

A Great God, a Great Promise, and a Great Faith!

Luke 1:26-38

Series: *Advent 2017*

Congregational Prayer:

- Because God owns all power, we as God's people turn to Him in fervent and frequent prayer – admitting our great weakness and entrusting ourselves to His unstoppable and limitless power.
- Father in Heaven – there is simply none other like you in the greatness of power. You have made all things, and you sustain all things, and all things are under the control of your Sovereign plan – and all of this is proof of your unsurpassable power. We are too weak to take our next breath without you. We are too weak to keep our smallest of cells alive without you. We are powerless to will ourselves into any kind of meaningful existence without you. You are our everything – our all in all. You are our strength and our Redeemer, our Rock and our Refuge, our Hope and our Confidence.
- So, in our great weakness, we confess to you our great need for more of you and less of us. We ask that you would free us from the deception which tempts us to believe that the way to advance in this life is to have more of us and to depend more on our own strength. Remind us today through our time in the Word of our great weakness, and of your unchanging strength.
- Many within our church family are feeling the exasperation of their own weakness today. Some are exasperated by their physical ailments which plague their body, some by their emotional despair for which they seem to find no answer, some by their crushing circumstances which relentlessly batter them into a state of complete exhaustion. You are the answer for each one. Your strength is their only hope, so please help them to turn their eyes to you. As they gaze upon the virgin Mary in her great weakness, would you give them the heart of faith like her? Would you help them to be able to say – I am the Lord's slave, let it be to me according to His Word? In their great weakness, would you help them to rejoice in and trust in your great strength? And in so doing, would you magnify yourself among our church family. Would you raise the eyes of our hearts from the weakness of the here and now to the greatness of your holy character which is our only hope!
- One area of weakness we are especially aware of as a church family is our weakness to bring anyone else to salvation in Christ alone by faith alone. You have put into our lives many people who do not know Christ as Savior and Lord, and who have no hope of eternal life. And we want to be more faithful and more zealous as ministers of

reconciliation – gentle and yet bold in our proclamation of the Gospel. But we know that their salvation will not be wrought by us! They will only come to faith in Christ if you graciously turn your favor toward them and cause them to be born again. So, we again ask you to prove the power of the Gospel, and use us as mouthpieces of your truth, and bring some of the lost around us to a saving faith in Christ, to the praise of your glorious grace!

- We pray this for our sister, Ronda Schmidt as well. As she faithfully serves in training others to take the Gospel to the farthest reaches of our globe, would you also give Ronda opportunity and boldness as an ambassador for Christ, and would you use her, by your great power, to convert lost sinners.
- And we pray for our brothers and sisters at Grace Baptist in Whitewater. Would you overwhelm them with the great power of God, and would you compel them to trust in You alone!

Introduction: Take your Bible and join me in Luke 1, Luke chapter 1. As we approach Christmas day we are continuing our Advent series by walking through Luke’s narrative account of the birth of Christ. Many preparations are swirling around you this time of year, and it is easy to be drowned by these many expectations and responsibilities. The story is told of a lady who had a circle of friends for whom she really wanted to buy Christmas presents. They were dear friends and she wanted to show them that with a nice Christmas gift. Well, time slipped away and the busyness of work and of the season engulfed her. Soon she found herself just a few days before Christmas and she had not yet made it to the store to buy these gifts. So, she decided to give up on the idea of buying them each a gift, and rather just buy everyone in her friend group the same Christmas card. So, she found herself in Wal-Mart looking quickly through the cards until she found a box of 50 cards that were exactly what she wanted. She didn’t take time to read the message inside the card because she was in a hurry, but she was drawn to these cards because of the beautiful picture on the front that looked so perfectly elegant for all of her friends. She got home and hurriedly signed all of the cards – “with all of my love” and got them in the mail to her friends.

As the New Year came and she had some time to slow down and pick up the pieces of the frenzied holiday season, she picked up one of the cards leftover from the box of cards she sent to all her friends. She was shocked as she read the inside of the card. The little rhyme said, “This Christmas card is just to say, a little gift is on its way.”¹ So much for only sending a card and foregoing the gifts! She had made a promise she never intended to make!

Well, in Luke 1, unlike the mistaken promise of this lady, we find the great promise of a great God. It is a promise that had been in the plans of God since before the foundation of the world, and nothing was going to stop Him from keeping it. There was nothing haphazard or last-minute or unplanned about it. For over 400 years God has not spoken directly to man through

¹ Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Ultimate Book of Illustrations & Quotes*, pg. 81.

the prophets, he has not shown his power through miracles, and from man's perspective, it seems that his plans of redemption have not moved forward even one centimeter. But then he broke the silence when he appeared to Zechariah and made the prophetic promise of the birth of the Messiah's forerunner - John. In verse 26 of chapter 1 of Luke's Gospel, the narrative moves from the center city of Jewish life - Jerusalem - to a tiny town on the outer fringes of the nation - Nazareth of Galilee. It moves from God's promises given to an elderly and godly couple with priestly bloodlines to a young and obscure and unproven virgin and her betrothed. It moves from the promise of a baby who would be great among men as the forerunner of the Messiah, to the promise of the baby who would be the Messiah, and therefore the greatest man to ever live. God uses the same messenger - the angel Gabriel - that he had used to bring his promise to Zechariah. Luke 1:26 gives us the account this way . . . *Read 1:26-38.*

We live in a day of superlatives! Everything is great and grand and awesome and cool and out of this world, when in reality, most things are pretty normal and average. We throw around descriptive adjectives with such reckless abandon that they quickly lose their meaning. So, this morning, I run the risk of boring you by using the same superlative to describe the different elements of this text. We will see our Great God, His Great Promise, and Mary's great faith. Everything is great nowadays, to the point where nothing is! But, take the journey with me through this narrative to discover the true and unsurpassed greatness of God, the unsurpassed reality of His truly great promise of Jesus, and of the often unheralded greatness of Mary's faith.

To set the stage of our journey, take note of the fact that God again sends Gabriel to deliver this most important message. There are a lot of messages being delivered in our day in many various ways to grab our attention. We are bombarded with the constant news updates and push notifications on our phones and tablets - everybody seems to have something they want us to know. But no matter how ingenious the presentation of the information is, what really grabs your attention is the content. And that is what is happening in this interaction between Gabriel and Mary. His approach and appearance and just the startling reality of having a messenger from God talk to you are all outmatched by the glorious content of his prophetic promise.

The great promise is brought to a young lady in an obscure town in the northernmost region of Israel known as Galilee. The town of Nazareth was a small town of probably a few thousand people situated on a mountain overlooking the Valley of Jezreel. This region - Galilee - had a large Gentile population and influence. So much so that the purists of Jerusalem looked down their long and pious noses at the backwater hicks of Galilee, and particularly of these obscure villages like Nazareth. Even Nathanael, who would become one of Jesus' disciples and who was raised in Galilee thought of Nazareth as an out of the way and worthless place. When he was told by Philip that the Messiah had come and he was from Nazareth, Nathanael replied by saying - "can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

So, God's messenger comes to one of the most obscure and despised places in all of Israel and he appears to an average, non-celebrity, obscure, and young teenage girl. We don't know much about Mary from the Scriptures other than that she was a virgin who was betrothed to Joseph, and they both lived in Nazareth. Following the custom of the day, Joseph and Mary were most likely pledged to be married to one another in their early teenage years. During those years Joseph would prepare and build and ready himself and his house for marriage and once all of the preparations were made, they would call for a celebration and a wedding and be officially and completely married. This period of waiting was the betrothal period and it could last from a couple of months to a couple of years. During this time the couple's public covenant to one another was considered as strong as marriage and it required an official letter of divorce if the betrothal was to be broken up. But, during this betrothal period, they rarely saw one another and the marriage was not consummated until the wedding day. So, Mary is probably somewhere between 13 and 15 years old. She is a very normal, very average, very non-celebrity young lady in a very average and even despised village. It is to this young lady that God chooses to show great favor and kindness as he brings to her a great prophetic promise.

I. Our Great God

- a. Turn your eyes upon this great God. One of the joys of the Christmas narrative is that we have the privilege of seeing the character and nature of God put on display in unmistakable ways. This is true in all of Scripture, but like the Cross, the manger spotlights the glorious character of God. So, here in this text we see this greatness of God in that He shows great favor, or grace, to Mary, and He shows his great power in making the virgin conception possible. The main actor in this narrative is God. Mary is simply a recipient of this divine favor, or grace. She is not actively earning such remarkable kindness from the Lord. She is simply going about her life in her obscure and despised village, and God sends His messenger to her with a great prophetic promise.
- b. This promise begins with a startling greeting from Gabriel. He greets her in verse 28 as "O favored one, the Lord is with you!" The word in the original for "favored" is the word for grace. She is being shown great grace by a great God. Notice that the presence of the Lord is coupled with the great kindness she is being shown. God has chosen her to lavish upon her His overpowering presence and with that comes His great grace. He is not coming to her in the message of Gabriel with judgment or anger or vengeance, but with grace. And this is not because Mary herself has earned this great kindness. This is a tragic theological lie which has propagated since the time of the Latin Vulgate. In that translation of the Scriptures, which dominated the Church of the later Middle Ages and into the time of the Protestant Reformation, the phrase, "O favored one" is translated as "full of grace." "Full of grace" – that takes the kindness of the Lord being shown here to Mary, and it centers that grace in Mary rather than in God. And so, this is what propagates in the Roman Catholic Church to this day – that Mary herself is

the one who is full of grace. The error here is that because Mary was shown such grace she was full of grace and she now becomes a dispenser of grace, rather than just a recipient of grace.

- c. But that is nowhere taught in the Scriptures, and especially not here in this text. Mary is not a dispenser of grace anywhere in the Scriptures, but rather, a simple recipient of God's kind favor. She is a sinner in need of a Savior just like you and me. She is an obscure and average and normal young lady in every way. Nothing about her especially compels God to show this great favor to her. The great favor upon her is sourced in and compelled completely by the great kindness of God. It is rooted in Him, it is sourced in Him, it is sustained by Him, and it is all to His glory, not Mary's. To kind of finish tying up that loop, the result of this text is not the praise and adoration of Mary in any way. Nowhere in Scripture is Mary ever worshiped or praised as being of some other-worldly quality worthy of our worship. The single result of this interaction between Gabriel and Mary as it relates to worship is the worship of God. You can see this in verses 36-55 of Luke 1 – known as Mary's Magnificat. It is not Mary rejoicing in her newfound ability to bless others with great grace, but rather, her worshiping her great God who has lavished such unfathomable kindness upon her to entrust her womb with the Savior of the world. This is all about God, not Mary. Mary is blessed beyond any other young virgin, and this blessing is all of the great grace of God – His unmerited kindness toward her.
- d. Take note also of the great power of God in this text. This is seen in verse 35 as Gabriel answers Mary's question about the process. She believes God is going to do what he has promised in verses 31-33, but she isn't sure about how this is going to happen. She is a virgin, how can she become pregnant with this Son of the promise? Well, in an answer that is shrouded in divine mystery, Gabriel tells her that the Holy Spirit will come upon her, and the power of the Most High will overshadow her. This is not describing intercourse between the divine and human, like what Greek mythology promotes. Rather, this is the covering over of Mary with the divine presence and power to bring about in her womb and by her seed the promised Savior of God's people. It will be completely a work of God and it will be accomplished by the great power of the Most High. Mary will contribute no effort to this conception and her only role is that of her seed and her womb. While there are many things we don't know about the process, we do know that it was all going to be accomplished by the great power of God. The conception of a human baby in the womb of its mother is impossible without the natural process involving the male. It simply can't happen. But what is impossible with man is possible with God. And that is one of the main points of the whole Christmas story. What is impossible with man is shown to be possible only by the great God of Heaven.

- e. As kind of an icing on the cake of this promise of God's great power overshadowing her and making this happen, Mary is told in verse 36 of her relative Elizabeth who has also conceived a son in her old age and in spite of her previously barren state. What an act of mercy by God to confirm to Mary His power to make impossible possible, as seen in the womb of her barren relative! All of this leads to the unmistakable conclusion of verse 37 – "For nothing will be impossible with God." This statement ties a direct link back to the words of another angel in Genesis 18, some 2000 years prior about another impossible conception and birth. That angel was speaking to Abraham about the son of promise that would be born to them in keeping with God's covenant promises in their old age. And the reassurance given to Abraham is that "nothing will be impossible with God!"
- f. I imagine that when Mary heard those words come out of the mouth of Gabriel her well-trained heart was reminded of the promises to Abraham and Sarah. Just like God kept that promise by His great power, so too he was going to keep his promise to Mary. These things are not possible with man – the conception of a child in a barren womb of old age, and especially the conception of a child in the womb of a virgin. But the weakness of man is the cardboard upon which lays the bright diamond of the great power of God. In our weakness, He is shown to be immeasurably strong!

II. His Great Promise

- a. This great God gives a great promise to Mary in our text. When you consider what Gabriel says to Mary you cannot miss, and certainly she did not miss, the significance of what was being promised. Mary would carry the Messiah in her womb. In verse 31 she is given the promise of a great Savior, and in verse 32 she is given the promise of a great Son, and in verse 33 she is given the promise of a great King. All of them combine to make the unmistakable promise of the Messiah coming to Earth through Mary's womb.
- b. *A Great Savior – 31*
 - i. Gabriel describes the great favor that Mary is receiving in verse 31 by telling her that she will conceive a son and he will be born and his name shall be Jesus. The meaning of a name was very significant in Bible times, and so when Joseph receives this same prophecy from Gabriel in Matthew 1, Gabriel explains the name of the baby. He is to be called Jesus because he will save his people from their sins. His name means savior, and this is what He has come to do – to save us!
 - ii. This son is to be brought to her womb through supernatural conception. And this supernatural conception was one which far exceeded any other supernatural conception in the history of mankind. So, Isaac was conceived by divine power in the womb of Sarah, and Samuel was conceived in the womb of Hannah by God's power, and John was

conceived by divine power – but no conception came close to the unbelievable reality of this one. Superseding all natural processes for conceiving a human child, God intervenes in Mary’s womb to bring this son to her. But this supernatural conception soon gives way to the very natural process of development in the womb and subsequent birth. Though this Jesus would be conceived supernaturally, his growth and development and birth and life on earth would be as natural as yours and mine. He would be truly born of a woman. He was conceived by the power of God, but he was born of a woman. He would truly and really be Mary’s son. And because he will be truly and really human, he will be able to save us from our sins. Humanity had sinned and so humanity needed to be saved by a human. But no human outside of Jesus is capable of such salvation of others because their own sinfulness demands their own payment of sin’s penalty. But God taking on human flesh through the womb of Mary – now we have the makings of a true Savior capable of full rescue from sin.

- iii. There is some mystery here in the union of divine nature and human nature in the womb of Mary. But what we do know is that this divine and supernatural conception is the key to the divine being wedded with the human in one person – the person of Jesus. His divine nature does not begin in the womb, but pre-existed this moment in all of eternity as the second person of the Trinity. But his human nature does not pre-exist this moment, but rather, when the Holy Spirit comes upon Mary and the power of the Most High overshadows her and takes her seed and creates the human body – this is the beginning of the human nature of Jesus. This is also what allows for Jesus to not be two persons in one body. If Mary had been intimate with Joseph and had conceived through the normal means, and then the Holy Spirit came upon her and made that human baby the baby Jesus, then that would have created two persons in one human body, because at conception a human being is formed. But this conception in the virgin womb by the power of God makes it possible for the pre-existent Son to take on human nature – joining in one person the two natures of complete humanity and complete divinity. He is truly man and truly God – one person with two natures. And this makes the salvation of God’s people possible through this God man.

c. A Great Son – 32a, 35

- i. This great Savior is also promised to be a great Son. Verse 32 describes him as the Son of the Most High. Elizabeth’s baby, John, is prophesied to be the prophet of the Most High, but Jesus will be the Son of the Most High. In verse 35 the result of the Most High overshadowing Mary and causing her to conceive this son is that he will be holy because he will be

the Son of God. So, these thoughts are synonymous – Jesus will be the Son of the Most High and he will be the Son of God and he will be holy.

- ii. Of the great treasures hidden in this idea of Jesus being the Son of God, the obvious diamond sitting on top of this text is that Jesus is being born of God here. His human conception is divinely wrought. He is not simply a human baby, but a divine one. He is not just the son of Mary and therefore the Son of man. But He is the Son of God because His birth is the only one in human history that has ever happened singularly as an act of the power of God in a virgin womb. Though every conception is overseen by God and allowed or disallowed by God, He has given the freedom of choice to mankind and the command to mankind to be fruitful and multiply. But this conception was not just overseen and allowed by God, it was brought about by an act of God alone! Because of this, Jesus is God's Son – God's offspring – the only begotten of God – the only human ever brought to life by the direct superintendence of God.
- iii. This in itself makes Jesus holy – set apart – completely distinct. He is holy because he is the Son of God. This holiness is not just a holiness of conception in that he is entirely unique from all other human conceptions, but it is a holiness of character and nature. He is the Son of God which means that he has all of the divine DNA of God, so to speak. Just like my sons have the characteristics and nature as it relates to being a man – in other words, they are truly and completely human because they were born as my sons. So, Jesus is truly and completely human because he was born of a woman – as her son. But he is also truly and completely divine because he was born of God – as the Son of God! And we are talking exclusively about his becoming human here. He has always been the Son for all of eternity, but He is uniquely seen to be the Son of God and the Son of the Most High through this conception in Mary's womb which God brings about. This great Savior is also a great Son!

d. *A Great King – 32b-33*

- i. And He is promised to be a great King in verses 32-33. He will be given the throne of David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end. In these few words Gabriel communicates to Mary that her son will be the full-blown Messiah promised in the Old Testament from Genesis to Malachi. Notice that his millennial rule and his eternal rule are prophesied here. He will rule over the house of Jacob forever from the throne of David. This, in part, is a reference to the complete fulfillment of God's promises to His chosen people during the 1000 years of Christ's reign described to us in the book of Revelation. The King ruling over God's chosen people in that literal and future kingdom will be this Jesus who was to be conceived in Mary's

womb. But his reign will not just be over his people, but over all people. And it will not just be for the 1000 years of the Millennium, but it will be forever and ever – there will be no end! In other words, he will be the greatest king whose kingdom will span the entirety of creation, and whose authority will be unchallenged and unchanged forever and forever! What a promise of great kindness is falling upon the ears of this young virgin in the most obscure and despised of places. Your womb will miraculously carry the King of kings and the Lord of lords!

- ii. Stop and ponder for a moment the whole scope of this great prophetic promise which is being given to Mary here. Within this economy of words we have the entirety of the Gospel. The second person of the Trinity coming to Earth through virgin conception, His sinless life as the Holy One, His unique position as the Son of the Most High and the Son of God, His work of redemption which would come through His substitutionary work – which we are alerted to by his name – Jesus, and the consummation of his saving work in the coming Millennial and everlasting reign as the King of His Kingdom. The whole Gospel is here in this great word of promise! Everything that is necessary for a Savior to be able to save humanity from their sins is here in this text. He must be man – indeed, he will be the son of Mary. He must be sinless – indeed, he will be the holy one. He must be God – indeed, he will be the Son of God – equal to Him in every way. Jesus is the perfect Savior!

III. Mary's Great Faith

- a. It is impossible to put yourself in Mary's shoes here, but you can sense just a bit of the gravity of the moment. It is enough of a terrifying reality to have an angel appear to you, but the gravity of the moment is put on an indescribable level by the content of the promise that was delivered to her.
- b. And Mary's response to the promise is one of great faith! There is a progression in the text of her response to this prophetic announcement. She is at first confused and greatly troubled by the greeting of Gabriel. Then in verse 34, after hearing the content of the promise, she is inquiring about the way this is all going to be fulfilled. And then in verse 38 she speaks words of marvelous and completely settled faith in her Lord. So, she moves from being greatly troubled to being inquisitive, to then being completely settled in God's sure promise. This is the progression of great faith. Hearing the word, further understanding the word, fearing the God of the Word, believing that it will go as the Word said it would, and then humble and full submission to that Word. This is faith!
- c. Faith in God is not a mustering up of some internal feeling of confidence in God that if I have enough of it then I somehow magically flip God's switch to where he now answers my prayer and gives me what I want. No, faith in God, as we see it on display here in Mary, is taking God at His Word, believing Him fully, and

submitting to Him completely. This is Mary's one and grand commending quality in the text – her great faith in God. She was a humble servant of the Lord and she was going to believe Him and order her life in accordance with what He said.

- d. So, she expresses this faith in verse 38 when, in response to the great promise of great grace upon her, she says – “behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” The word for servant in the original is the word, *doulos*, which means more than a household servant that is paid for their services. It means that she is the slave of the Lord. He owns her in every way, and she is in complete submission to His will. She is entirely and completely submitted to Him as her Lord, because she is His slave. Hence she can say – let it be to me according to your word. These are words of a slave to their master.
- e. And in that statement there is all kinds of baggage which she is laying humbly before the Lord. To accept this gracious work of God upon her to make her the mother of the Messiah would bring shame and ridicule and suspicion and doubt from others. She is a 13 or 14 year old virgin who is betrothed to a young man, and she turns up pregnant. What is the logical and only humanly possible explanation going to be? That she and Joseph were not faithful to their pre-marriage commitment to purity. And it isn't like she can just say – oh, let me tell you about the angel who visited me! Yeah sure, Mary, an angel told you that you would conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit. I've heard a lot of grand excuses in my time, but that one takes the cake. Well, at least you were creative in your attempt to cover your sin.
- f. I mean, for Mary, this is a no win situation if your goal is to be respected by those around you. Even her own betrothed is going to question her explanation and refuse to believe it. Even he will question her integrity and impugn her character by moving toward divorce. This is what Mary is accepting here. She is accepting the critical and judgmental eye of all those she knows and loves. And yet, what is her response – I am your slave – let it happen to me just as you have said!
- g. How long do you think this interaction between Gabriel and Mary took? No more than 2-3 minutes – probably more like a minute to a minute and a half. And yet it would take the rest of Mary's life for her to ponder these things in her heart and understand the greatness of this work of God. And in this brief interaction between messenger and slave, I am guessing that Mary felt the weight of this assignment. The fear of the unknown was great. The fear of what people would say was quick to come to her mind. The doubt about how this would all actually work out was surely plaguing her. But her fear of the Lord was greater. Her love for Him outshone any other love for personal safety or personal renown. Her desire to believe and obey her Lord trumped all her fears and doubts. This is faith!
- h. Is this the nature of your faith in our Lord? Does your heart resonate with Mary's words in verse 38 – I am the Lord's slave, let it be to me according to His word? If you have a professed faith in Jesus Christ as your Savior which is absent of this

humble submission, then you have a faux faith. You have a faith which wants the blessings of salvation without the hardships of walking the narrow road. This is not to link works with salvation, as though we earn our salvation by the works of faith. Mary is not here earning her grace through humble submission. This is all of grace given to her by God. But if she believes God's Word then she must entrust herself to all that God's promised Word will now bring into her life. This is true of us as well. Belief in Jesus as our Savior as the sinless Son of God who lived a perfect life and died a substitutionary death – belief in this Jesus brings great consequence into one's life. It makes one a slave of our gracious Lord – just like Mary is here in verse 38.

Conclusion: Mary is indeed shown great favor by a great God as she is given a great promise. Her womb would carry the Great Savior, the Great Son, and the Great King – Jesus would be his name! Truly among women, Mary is given the highest of privileges to be the mother of the Savior of the world. She is blessed indeed! As we close, turn with me to Luke 11, Luke chapter 11. We are parachuting into the middle of Jesus' ministry and in verse 27 we are told of Jesus' interaction with another woman. *Read 11:27-28.*

The sentiments of this woman are understandable. Upon hearing the divine wisdom come from the mouth of Jesus, she declares that his mother is the most blessed human being that has ever lived! How fortunate she was to have this great teacher in her womb and clinging to her breast in the innocence of infancy. But Jesus' response is what you need to leave with today – Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it! My friend – you can be more blessed than Mary was. You can know more of the grace and unmerited kindness of God upon your life than Mary, the mother of Jesus knew in carrying the Savior of the world in her womb. Rather than having the unique blessing of being his human mother, you can know the blessing of hearing and keeping His Word! Jonathan Edwards says it this way – “They who hear the word of God and keep it, do as it were conceive and bring forth Christ in the heart. Christ is formed in them. Galatians 4:19 says, ‘My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you.’ ‘Tis more blessed to have Christ in the heart than in the womb. ‘Tis more blessed to have Christ in the arms of faith and love than in the arms or at the breast as the virgin Mary had.”²

Do you know that kind of blessedness? Let's pray!

² As quoted in Nancy Guthrie, *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*, pg. 59.