

# A Reversal of Power

## the first Sunday of Advent

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### Luke 1:26–31 (NLT)

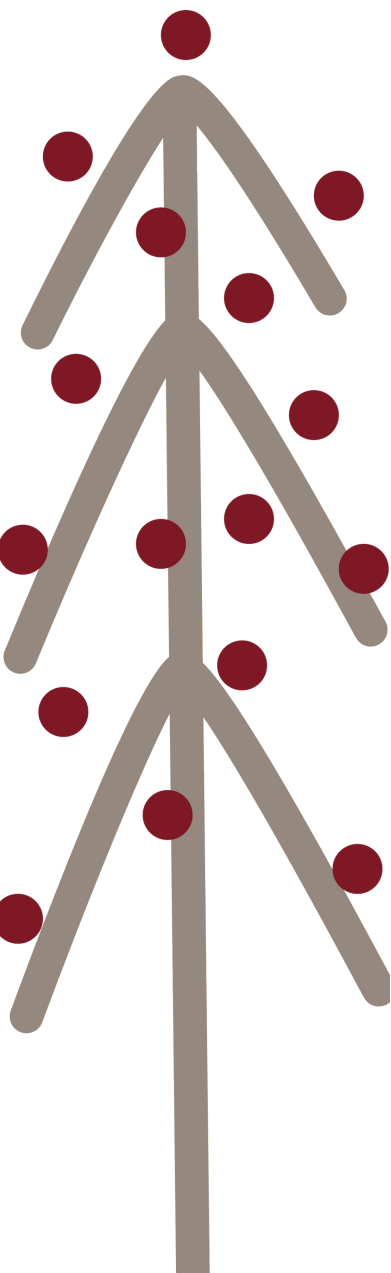
In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus."


### Micah 5:2 (NLT)

But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, are only a small village among all the people of Judah. Yet a ruler of Israel, whose origins are in the distant past, will come from you on my behalf.

### Isaiah 53:2–3 (NLT)

My servant grew up in the Lord's presence like a tender green shoot, like a root in dry ground. There was nothing beautiful or majestic about his appearance, nothing to attract us to him. He was despised and rejected—a man of sorrows, acquainted with deepest grief. We turned our backs on him and looked the other way. He was despised, and we did not care.





I began a new pastoral role earlier this year. After my first Sunday preaching I had a mom reach out to me and share that her young daughter was intrigued by me. She loved watching me on the church livestream and said “Look mama, it’s a girl like me.” I don’t think I could have heard anything more encouraging that day. This young girl saw me, a bi-racial woman, in the pulpit and connected with me. It was not my words that impressed her but the fact that I am who God created me to be . . . doing what God called me to do. It is often out of the mouth of babes that we hear truth and wisdom and this young girl reminded me how God works through us in unexpected ways.

The theme of God working through the unexpected weaves throughout Scripture, particularly as it relates to power. We learn that power belongs to the Lord as we see it stripped from unjust leaders and given to those who are unimpressive and unimportant. The prophet Micah spoke about the hope of a new world where current leaders who despise justice will be brought low as the just and merciful leader appointed by God arises. This leader will come from Bethlehem - a small and insignificant town, a place with no power or privilege.

We see this reversal of power once again in the angel’s proclamation to Mary. He addresses her, a young and unimportant girl as “favoured woman” and tells her that God is with her. God’s power is about to be displayed through her weakness, or through what the world perceives as her weakness. Upon hearing this message Mary is confused and disturbed.

I imagine you have felt confused and disturbed over the last year and a half. We have been made aware of the horrific legacy of residential schools in Canada. Perhaps you’ve had time to examine the spaces in which you work, serve or worship and have faced the reality that systemic racism is alive and well. We grieve with every injustice that comes to light and often it seems we are powerless to do anything about it.

And yet there is hope. The Advent season reminds us that our hope does not lie in political systems or in charismatic leaders but in the precious Word of God made flesh. Our hope is in Jesus who came without any worldly power to usher in the Kingdom of God - a Kingdom where justice and mercy reign and oppression is no more. Our participation in the Kingdom does not depend on our abilities or strengths but in our willingness to obey.

This Advent, God is inviting us into His redemptive activity of reversing power and privilege. What do you see as your weakness? Pray about how God will use that weakness to inspire others and further His Kingdom. Then **Act**. Consider how you might spend time this Advent season with those who the world sees as weak and without power.

