

Thank you to Mark Hardy. May you keep your thoughts and prayers coming to share and uplift each other.

God Bless all! Roger

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The Waiting Is the Hardest Part

Luke 1:26-37 (NIV)

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, 27 to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. 28 The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." 29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, 33 and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end." 34 "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail." 38 "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

It may have gotten lost in the swirl of recent world events, but Wednesday, March 25th was a church "festival day" – The Annunciation. March 25th is nine months before December 25th, so it is the date that many denominations have tied to the unveiling of God's plan to Mary two millennia ago. For a (very) young woman in Palestine, that visit was utterly (literally) out of the blue. She wasn't looking to have her life, or the lives of the whole world, turned upside down – but turned upside down it was. And then, after the shock of the announcement, she had to wait. I wonder if she even really knew what she was waiting for? She may have been every bit as confused, distressed and alarmed as we feel today – but she had faith, and confidence in her God to deliver a "good" outcome from a decidedly distressing beginning: a young, unmarried woman who suddenly found herself pregnant, in a place and time that wasn't very conducive to such an occurrence.

God can wring good from any situation. He does it according to His plan, following His timetable. Sometimes, our job is very simple: to wait. So, as Christians, we shelter in place, temporarily giving up our social relationships, our working norms, even some of our close family interactions – and we wait. But we wait, as Mary did, full of faith and hope (and, yes, full of grace, as Gabriel was quoted to say to Mary in some Bible translations). The near term may be frightening and confusing, but the end game is immutable. As Tom Petty put it: The waiting *is* the hardest part.

PRAYER:

Dear God.

Help us feel your presence hourly, daily, as we persevere in these unique and challenging times. Help us have faith, and to feel Your peace, as we wait. Keep us mindful of our role to serve and to care for, and about, all people as befits our role in this life on Earth. Be with us, we pray, in the name of Jesus who did come to rescue us all.

Amen.

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