

Sunday 4th December 22

Nothing is impossible for God!

Psalm 89:1-6

A *maskil* of Ethan the Ezrahite.

- ¹ I will sing of the LORD's great love forever;
with my mouth I will make your faithfulness known
through all generations.
- ² I will declare that your love stands firm forever,
that you have established your faithfulness in heaven itself.
- ³ You said, "I have made a covenant with my chosen one,
I have sworn to David my servant,
- ⁴ 'I will establish your line forever
and make your throne firm through all generations.'"
- ⁵ The heavens praise your wonders, LORD,
your faithfulness too, in the assembly of the holy ones.
- ⁶ For who in the skies above can compare with the LORD?
Who is like the LORD among the heavenly beings?

Isaiah 9:6-7

- ⁶ For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,
and the government will be on his shoulders.
- And he will be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.
- ⁷ Of the greatness of his government and peace
there will be no end.
- He will reign on David's throne
and over his kingdom,
establishing and upholding it
with justice and righteousness

from that time on and forever.

The zeal of the LORD Almighty
will accomplish this.

Luke 1:26-38

The Birth of Jesus Foretold

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.

Sermon: Nothing is impossible for God

[It would be good to have your Bibles opened initially at our first Old Testament passage – Psalm 89 - let me pray before we begin]

Context

[Slide 1-Context]

- We are **counting down to Christmas** and we've been **looking** at the **events** leading up to that **very first Christmas** and the **birth of our Lord Jesus**
- And we said last week that **preparation for Jesus' birth** – began 400 years before His birth – when **God promised** – through the prophet Malachi - that He would **send a messenger before Jesus** – a messenger who **had the spirit and power of the OT prophet Elijah**
- And we said last week that this messenger [with the spirit and power of Elijah)] - to be born before Jesus – was none other than **John the Baptist** (Luke 1:36 says **Mary and Elizabeth were relatives** – making Jesus and John relatives)
- And we were **given a challenge last week** – to prepare for Christmas this year by **reading one chapter of Luke each day until Christmas Day** – so we would have the **whole story of Jesus** in our hearts and minds this Christmas. How are we going with that?

(pause)

- This week we're looking at **some more preparation** for the birth of Jesus – and this preparation begins over 1000 years before Jesus was born – and it begins with God making a promise

- And what we are going to see this morning is **three things**:

[Slide 2 – More Preparation]

1. **1st** - Nothing is impossible for God – because **His love and faithfulness are eternal** (Psalm 89:1-6)
2. **2nd** – Nothing is impossible for God – because He is all-powerful, all-knowing and ever-present (Isaiah 9:6-7)
3. **3rd** Nothing is impossible for God – because **He is Holy and deals with sin** (Luke 1:26-37)

His love and faithfulness are eternal (Psalm 89:1-6)

1st then - Nothing is impossible for God – because **His love and faithfulness are eternal**

- In our Old Testament reading from Psalm 89 – the **Psalmist** – a guy called **Ethan the Ezrahite** – who was a **musician** in the time of King David – and also **noted for his wisdom** in King Solomon's time (1 Kings 4:31)
- Sings a **psalm about God's covenant promises**
- Covenant promises that stem from **God's great love for His people** and **God's great faithfulness to His people**
- The psalmist Ethan says – v1 – that he **will sing about God's great love and faithfulness forever** – and make it known through all generations
- And here we are today – some 3000 years later - **still reading about it!**
- And what we discover in v2 – is that **God's love and faithfulness were established in Heaven** – so they are **ETERNAL**

- And to demonstrate God's love and faithfulness – the psalmist **Ethan gives an example of it** – in vv3-4
- He talks about a promise that God made to King David – 1000 years before Jesus. A **promise that King David's royal family line would go on forever** – through all generations – and that there would one day be - someone on David's throne - forever
- A promise that **finds its fulfilment in our Lord Jesus** – because by the time Jesus comes to be born – even though there is no actual King of Israel from David's family line on a throne – we find out in Matthew's Gospel chapter 1 – and Luke's Gospel chapter 3 - when we are given Jesus' family tree – **we find out that Jesus is a descendant of King David** – and we'll also see in a few minutes – from our NT reading - that **Jesus is not only this promised king** – but a different King – a unique King – a one of kind King
- Just because there is no King of Israel – by the time Jesus is born – **is not a problem for God to keep this promise!**
- As the psalmist Ethan says in v6 – *for who in the skies above can compare with the Lord? Who is like the Lord among the Heavenly beings?*
- **God is incomparable** – and **nothing is impossible for God** – because His love and faithfulness are eternal
- Application – For us it means – **if we know nothing is impossible for God and if we know His love and faithfulness are eternal** – we can trust that everything God promises – **WILL come to pass** – they are **unbreakable promises**. Unlike our promises – which **we may mean to keep** – but circumstances sometimes prevent us from keeping.

And sometimes we make promises that we forget to keep!

God does not forget His promises – He is faithful ALL THE TIME!

(pause)

He is all-powerful, all-knowing and ever-present (Isaiah 9:6-7)

- We then move forward from 1000 years before Jesus' birth – to another promise from God – given by the prophet Isaiah – about 700 years before Jesus
- In this prophecy from Isaiah 9:6-7 [Please turn there now]
- God builds on the promise that He made to King David – that there will be a forever King on David's throne – by describing here a **child to be born** – who will be this forever King!
- Which brings us to our 2nd point
- Nothing is impossible for God – because He is **all-powerful, all-knowing and ever-present** (Isaiah 9:6-7)
- See v6 - God Himself will **provide this forever King**
- This King will be - a **child GIVEN by God** – a **gift from God**
- And the **government** will be on this child's shoulders...
- It literally means this promised **child has the rule and dominion over the whole world!**
- We can forget about the United Nations; G20's and G8's or the idea of a World Government
- This child will be and is the **ruler of the whole Earth**
- And this promised forever King has the **most amazing attributes**
- See v6 still

- The child to be born –
 - Will be a **Wonderful Counsellor** - the nearest word we have in Hebrew - to a supernatural counsellor – this child will grow up to have **wisdom beyond any other person’s wisdom** – and we know when Jesus grew up and started His ministry – He **outsmarted everyone including the Pharisees and teachers of the Law** – He **answered their questions with His own questions which they couldn’t answer** – He **taught amazing things** – and He **left us His Holy Word and the Holy Spirit as our supernatural counsellor!**
 - This child to be born – is also **Mighty** – which means strong and brave – and rock solid – like any good ruler or king should be –
 - But this child is a **Mighty GOD** – Isaiah is saying this promised child – is **God Himself** – He’s not going to grow up to just be a good bloke and a good teacher – **He’s GOD with His people** (Immanuel)
And being a Mighty God - this child will have God’s mighty power – **power over nature** - **power over disease** - and **power over demons** – the same power Jesus showed in His ministry
 - And His mightiness - is not from military strength - but strength from His powerful and Holy Word – God’s Word
 - This child is also described as Everlasting Father - The idea in these Hebrew words is that **Jesus is the source or author of all eternity**, that **He is the Creator Himself** and **has existed from the beginning**. It does not mean that Jesus Himself is the Person of the Father in the Trinity – but is

in fact the **person of the Son in the Trinity** – and **has all the power of the Father**

- And this child is also described as - **Prince of Peace** - He is the One that brings about **peace between God and humans** – He is the one who will **reconcile human kind to God** – because when this child grows up, He calls people out of the darkness of their sins – and calls them into His glorious light.

And **He takes the sin of the world on His shoulders** – and takes the punishment for sin off people and on to Himself on the cross and brings peace to people's hearts – because no matter what else is going on in a person's life – **having faith in Jesus – the Prince of Peace – means being at peace with God** – which makes people right with God and approved by God – **this is a peace that surpasses all understanding**

The Hebrew Word for this peace is ***shalom*** – it means **peace, harmony, wholeness, completeness, prosperity, welfare and tranquillity**

That's the peace Jesus brings us!

- And v7 - as a forever King – Jesus reigns on David's throne – **with justice and righteousness** – no one else on Earth is ever completely just – we see injustice all around us – and no one else can be truly righteous and perfect – only Jesus
- How is all this possible for this child who is to be born?
- Isaiah tells us at the end of v7 – by the **zeal of the Lord almighty** – literally because of **God's jealous ardent love for His people** – that's why it's possible!
- God loves His people so much – He's sending this promised child – with the attributes that are of God Himself – omnipotent (all-powerful) – omniscient (all-

knowing) and omnipresent (ever-present) – because God is present as the Father in Heaven – as the Son who came to this Earth – and as the Holy Spirit that is everywhere!

- Application – so here we have this promised child Jesus – **described as a forever King and God** – but sadly many today reject Jesus as King of their lives – and try to be King of their own lives – and in doing so – they miss what this promised child can do for us – which brings us to our NT reading from Luke 1:26-37 – [\[please turn there now\]](#)

He is Holy and deals with sin (Luke 1:26-37)

And our 3rd point – Nothing is impossible for God – because He is Holy and deals with sin (Luke 1:26-37)

- We fast forward 700 years to about 4BC
- To the town of **Nazareth** in Galilee – v26 – where an **angel** – called **Gabriel** - **appears to a virgin called Mary** - who is engaged to a man name Joseph – a descendant of King David
- The angel tells Mary she has been highly favoured and the Lord is with her v28
- **Mary** is a bit **troubled** by what this might mean – v29
- But the **angel** – v30 – reassures Mary to **not be afraid** – she has found favour with God.
- Then the **startling news** – v31-33 - **Mary will conceive** and **give birth to a son**. No ordinary son – a **son called Jesus** (which means God saves or Saviour)
- **This is huge** – Mary will have a child – who is the **Son of God** – and **fulfils the promise made to King David** – to be the **promised Messiah** – and **forever King!**

- The angel's message to Mary **raises a few questions** – let's look at three

Q. 1st - How is it possible for a virgin to have a baby? A question Mary also raises in v34?

A. Humanly speaking; it's impossible for a virgin to have a baby – because a virgin has not had intercourse. But remember – **nothing is impossible for God** – and the angel goes on to explain in v35 - Even though Mary is a virgin (v34), the **Holy Spirit will come on Mary and the power of the Most High** [God] **will overshadow** Mary [*this is reminiscent of the glory of God coming to rest on the tabernacle in Exodus 40:35*] her (v35). In other words, **God** will give Mary the baby in her womb.

Q. 2nd - Why is it important that this child is a **descendant of King David**?

A. Joseph being a descendant of King David is important – to **fulfil the prophecies** we've just heard from the Old Testament of a promised King from David's family – and also Jewish Law required inheritance and birthright to come from the Father's line – so Joseph is the legal father of Jesus and a descendant of King David – just as God promised!

Q. 3rd - Why is it important that **Mary is a virgin**?

A. The virgin birth is important for the following reasons:

- i. The **virgin birth preserves the truth that Jesus is fully God and fully man**. If Jesus was born like any other baby, He could not be God and eternal (John 1:1, 14)
- ii. The **virgin birth fulfils prophecy** (Isaiah 7:14)

iii. **If Jesus was not born of the Holy Spirit – then He could not be born sinless**
 [Rom 3:23; 6:23] – and **He would have inherited a sinful nature like all**
human beings – and therefore He could not purchase forgiveness of our sins
 – and - **He could not be the once and for all perfect sacrifice for sin**
 (Hebrews 7:27-28) – **and so we would still be dead in our sins – we would**
have no forgiveness - and no hope of eternal life!

*Let me **side track** for a minute and tell you **about Marmalade the cat**;*

*Every morning **Marmalade** the cat turns up at the **back door** with a **dead bird** in its mouth!*

*The children of the **family** are so over **Marmalade** doing this that they **even drench the ground around the bird bath with water** to prevent Marmalade getting good leverage to pounce.*

*Now **anyone who knows anything about cats** will tell you Marmalade is just doing what is in a **cat's nature** – which is **hunting and presenting their catch to their owner**.*

*And before we give Marmalade too much of a hard time – **we're no different** – **we do what is in our nature** – and the **Bible says our nature is sinful** (Romans 3:23) - **we are born sinful** (according to King David in Psalm 51 – he says - surely, we are sinners in our mother's womb).*

*But Jesus born of a virgin and through the power of the Holy Spirit – is **NOT** born with that sinful nature – He is **fully God** (and Divine) and yet also **fully man**. Yes - He grows up to be tempted and face all the things we do – **but He doesn't sin**.*

And because He wasn't born sinful and does not give in to sin – He is **Holy** and He is able to **keep God's Law perfectly** and able to take the punishment of sin from us – and take that punishment on Himself – and **deal with sin!**

So - we shouldn't gloss over the fact that Mary is a virgin – and the fact that Jesus was born of a virgin!

The angel proves his point about God's planned miracle of Mary conceiving as a virgin – by telling Mary in v36 – even Elizabeth (Mary's cousin KJV) is going to have a baby in her old age – and she's already 6 months pregnant

How is this possible?

V37 - *For no word from God will ever fail.*

Application: For us – here's the bottom line – **When God says something will happen - it happens – we shouldn't doubt – even if there is a delay – God is in the miracle business! Miracles still happen today!**

Besides if the conception of John the Baptist, as the Forerunner to Jesus, is miraculous, we shouldn't be surprised that Jesus' birth is **even more remarkable!**

Our Response (Luke 1:38)

To finish up then –

What will our response be this morning - to the truth that **nothing is impossible for God?**

[Slide 3-Response Heading]

Well to help get our response

Let's briefly **look at Mary's response again**

Look how Mary responds in v34 to the news that she will conceive God's Son?

She seems to have only heard she's having a baby – it's like the bit about - the baby being Jesus the Saviour – and the bit about - the baby being the Son of the Most High – and the bit about - this baby being a King reigning forever – well that's all fine – but having a baby as virgin – **how's that going to happen?**

And when the angel explains the baby born to Mary is to be conceived – without intercourse with a man – **but through the power of the Holy Spirit and by the power of God overshadowing her**

Look how Mary accepts the angel's message in v38 – WITHOUT questioning

She simply says - *I am the Lord's servant – may your word to me be fulfilled?*

This is a big deal for Mary – **being pregnant out of wedlock was a scandal; she was in danger of being seen as a disgrace and an adulteress (and could **possibly face the death penalty by stoning**).**

But Mary's response shows why God chose her; **she was prepared to accept God's Word even if she couldn't make sense of it.**

Mary is a woman of great faith; she accepts that whatever the repercussions of going along with God's Word are; she trusts God has it covered.

What about us this morning?

[Slide 3b-Response]

Can we join Mary – and go along with God's plan for our lives – even if we can't quite make sense of things – can we trust God has our lives covered?

Can we join Mary and say "*I am the Lord's servant*" – **because nothing is impossible for God...**

Let's pray...

Heavenly Father – thank you that you always keep your promises – and that you sent your Most Holy Son – born of the virgin Mary – to deal with sin and death – once and for all.

Thank you that nothing is impossible for you – help us to really believe this – and entrust our lives completely to you.

In Jesus Name. Amen!