls, while Mary gets caught up in God's gracious plans – one takes an invitation that leads to death; but the other takes an invitation that leads her to life. And this is why we can stand amazed at God's favor!

It is amazing that God favors this plain Nazarene woman, Mary; she's just plain. But it is even more amazing that He blesses one who falls in a long line of sinners. After all, "*all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God* (Romans 3:23)." Remember this: After, and following Eve, "*none is righteous, no not one* (Romans 3:10.)" I think Mary is amazing not because of any special gift or attribute she had, but because God chose her.

And I think that's the same for all of us. God favors us all – even though we are all like Eve!

I have read that the great theologian Martin Luther just loved Mary. Why? because she stands for all of us, all of us who have no right to expect God's attention and favor and yet are surprised to discover that God has chosen, elected, called, addressed, and honored each of us. What favor!

Prayer and Song

Take time to pray and sing praises to Him. Here is one by Ken Bible.

Love has Come

*Love has come, a light in the darkness!
Love explodes in the Bethlehem skies.
See, all heaven has come to proclaim it.
Hear how their song of joy arises:
Love! Love! Born unto you, a Savior!
Love! Love! Glory to God on high!*

*Love is born! Come share in the wonder.
Love is God now asleep in the hay.
See the glow in the eyes of His mother.*

*What is the name her heart is saying?
Love! Love! Love is the name she whispers.
Love! Love! Jesus, Immanuel.*

*Love has come, He never will leave us!
Love is life everlasting and free.
Love is Jesus within and among us.
Love is the peace our hearts are seeking.
Love! Love! Love is the gift of Christmas.
Love! Love! Praise to You, God on high!*