

Isaiah 7:10-14

¹⁰ Again the Lord spoke to Ahaz, ¹¹ "Ask the Lord your God for a sign, whether in the deepest depths or in the highest heights."

¹² But Ahaz said, "I will not ask; I will not put the Lord to the test."

¹³ Then Isaiah said, "Hear now, you house of David! Is it not enough to try the patience of humans? Will you try the patience of my God also? ¹⁴ Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel.

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 favoured! 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 favour 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.

There's a **sermon outline** for you to take **notes**.

Let me **pray** first.

Let's pray...

Intro/God's Will

A question to begin with

Have you made a “will”?

[It's a good idea for all of us to have a last will and testament]

[Slide-Definition]

A last will and testament is a written document expressing what we wish to happen to our possessions when we die. Historically – **a will** dealt with property or possessions and **a testament** dealt with personal matters. The document is also witnessed by at least two witnesses.

God has a will and testament – written down – it's called the Bible

It expresses God's wishes – and is witnessed by the godly people and prophets who wrote it down and declared it to the people of their generation – and passed it down to us.

[Slide-Old/New Testament]

But the Bible is not God's wishes for when He dies – because God is eternal and lives forever!

God's will and testament expresses his wishes to us now and for all eternity.

His wishes are that He wants a loving relationship with His creatures.

The Old Testament (OT) part of the Bible – expresses God's character and points out that the relationship between God and humankind is broken – because the first humans – Adam and Eve - broke God's rules and brought sin and the

punishment for sin – which is death – into the world. So the rest of the OT states God's will is to fix humankind's broken relationship with God - by sending His Son Jesus. So the OT says **Jesus is coming, Jesus is coming!**

The New Testament (NT) part of the Bible – also expresses God's character and explains why Jesus came – and how He fixed the broken relationship between God and humankind – and then God expresses His will for how we should live now.

So to begin with - we are going to look at our OT reading from Isaiah 7:10-14 - and see how God's will to send His Son to fix this broken relationship – actual plays out...

[Please turn to Isaiah 7:10-14]

God's Will is to be With Us (Isaiah 7:10-14; Luke 1:26-34)

And my **1st point** is **"God's will is to be With Us"**

[Slide-1st Point]

We pick up the story in Isaiah 7:10-14

The context is – it's 735-732BC

The Prophet Isaiah - v10 - speaks to King Ahaz of Judah during the Syrian-Northern Israel crisis. Two enemy kings – King Rezin of Syria and King Pekah of Northern Israel threaten King Ahaz in Jerusalem in Judah, and God offers King Ahaz to ask for a sign to reassure him (v11) —but Ahaz acts all pious and says he

doesn't want to test God (v12) – and refuses to trust God and refuses to ask for a sign.

But God gives Ahaz a sign anyway in v14

Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son and will call him Immanuel.

Like many of the OT prophecies – there is a **near fulfilment** and **a far fulfilment** [e.g. Psalm 22]

In the case of Isaiah 7

The Near Fulfilment is: A child born in King Ahaz's time—called *Immanuel*—would be a sign that before this child was eating solid food, those two threatening nations – Syria and Northern Israel - would fall. This showed God was with Judah and would protect His people.

The Far Fulfilment – is 700 years after Isaiah and brings us to our NT reading **[Please turn to Luke 1 starting at 27]**

V27 – God takes the initiative to come near to humankind by sending an angel called Gabriel to speak to a **virgin** girl called Mary – remember – the prophet Isaiah mentioned a **virgin**

V28 – Gabriel tells Mary “*the Lord is with you*” which is similar to what Isaiah said about the child to be born having the name “*Immanuel*” which means “**God with us**”

In Matthew's version of the birth (Matt 1:23) – an angel tells Mary's fiancé Joseph – that the child to be born will have the title “**Immanuel**”

V31 – The angel tells Mary she will give birth to a **son** – the prophet Isaiah also mentioned the birth of a **son**

V32 – The angel also says this child will be **great** and be **the Son of the Most High** – that description is a **divine description** – **this child will be God in human form!**

You see - God's will is not to be a distant God – but to be an up close and personal God. His will is to be present with us – near us – and in a close intimate faithful relationship!

Jesus is the fulfilment of God's long desire to dwell with His people – like He dwelt with Adam and Eve back in the Garden of Eden at the time of Creation.

Application

There's a nice application here for us!

Even in the difficult times of our life when we are waiting on God to act or we are fearful of the future or God seems to be silent: **God's will is - not to be far off - but to draw near to us!**

Today...

- God is with us through - **the Holy Spirit** which Jesus sent to us and lives inside people who believe in Jesus (Romans 8:9-11; John 14:16-17)
- God is with us through – **His Word** – His living active Word draws us close to Him (Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16)
- God is near us through – **His people** – Jesus promises where two or more are gathered in His name, He will be there (Matthew 18:20)
- God is near us through – **our suffering** – *He is close to the broken-hearted* (Psalm 34:18) and promises that – *He will never to leave us nor forsake us* (Hebrews 13:5)

- And because of Jesus – we can **approach God directly in prayer** (Heb 4:16)
– and Jesus even left us the **Lord’s Prayer** to come close to our Heavenly Father!

I pray we can all feel “**God with us**” today and into the future!

And so my **1st point** is to “**God’s will is to be With Us**”

God’s Will Works Through the Unexpected (Luke 1:27-37)

My **2nd point** is to “**God’s will works through the unexpected**”

[Slide-2nd Point]

V26 – God sent the angel Gabriel to **Nazareth** in the 6th month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy.

Elizabeth is an older relative of Mary – and beyond child-bearing age but God has miraculously arranged for Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah to have a child. This child will actually turn out to be John the Baptist – and he will grow up to prepare people to meet Mary’s son - Jesus!

God uses the unexpected!

The town of Nazareth is an insignificant town [a bit like Toukley] – and has never had anything of note happen in it before!

God uses the unexpected!

V27 – God sends Gabriel to a young woman called Mary. **Mary is an ordinary young woman** – not from a royal family – not someone with status – just a humble woman from a forgotten about town

God uses the unexpected and lowly!

Using the unexpected and the lowly is a familiar pattern for God...

God chose: David (a shepherd boy) to be King of Israel

God chose: Moses (a fearful, exiled shepherd) to lead God's people

God chose: Gideon (from the weakest clan) to win a famous battle

God chose: Rahab (a prostitute and non-Jew) to help God's people and to be included in Jesus' family line!

God chose: Ruth (a widow and non-Jew) to also be included in Jesus' family line

Jesus chose: disciples (who were fishermen, a tax collector, and ordinary working men)

Despite Mary being humble and lowly – she is - v28 – *highly favoured by God* – which literally means she is **full of grace**. God chose Mary to bear the Son of God! Mary didn't earn this privilege – it was bestowed on her by God!

And to assure her there is nothing to worry about – Gabriel reassures Mary that *“the Lord is with you”*

Those words would have been of great comfort to Mary

It's not like an angel pops up in your kitchen every morning at breakfast!

And v31 when Gabriel tells Mary she will conceive and give birth to a son

That's totally unexpected because Mary is a **virgin**?

In fact, Mary asked Gabriel that very question in v34 – *“How will this be, since I am a **virgin**?”*

Humanly speaking – it's not possible for a **virgin** to have a child!

But Gabriel explains in v35 “*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*”

What Gabriel means is that through the Holy Spirit and God’s Power – Mary will be enveloped in a cloud (that’s what the Greek word for overshadow means here) and a miracle will take place – where God’s Son Jesus, will be placed in Mary’s womb.

That’s totally unexpected!

To reassure Mary – Gabriel tells Mary of another miracle God has just done – v36 – Mary’s relative Elizabeth is going to have a child in her old age – even though she’s been unable to conceive a child for many years!

How is this possible?

V37 tells us - because - *no word from God will ever fail!*

In other words **nothing is impossible with God** – if God says something will happen – it WILL happen!

Application

For us it means...

God is in the miracle business!

God always keeps His promises!

God’s word is infallible!

And we should never underestimate how God might use our quiet service, our simple obedience, or our humble circumstances.

For example: How did a shy Roman Catholic Irish guy from a small village in Ireland end up as a Presbyterian minister in a forgotten about little town called Toukley in NSW, Australia? It's bizarre and totally unexpected!

And I suspect – if each one of us this morning asked ourselves the question "***How did I end up here?***" – I expect the answers we come up with will be just as unexpected.

My 2nd point is to - **"God's will works through the unexpected"**

God's Will is To Provide us With a Saviour (Luke 1:31-38)

Which brings us to my 3rd point – **"God's will is to provide us with a Saviour"**

[Slide-3rd Point]

As we said at the beginning - God's will is to fix humankind's broken relationship with God

Gabriel tells Mary – v31 – she is to give her son – the name **Jesus**

The name **Jesus** means "***the Lord saves***" – and Jesus' name describes His mission!

This baby boy – Jesus – will grow up to die on a cruel cross to take the punishment for our sins from us – onto Him. He dies our death on that cross – so we can receive forgiveness of our sins.

Jesus will also rise from the dead three days after His death – to show death can't hold Him down either – and - to show He has the power to raise us from the dead too – so we can live in Heaven forever!

He truly is a Saviour!

How is Jesus able to save?

V32 – Jesus is able to save - because - Gabriel says Jesus is the **Son of the Most High** – in other words **Jesus is divine** – **He is God** – and has the **power of God!**

And Jesus is able to save - because V32-V33 – **Jesus is a forever King of a forever Kingdom** – something God promised to King David 1000 years before Jesus was born!

And most importantly of all – is Jesus was born of a **virgin**

And it's actually **crucial** that Jesus was born of a **virgin** for 3 reasons:

- 1st - The Virgin Birth is essential for **truthfulness of the Bible and its promises and prophecies**. God through the prophet Isaiah announced that there would be a son born through a virgin birth – and also that God would be with His people – and that's' exactly what happened when Jesus was born. **The virgin birth keeps the integrity of God's promises and prophecies!**
- 2nd - The Virgin Birth – means God's Holy Spirit miraculously put the baby Jesus in Mary's womb. Jesus' father is God the Father - which proves Jesus is fully God (deity). If Jesus were to be the son of a human father and human mother, then He could not be God in human flesh.
- 3rd - If Jesus had been born naturally of human parents – then He would have been born a sinner like all other human beings (Romans 5:12) and He would have needed a Saviour himself.

If He had sin of His own, He could not die as a once and for all sacrifice for the sin of the whole world (1 Peter 1:19; Hebrews 10:10) – and we would still be in our sins and unforgiven – **AND** – we would have no hope of Heaven!

Also - Jesus had to have at least one human parent or He would not have shared our humanity. But the virgin birth - through the Holy Spirit – means Jesus was able to be born as fully God and fully human and yet be born sinless (Hebrews 7:26) – It's truly amazing isn't it?

Application

For us it means

Our deepest need is to be forgiven of our sins and restored into a right relationship with God.

And the only way we can be forgiven and restored to God is to - **Repent and Believe**

Repent of our sin means admitting we have sinned against God and broken His rules – and then genuinely saying **sorry** to God for our sins – and then **believing** Jesus – God's Son – the **Saviour** - came to fix our sin. If you haven't said sorry to God for your sins – today is the day to repent and believe!

So my 3rd point – “**God's will is to provide us with a Saviour**”

Our Response

[Slide-Our Response Heading]

The fact that...

- God's will is to be with us
- And - God's will works through unexpected ways
- And - God's will is to provide us with a Saviour

Demands a response from us...

Will we respond like Mary?

[Slide-Response]

And say – ***Lord, I am your servant*** – literally – ***Lord, I am your slave*** – a slave cannot help but do the will of their master

Can we respond like Mary – and say, Lord, I am your slave – ***I will obey your every word, Lord and Master – no matter what the consequences might be!***

Can we respond and say - ***Lord, use me as you see fit – to accomplish your will through me!***

We may well ask then - what is the will of God for me?

How do I know?

We'll remember – we have God's will and testament written down in the Bible for us!

And there are 2 fundamental things **God wants for us:**

1. First - to **Repent and believe** (Mark 1:15) – which we have already mentioned – so that we can **receive eternal life in Heaven** (1 Timothy 2:3-4; John 3:16)
2. Second – God want us to do what Micah 6:8 says: ***What does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.***

Will we **act justly** from this point forward – doing what is right in God's will?

Will we **love mercy** – will we show compassion and love to all we come across?

One way to show compassion and love to others is to care about their souls – and sharing with them the Good News – that believing in Jesus – Immanuel –

God with us – **is the way a person gets right with God and gets to Heaven!**

Will we **walk humbly** - not boastfully or proudly - but **humbly walk with God** – seeking to live lives that always please Him?

Can we submit to God - like Mary did?

And change the world's thinking which seems to be right now – ***“Your will be changed God, to suit my will”***

Can we join Mary – and say – ***“Your will be done on Earth, Lord, as it is in Heaven!”***

Let's pray...

Benediction (Romans 5:1)

Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ Amen!