

Good News of Great Joy...for Young & Old Alike

2019-12-29 by Ben Deaver at College Heights with Tallgrass Church on Luke 2:25-38

Don't forget:

- Print Scripture for Dick and Kate.
- Pray for one another!
- Benediction

Mingle Question: Meet someone who is not in your church and ask one another, "How did you spend Christmas?"

Good morning!

Welcome to College Heights and welcome to Tallgrass Church! We're so excited to worship Jesus with you this morning. My name is Ben Deaver. I'm the Lead Pastor at Tallgrass Church. We lease from College Heights and love meeting here. Thanks so much! Here's the most recent picture of my family—Maris, Kate, and Maddox. Jambo, our 13-year-old mutt is missing. Sorry.

The Chiefs play at noon. But, at Tallgrass Church, we're used to only catching the second half when the games are at 3pm since we typically meet at 4pm. So I'll get us out of here by halftime, that should be around 2:30 or so. Cool?

The Christmas story continues. The Twelve Days of Christmas go until January 5 so we're going to keep talking Christmas all the way until next Sunday for Tallgrass Church. So, leave your tree and lights up and keep the Christmas music playing! We'll continue with our Tallgrass Church Advent sermon series called Good News of Great Joy!

There's something we all have in common in this room. We are all part of a generation.

- Generation X—ages 39-54
- Millennials—ages 23-38
- Boomers—ages 55-73
- Generation Z—ages 22 & under
- Silent—ages 74-91
- Greatest—ages 92-118

Generation Jokes

- What generation does Forrest Gump's son belong to? *Gen A*
- This young generation with their computers and internet are so self absorbed. *It's all meme, meme, meme...*
- We made learning so much easier for the younger generation. *They now have schools with smart devices, digital textbooks, and online courses. We even reduced the planets down to eight.*

Good News of Great Joy

- The Christmas story is Good News of Great Joy for...
 - men and women alike
 - Jew and Gentile alike
 - slave and free alike
 - and this morning we learn the Christmas story is Good News of Great Joy for young and old alike.
- If you're here this morning and you feel like you're too young to really be used by God or to really get the Good News of Christmas, I'm here to tell you that you're not too young. Or if you're here and you feel like you're too old to be used by God or to be able to really make an impact anymore for the cause of Christ, I'm here to tell YOU that you're not too old. There is truly Good News of Great Joy for Young and Old alike!

Good News of Great Joy...for Young & Old Alike

Tallgrass Community Church & College Heights Baptist Church

- Both Tallgrass Church and College Heights have young and old alike...but possibly Tallgrass Church in general has a younger demographic and College Heights has a slightly older demographic.
- Tallgrass Church itself is very young whereas College Heights is an older church.

Timeline:

- *Polishing the Christmas Jewel* by Dave Geldart
- **MAP**—Mary and Joseph travel the 70-90 miles from Nazareth to Bethlehem. Jesus is born.
- Shepherds visit Jesus pretty soon after His birth.
- Then Luke tells us...
 - **Luke 2:21-24** ²¹And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ²²And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) ²⁴and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”
- End of eight days—circumcision, probably at a local synagogue
- Time for purification (40 days)
- **MAP**—Mary and Joseph and Jesus travel the 5 miles from Bethlehem to Jerusalem to the Temple
- **Luke 2:39-40** ³⁹And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him.
 - What happens next? When do the magi visit?
 - When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord they return to Nazareth.
 - The child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom—next decade
 - Parents go to Jerusalem annually at the Feast of the Passover—Jesus is 12
- Luke, the physician and historian, records this little interaction between two elderly people and 40-day-old Jesus and His parents. Out of all the interactions that must've occurred over that first month of Jesus' life, Luke wants us to know about these two older folks who are at the end of life. We zoom into this scene in 1st century Jerusalem where the oldest and youngest are gathered together to celebrate Good News of Great Joy for young and old alike!
- ***Invite up Dick Akins and Kate Deaver!***

Dick Akins reads Luke 2:25-35

Luke 2:25-28 ²⁵Now there was a man in Jerusalem, whose name was Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout, waiting for the consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷And he came in the Spirit into the temple, and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to do for him according to the custom of the Law, ²⁸he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said...

Luke 2:29-32 ²⁹"Lord, now you are letting your servant depart in peace, according to your word; ³⁰for my eyes have seen your salvation ³¹that you have prepared in the presence of all peoples, ³²a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel."

Luke 2:33-35 ³³And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him. ³⁴And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, "Behold, this child is appointed for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign that is opposed ³⁵(and a sword will pierce through your own soul also), so that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed."

Kate Deaver reads Luke 2:36-38

Luke 2:36-38 ³⁶And there was a prophetess, Anna, the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, ³⁷and then as a widow until she was eighty-four. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. ³⁸And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

PRAY!

Father, this morning, as we head into 2020 together, please help us...

1. To prepare to grow old well.
2. To speak of Jesus.
3. To invest in generations.
4. To love the season of life we're in TODAY!

Simeon's Prophecy to Mary (1628) painting by Rembrandt

- Never mind that the characters are Caucasian. Imagine them as Middle Eastern because that's what they were.
- Imagine Mary even younger, 12-14 years old perhaps.
- Imagine Anna much thinner most likely.

Simeon

- righteous and devout (v. 25)
- waiting for the consolation of Israel (v. 25)
- the Holy Spirit was upon him (v. 25)
- received revelation from the Holy Spirit (v. 26)
 - It had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. (v. 26)
- He came in the Spirit into the temple. (v. 27)
- ***Simeon had prepared to grow old well.***
- He took Jesus up in his arms (v. 28)
 - He took Jesus up in his arms and blessed God and said... (v. 28)
 - I often envision the eyes of Simeon lighting up as he beheld baby Jesus and the joy he had when he was able to hold Jesus.
 - Simeon must have shone like a light in the midst of a crooked and depraved generation. See Philippians 2:15.
 - Simeon was not a typical old man. He was ahead of his time in anticipation of how the Kingdom of God would come and who it would be for. And yet his understanding was rooted in ancient truths that had been forgotten by most in his generation.
- **Read Luke 2:29-32**
- ***Simeon spoke of Jesus.***
 - Salvation for all peoples! This includes Jews AND Gentiles!
 - **Read Isaiah 49:6**
- **Luke 2:33** And his father and his mother marveled at what was said about him.
- **Read Luke 2:34-35**

Simeon, a model old man

1. Simeon had prepared to grow old well.
2. Simeon spoke of Jesus.
3. Simeon invested in the younger generation.
 - a. Invest in someone from a younger generation and/or seek out someone from an older generations.
 - b. My favorite old men love Jesus and those Jesus came to rescue near and far!
 - c. Dr. Bob Taussig
 - i. He would pull new students in and put them in a headlock.
 - ii. He worked out at the K-State Rec Center all the time.
 - iii. He cleaned out the leaves of his gutter.
 - iv. He gave his wife an anniversary every month because he knew he could pass away at any time.
 - v. He emailed international students like crazy.
 - vi. Chinese students would show up at his doorstep and say, "Someone told me to come here to learn about the God."
 - vii. He loved Jesus. He loved people. I loved the time I got to spend with Dr. Bob. I loved Dr. Bob.
 - viii. At his funeral his whole biological family was there, seven kids, then a huge layer of grandkids, then an even larger layer of great grandkids. But his biological family was dwarfed by his spiritual family.
 - ix. What an impact he had on so many. What an impact he had on me.
 - x. I want to be like Dr. Bob. I want to be like Simeon. I want to help others become like Simeon. I need help getting there.
 - d. Boys and young men, seek out older men who can help you follow Jesus well into old age!
 - e. Older men, seek out younger men who you can help follow Jesus well into old age!
4. Simeon loved the season of life he was in!

Anna

- a prophetess (v. 36)
 - As a prophetess she outranks Simeon, who may have been a priest. She is the New Testament's only named female prophetess.
- the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher (v. 36)
 - She is one of the few in the New Testament whose tribe is listed.
 - Others include Jesus, of the house and lineage of David and the tribe of Judah (Luke 2:4; Matthew 1:1-16), Saul of Benjamin (Philippians 3:5) and Barnabas, a Levite (Acts 4:36).
 - **Genesis 30:13** And Leah said, "Happy am I! For women have called me happy." So she called his name Asher.
- advanced in years (v. 36)
 - She was advanced in years, having lived with her husband seven years from when she was a virgin, and then as a widow until she was eighty-four (or for eighty four years).
- didn't depart from the temple (v. 37)
- worshiped with fasting and prayer night and day (v. 37)
- ***Anna had prepared to grow old well.***
 - **Genesis 49:20** Asher's food shall be rich, and he shall yield royal delicacies.
- full of gratitude to God (v. 38)
- spoke of Jesus to all who were ready to hear (v. 38)
- ***Anna spoke of Jesus.***
 - And coming up at that very hour she began to give thanks to God and to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Anna, a model old woman

1. Anna had prepared to grow old well.
2. Anna spoke of Jesus.
3. Anna invested in the younger generation.
 - a. Invest in someone from a younger generation and/or seek out someone from an older generations.
 - b. My favorite old women love Jesus and those Jesus came to rescue near and far!
 - i. Sister Harriet, one of Maris's teachers at St. Teresa's Academy in Kansas City, MO
 - ii. I can't wait to meet this woman who was a bright spot in my wife's childhood. This woman who invested in younger women. Who knows the crucial role she played in the spiritual journeys of so many?
 - iii. Maris, can you share briefly about Sister Harriet?
 - c. Girls and young women, seek out older women who can help you follow Jesus well into old age!
 - d. Older women, seek out younger women who you can help follow Jesus well into old age!
 - e. Younger people, make the most of the time you have with older people who love Jesus and love those that Jesus came to rescue!
 - f. Older people, make the most of the time you have left to spread Good News of Great Joy about Jesus to people near and far!
4. Anna loved the season of life she was in!
 - a. Anna was comfortable in her own skin as she aged.

In 2020:

1. Prepare to grow old well.

- a. Simeon, and this man was righteous and devout (v. 25)
- b. She did not depart from the temple, worshiping with fasting and prayer night and day. (v. 37)
- c. Choose a spiritual discipline to focus on in 2020.
- d. Could be related to prayer and fasting. Or Bible reading.
- e. College Heights—2020 Bible Reading Plan
- f. Tallgrass Church—Tuesday morning Tallgrass Prayer with first Tuesdays fasting
- g. WOTY—Word of the Year
- h. TawG—Time alone with God
- i. If you don't know Jesus yet, then the first step for you to growing old well is to get to know Jesus. Jesus life was cut short. He didn't grow old because He went to the cross around age 33 to die for your sins and for my sins. Put your faith in Him this morning!

2. Speak of Jesus.

- a. ...he took him up in his arms and blessed God and said... (v. 28)
- b. ...she began...to speak of him to all who were waiting for the redemption of Jerusalem. (v. 38)
- c. Most of us need to make a practice of speaking of Jesus more often and with more people.
- d. Look for opportunities to bring Jesus up in conversation.
- e. Make opportunities to bring Jesus up in conversation.
- f. Do your homework about Jesus so you can give a reason for your hope when asked.
- g. Spend time with Jesus so that when you interact with others they can tell that you're friends with Jesus.

3. Invest in generations.

- a. Invest in someone from a younger generation and/or seek out someone from an older generations.
- b. There are insecurities going both directions. Young folks are often worried that older people may not take them seriously or may not have time for them and the older generations often don't feel like they have anything to offer or that younger people aren't interested in what they have to offer. Listen, we need one another. And we need the church to be a place where people from all generations gather to worship Jesus TOGETHER!
- c. We're talking about discipleship here. This can be helping someone who's a little younger than you in their faith. Or this can be helping someone who is much younger than you in their faith and in how old they are.
- d. I long for this myself. I long for this for my 11-year-old daughter and my 6-year-old son.
- e. My favorite old men—Dr. Bob Taussig, Charles Bascom, Steve Gruber, Dr. Jim Wilson, Herman Regier
- f. My favorite old women—Kay Bascom, Sarah Regier, Sister Harriet from St. Teresa's Academy

4. Love the season of life you're in TODAY...whether you're young or old or somewhere in between!
- a. Be comfortable in your own skin.
 - b. Kate trying to be older than she is. So many trying to be younger than they are. I get it. I feel it. Want to fit in with the youth. Want to fit in with the pastors.
 - c. The young folks don't feel like their old enough to do great things for God. And the old folks don't feel like their young enough to do great things for God. Just exactly when will I be old enough to do great things in the Kingdom of God? Or just when was I young enough to be about God's Kingdom business? If Lentz were here today we could ask him. Maybe he would say, the perfect age to really get the Gospel and be about Kingdom work is when you're 42 years old and 283 days from noon-4:00pm Central Standard Time. That's when you're just the right age to really get things done for God!
 - d. No! That's not right. Now is the time! The Kingdom of God is at hand, NOW.
 - e. As long as it is today, which is always, do not harden your hearts but rather, soften your hearts, look to Jesus and let's get after it...TOGETHER!
 - f. **1 Timothy 4:12** Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity.

Pray for one another.

Have Bill Bickmeier pray over College Heights.

- Pray for those in College Heights who will be starting a Chronological Bible Reading plan in 2020. Pray that God helps them to read and meditate on the Scriptures and that they bear fruit in their lives.
- Pray for Lentz and for others who preach at College Heights that they would be faithful to preach the Word accurately and that the Gospel message would be clearly preached and understood by those who hear.
- Pray for the student age group who are a part of College Heights who are either "choosing whom they will serve" or making decisions about future plans for missions or plans after graduation.

Have Bob Allen pray over Tallgrass Church.

- Pray that we would continue to reach people who have no faith community. Pray that we would courageously walk alongside people in their spiritual journeys, helping them take scary steps of faith towards relationship and intimacy with Jesus.
- Pray for our church family to live out the "one anothers" well, that we would grow in our commitment to our church so the body of Christ would build itself up in love.
- Pray for provision for everything we need as a young church, that we could walk in the good works God has prepared for us.

Benediction

Hebrews 12:1-2 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, *both of those who've gone on before us and have seen death and await our arrival and those who are still living*, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us *whether we are young or old*,² looking to Jesus, the founder and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is *NOW seated at the right hand of the throne of God waiting for the right moment for His second Advent when He will return just as He left to put all things right and to gather all His sons and daughters both young and old alike. This is Good News of Great Joy! Have a Happy New Year, and we'll see you in 2020!*

Chopping Block:

Generation Jokes

- Hey, why are they called "Generation Z" anyway? *Because they'll be the last ones left if we do nothing about climate change.*
- Every generation thinks the next one is not as good or hard working. *I'm not sure that's true, but we'll see what those lazy, freeloading Millennials think of the generation after them.*

One In Christ Jesus

- **Galatians 3:28** There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.
- **1 John 1:12-14** ¹²I am writing to you, little children, because your sins are forgiven for his name's sake.
¹³I am writing to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.
I am writing to you, young men, because you have overcome the evil one.
I write to you, children, because you know the Father.
¹⁴I write to you, fathers, because you know him who is from the beginning.
I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.
- The Nature of the Kingdom of God—God leverages the best of the young and the old and weeds out the worst of both.
- Receiving the Kingdom like a child and spiritual maturity
- Jesus is the Alpha and the Omega
- New wineskins and the ancient paths
 - **Jeremiah 6:16** Thus says the LORD: "Stand by the roads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths, where the good way is; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.
 - *Looking for the Ancient Paths*— https://www.huffpost.com/entry/looking-for-the-ancient-p_b_9131956
 - **Psalm 119:52** When I think of your rules from of old, I take comfort, O LORD.
 - **Matthew 13:51-52** ⁵¹"Have you understood all these things?" They said to him, "Yes." ⁵²And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like a master of a house, who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old."
- Honor the young and the old alike; Respect the young and old alike; Love the young and old alike
- Older folks—invest in the youth
- Younger folks—inspire and encourage those older than you

Passages:

- **Luke 2:20-24** ²⁰And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them. ²¹And at the end of eight days, when he was circumcised, he was called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ²²And when the time came for their purification according to the Law of Moses, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³(as it is written

in the Law of the Lord, “Every male who first opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord”) ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the Law of the Lord, “a pair of turtledoves, or two young pigeons.”

- **Luke 2:39-42** ³⁹ And when they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own town of Nazareth. ⁴⁰ And the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom. And the favor of God was upon him. ⁴¹ Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when he was twelve years old, they went up according to custom.
- **Galatians 3:23-29** ²³ Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. ²⁴ So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.
- **1 Timothy 6:11-12** ¹¹ But as for you, O man of God, flee these things. Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, steadfastness, gentleness. ¹² Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called and about which you made the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.
- **2 Timothy 4:6-8** ⁶ For I am already being poured out as a drink offering, and the time of my departure has come. ⁷ I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. ⁸ Henceforth there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, will award to me on that day, and not only to me but also to all who have loved his appearing.
- **1 Peter 5:1-5** So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: ² shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; ³ not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. ⁴ And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. ⁵ Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for “God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.”
- **2 Peter 1:12-15** ¹² Therefore I intend always to remind you of these qualities, though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. ¹³ I think it right, as long as I am in this body, to stir you up by way of reminder, ¹⁴ since I know that the putting off of my body will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ made clear to me. ¹⁵ And I will make every effort so that after my departure you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Anna:

Luke summarizes Anna’s encounter with the little family. Unlike Simeon, her direct speech is narrated—yet it is powerful. While Simeon speaks of the larger and later context of the child to the Gentiles and Israel (vv. 30-32), Anna evangelizes immediately and selectively—to those “looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem” (v. 38). She and Simeon join others in Luke’s gospel in recognizing this child’s great significance and wide import: the angel Gabriel (1:31-33), Elizabeth and John (in uterus) (1:42-45), Zechariah (1:76-79) and the Bethlehem shepherds who also evangelize (2:11-12, 20).

As a prophetess, Anna receives insight into things that normally remain hidden to ordinary people; she recognizes who this child is and tells of his significance to selected people in Jerusalem. Her actions affirm Amos 3:7: “Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plans to his servants the prophets.”

Luke dwells on Anna’s advanced age with ambiguity. Let’s simply agree with the text: she is ancient! Luke tells us she was married for seven years, then widowed. Her widowhood has either lasted 84 years or she is 84 years old when she crosses the Biblical stage (vv. 36-37). Some scholars figure it this way: Anna married at age 14, evidently a common age, was widowed at age 21, and then meets the young family 84 years later at age 105.

Luke indicates that her habits of worship, prayer and fasting represent a routine, probably one of decades. Evidently she resides within the Temple or on its premises. A precedent in earlier centuries could have been the presence of Levite musicians and heads of families “who stayed in the rooms of the temple and were exempt from other duties because they were responsible for the work day and night” (1 Chronicles 9:33). So perhaps this behavior was not so unusual during the first century because of the full time work of worship the Levites undertook.

Anna, this worship workaholic, sets her own hours, schedule, route and routine. Arguably she listens to God and prays as directed. Others recognize her as a prophetess. The work of prayer indeed characterizes a prophet, for God told Abimelech that Abraham was “a prophet and he will pray for you” (Gen. 20:7). Anna knows fasting brings results. Biblical precedents include Esther’s three-day fast before courageously approaching Xerxes (Est. 4:15-16), and the abstinence of Daniel and his three friends regarding the delicacies of King Nebuchadnezzar’s table (Dan. 1:12).

Let’s consider Luke’s textual silences. Luke omits mention of her family; perhaps she had outlived her children. But if she has living family members, what do they think of her lifestyle? Do they share her devotion to constant worship? What about her finances? Is she independently wealthy, or do others provide her food? What did she look like? These questions remain unanswered, for they do not contribute toward Luke’s themes.

The Biblical text, however, contains clues regarding her appearance and character. Her lifestyle of fasting may indicate thinness; her ability to walk around the Temple indicates her fitness and that her eyesight and hearing are intact; her designation as a prophetess indicates her spiritual acuity; her talk of the child to those interested in the redemption of Jerusalem indicates her deep connection with a likeminded community.

With this in mind, Anna shows one model of aging in the Biblical text. Luke presents her positively, as a woman without the bitterness that may come with age and as one full of hope. As she moves throughout the Temple, no doubt she seeks to do good to those whom she encounters. Luke’s description shows her as well adjusted, engaged in Israel’s life and useful to the Lord. She may well have become the model for the righteous church widows Paul describes in 1 Timothy 5:5. Arguably the best representatives of the Old Covenant—Zechariah, Elizabeth, Simeon, and worship workaholic Anna—although all elderly, all ably serve as transitions to the New Covenant.

Christmas Timeline:

<https://answersingenesis.org/holidays/christmas/a-matter-of-time/>

Circa 4 BC: the Birth of Jesus

1. Ussher believed Jesus was born at the onset of 4 BC, and this is consistent because the king, Herod the Great, died near the end of that year, and Jesus was born during his reign.²
2. Because of the Roman census, Joseph and Mary travel to Bethlehem from their hometown of Nazareth. Contrary to the idea of Jesus being born in a stable, He was likely born in the lower room of a house where animals often stay and subsequently laid in a manger (Luke 1:26–27; 2:4–7).
3. The shepherds visit following the angelic announcement (Luke 2:8–12, 20).
4. The angels worship the Christ (Luke 2:13–14).

Eight Days Later

1. Jesus was circumcised. This probably did not occur in Jerusalem but a local synagogue or perhaps a priest came to them, as was the case for John the Baptist (Luke 1:59; 2:21; Leviticus 12:3).
2. Jesus was given His name (Luke 2:21).

At Least 41 Days After the Birth of Jesus

1. The Law stipulated a woman wait 40 days following the birth of a son to finish her purification (*Leviticus 12:1–8*). So Mary and Joseph went to the Temple in Jerusalem to offer a sacrifice of two doves or pigeons, which signified they were poor (*Luke 2:22–24*). This suggests the magi had not visited yet to offer their expensive gifts; otherwise Joseph and Mary probably could have afforded the lamb and dove required by the Law for those with adequate means.
2. At the Temple, Simeon held Jesus, blessed God and the family, and prophesied in the Holy Spirit about Jesus (*Luke 2:25–35*).
3. Anna, a prophetess, saw the Christ at the Temple (*Luke 2:36–38*).

Soon After the 41st Day

1. The family returned to Bethlehem—not Nazareth, as some have suggested. After all, they were still in Bethlehem when the wise men later visited, and they apparently planned to return there following the flight to Egypt.³ As such, it is unlikely they would have packed up everything to go to Jerusalem for offering sacrifices. So they would have returned to Bethlehem where they left their belongings (*Matthew 2:5–9*).
2. They were now staying in a house (*oikian*)—perhaps the same one, but probably not in the stall area since the guest room (*kataluma*) may have been available at this time.

Within the Year

1. Alerted by the so-called Christmas star, an unknown number of magi from the East (perhaps Persia⁴) made their way to Herod's palace in Jerusalem to inquire of the Christ child (*Matthew 2:1–4*).
2. Contrary to popular opinion, the star was probably not a typical event in the heavens (e.g., supernova, planetary alignment, comet, etc.) Instead, it was truly a miraculous and special star (*Matthew 2:2, 7, 9–11*).
3. Jewish chief priests and scribes informed Herod that, according to *Micah 5:2*, Bethlehem was to be the birthplace of the Messiah (*Matthew 2:4–6*).

Maybe Within the Year

The Magi Arrive

1. These magi followed the star, which moved ahead of them, bringing expensive gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh to Jesus—who was now a young child living in a house (*Matthew 2:9–11*).⁵
2. They worshipped the Christ Child (*Matthew 2:11*).
3. Jesus is called a “young child” (*paidion, Matthew 2*) instead of babe (*brepbos, Luke 2:16*) at the time that the magi arrived. *Brepbos* specifically refers to a baby, whether born or unborn, while *paidion* refers to an immature child, possibly an infant (*Matthew 2:11*), so we should not be dogmatic about His age.
4. The magi returned to their homeland via a different route after being divinely warned in a dream not to go back to Herod (*Matthew 2:12*).

Herod and the Flight to Egypt

1. Soon after the wise men left, Herod realized that they were not going to return and he ordered the killing of all boys in and around the region of Bethlehem who were two years of age and under (*Matthew 2:16*). Herod knew the approximate timing of the star’s appearance (*Matthew 2:7*), which may be the time that Christ was born. With this information, Herod, who was paranoid about the crown and did not want anyone taking over, would have made sure to kill the child. So he may have at least doubled the time from when the star first appeared to the wise men, thinking this would guarantee that the child would be killed, even if the information was off.
2. An angel warned Joseph to flee to Egypt to protect his family. This trip would ultimately fulfill a prophecy (*Hosea 11:1*). Perhaps the new gifts helped finance that trip (*Matthew 2:13–15*).
3. Baby boys two years and under in Bethlehem and surrounding region were slaughtered (*Matthew 2:16*).

Late 4 BC to Early 3 BC

1. Herod died in 4 BC in Jericho and was buried in Herodium approximately 25 miles away. Reports are that the procession travelled with the body one mile per day. So it was likely 3 BC when he was buried.⁶ Herod's son Archelaus succeeded him (*Matthew 2:22*).

Early 3 BC

1. An angel informed Joseph that they could move back since Herod had died (*Matthew 2:15, 19*).
2. Since Joseph and Mary had completed the laws and commands (Greek *nomos*) of the Lord, they returned to the land of Israel from Egypt and settled in Nazareth of Galilee, which became the hometown of Jesus and was where Joseph and Mary lived prior to going to Bethlehem for the census.⁷ (*Matthew 2:22; Luke 2:39*).
3. Jesus would be called a Nazarene, fulfilling a spoken prophecy (*Matthew 2:23*).

MALE-FEMALE PAIRS AND PARALLELISM IN LUKE'S GOSPEL

Posted by Marg | Apr 8, 2014 | All Posts on Equality, Christian Living, Jesus and Women | 6

Tags: Ben Witherington III, Luke, Queen of Sheba, Women in the Gospels

<https://margmowczko.com/gendered-pairs-and-parallelism-in-lukes-gospel/>

I've been reading through the gospels lately. In Matthew's Gospel, I was reminded of Jesus' extraordinary counter-cultural teachings, I saw that we are all welcome to work in his vineyard, and I learned that Jesus had many female followers.

MALE-FEMALE PAIRS OF PEOPLE IN LUKE

While reading Luke's gospel, I was struck by how the author often presents his material using gender-symmetrical pairs of people.[1] For instance, in Luke's infancy narrative we have the male and female protagonists of Zechariah and Elizabeth, Joseph and Mary, and Simeon and Anna.[2] Later, Luke pairs the Twelve with the women disciples who travelled with them (*Luke 8:1-3*).[3]

MALE-FEMALE PAIRS OF PARABLES IN LUKE

Luke also presents a few of Jesus' parables in gender-symmetrical pairs. In these parables, Jesus intentionally addresses the women in his audience, as well as the men, and he incorporates activities from everyday life into his stories that both sexes could identify with. Yet, in each of the paired parables, Jesus gives essentially the same message.

These gender-paired parables include:

- The parable of the mustard seed (the seed was planted by a man) and the parable of the yeast (the yeast was used by a woman) in *Luke 13:18-19, 20-21*.
- The parable of the lost sheep (the sheep was searched for by a male shepherd) and the parable of the lost coin (the coin was searched for by a woman) in *Luke 15: 3-7, 8-10*.
- The parable of the persistent (male) friend and the parable of the persistent (female) widow (*Luke 11:5-8; 18:1-8*).[4]

MALE-FEMALE PAIRS TO MAKE POINTS IN LUKE

Gendered pairs are found in other sayings of Jesus recorded in Luke. For instance, Jesus mentions the widow of Zarephath and Naaman the leper in order to make a point in *Luke 4:25-27*. In *Luke 17:34-35*, Jesus mentions two men on a couch and two women grinding at a mill to make another point (cf. *Matt. 24:40-41*). In *Luke 11:29-32*, Jesus uses the examples of Jonah and the Queen of Sheba as signs.

JESUS' MALE-FEMALE AUDIENCE IN LUKE

Jesus' intentional inclusiveness in his teaching is further highlighted by the use of "complementary discourse".

Gill and Cavaness explain:

Jesus addressed mixed groups using "complementary discourse": a term used to refer to the repeating of statements twice (changing the gender each time) in order to make application to each sex. Although such was completely out of

step with the grammatical norms of His culture, Jesus frequently spoke using the following pairs: "men and women," "husbands and wives," "fathers and mothers," "fathers-in-law and mothers-in-law," "sons and daughters," and "sons-in-law and daughters-in-law." In Luke 12:53 Jesus refers to "father against son ... and mother against daughter." To the crowds He said, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even life itself—such a person cannot be my disciple" (Luke 14:26).[5]

MALE-FEMALE PAIRS IN THE OTHER GOSPELS

The other Gospel writers also use gendered pairs, but to a lesser degree. For example, the work of men and of women are mentioned side by side in Matthew 6:26 & 28, 24:40-41, and Mark 2:21. In John's Gospel, Jesus' encounter with Nicodemus, recorded in John chapter 3, is followed by Jesus' encounter with the Samaritan Woman, recorded in John chapter 4.

LUKE'S REASON FOR MALE-FEMALE PAIRS

Luke "gender-paired" people, parables, and points in order to highlight an important principle concerning gender. Ben Witherington observes that in Luke's Gospel, men and women are shown as being equal recipients of God's grace and equal participants in the community of Jesus' followers.[6] Luke's agenda was to show that Jesus not only valued, respected, and elevated women, but that women are equal with men.

Witherington suggests, "When Luke wrote his gospel, it is likely that the very reason he felt a need to stress male-female parallelism and Jesus' positive statements about women was that his own audience had strong reservations about some of Jesus' views on the subject."[6] Sadly, it seems that some Christians, despite Jesus' teaching and Luke's writing, still have strong reservations concerning the equality of women with men in the community of Jesus' followers.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Luke continued to pair men and women in his account of the Acts of the Apostles. For example, in the last half of Acts 9, Luke records that, through Peter's ministry, Aeneas was healed and Tabitha was raised. In Acts 21:9, he mentions Philip's four daughters who prophesied, and then, in the next verse, he mentions Agabus, a male prophet (Acts 21:10; cf. Acts 2:17-18).

[2] Mary must have been the original source for much of Luke's material in his infancy narrative. The prominence of Mary and Elizabeth and their speeches in Luke's opening chapter has led Richard Bauckham to label Luke 1:5-80 "a gynocentric text". Richard Bauckham, *Gospel Women: Studies of the Named Women in the Gospels* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 2002), 47.

[3] Kathleen Corley notes, "As in Mark, women as well as men make up the number of those Galileans who witness Jesus' entire ministry (Luke 23:59: Acts 10:37-39) and travel with him as he preaches and teaches from town to town." Kathleen Corley, *Private Women, Public Meals: Social Conflict in the Synoptic Tradition* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1993), 110.

[4] The parable of the persistent widow is not located alongside the parable of the persistent friend, so some pair the persistent widow with the penitent tax collector in Luke 18:9-14. The parables of the new fabric patches and the new wineskins (Luke 5:36, 37-38) which I haven't listed above, were spoken to the (male) Pharisees and the teachers of the law; but the parables could be considered a gendered pair as sewing was traditionally regarded as women's work, and the making and handling of wine was regarded as men's work. See Derek and Diane Tidball, *The Message of Women: Creation, Grace and Gender* (Nottingham: InterVarsity Press, 2012), 175.

[5] Deborah M. Gill and Barbara Cavaness, *God's Women—Then and Now* (Springfield, MO: Grace & Truth, 2004, 2009) (Kindle Locations 1257-1263).

In Appendix IX of her honour's thesis, Deborah Gill lists forty-five examples of Jesus' use of complementary, or coupled, discourse in the Gospels, instead of collective masculine address. Deborah M. Gill, *Gynecomorphisms in the New Testament* (Thesis, Assemblies of God Graduate School, 1979)

[6] Ben Witherington III, *Women in the Ministry of Jesus: A Study of Jesus' Attitudes to Women and their Roles as Reflected in his Earthly Life* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 52.

Male-Female Pairs in Luke-Acts

<http://www.stephenjbedard.com/2012/10/31/male-female-pairs-in-luke-acts/>

One of the things that I like about Luke is that he has a special interest in the role of women. In both his Gospel and in Acts, Luke often pairs men and women, giving examples of similar miracles or other events, each from the perspective of each gender. This should cause us to reflect upon the church's history of placing one gender above the other. I thought I would take the time to share some of these pairings.

- Prophetic announcement of Jesus' conception – Zechariah (Luke 1:5-38), Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45)
- Prophetic announcement of Jesus' birth – Simeon (Luke 2:25-35), Anna (Luke 2:36-38)
- Healing in Capernaum – Possessed man (Luke 4:31-37), Peter's mother-in-law (Luke 4:38-39)
- Raising from the dead – Widow's son (Luke 7:11-17), Jairus' daughter (Luke 8:49-56)
- Preparation of Jesus – John the Baptist (Luke 7:18-35), Sinful woman (Luke 7:36-50)
- Healing of long suffering – Gerasene man (Luke 8:26-39), Woman with issue of blood (Luke 8:40-48)
- Teaching the disciples – Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42), Male disciples (Luke 11:1-13)
- Healing on the Sabbath – Crippled woman (Luke 13:10-17), Man with dropsy (Luke 14:1-4)
- Finding the lost – Shepherd and sheep (Luke 15:3-7), Woman and coin (Luke 15:8-10)
- Parable on prayer – Persistent widow (Luke 18:1-8), Tax collector (Luke 18:9-14)
- Giving money – Spies (Luke 20:20-26), Widow (Luke 21:1-4)
- At the tomb – Women (Luke 24:1-10), Peter (Luke 24:11-12)
- Deception – Ananias (Acts 5:1-6), Sapphira (Acts 5:7-11)
- Raising from the dead – Tabitha (Acts 9:32-43), Eutychus (Acts 20:7-12)
- Prophets – Agabus (Acts 11:27-30), Philip's daughters (Acts 21:8-9)
- Powerful pagans – Simon (Acts 8:9-25), Girl with spirit (Acts 16:16-21)
- Conversion at Philippi – Lydia (Acts 16:11-15), Jailer (Acts 16:22-40)