

Westminster Presbyterian Church + 533 S. Walnut St. + Springfield, IL 62704

Dr. Lonnie H. Lee

December 24, 2006

7:30 p.m.

Messenger of Hope

Luke 1:28

The Christmas story teaches us that God is at work in the confusion of our lives. Confusion was the major theme of Mary and Joseph's Christmas journey. They were confronted with the mystery of an unexplained pregnancy. It was a scandal that they would have to face with family and friends. People would be looking for explanations that they could not provide. Certainly they find no comfort in the explanation the angel offers them. The word from God the angel brings only intensifies their confusion. Luke tells us that the message of the angel leaves Mary perplexed. If God is at work in these events, it is beyond their ability to understand.

A similar level of confusion overwhelmed David at a critical juncture of his tenure as King of Israel. David was one of the great heroes of the Old Testament. He was a man who knew how to make things happen. He had reached the point in his reign when he wanted to establish his legacy as King. Having succeeded in making Jerusalem his capital he decided the time had come to build a magnificent temple in Jerusalem. This temple would be a glorious house for God and a much needed source of unity for David's kingdom.

So David begins marshalling the resources to implement this ambitious project. Then the unexpected happens and David is thrown into confusion. The prophet Nathan comes with a word from the Lord. The prophet tells David that he is not to build a house for God. God will build a house for him.

God will build David's line of descendants into a blessing for future generations. The legacy of David will not be about his heroism or his ability to get things done. The legacy of David will be something that God has chosen to do. What God is doing is well beyond David's capacity to understand.

David finds himself at the same dead-end that Mary and Joseph would later experience. It is also a dead-end that most of us know all too well. Lillian Daniel describes this place in the following words:

Sometimes it's in admitting we don't have all the answers, that suddenly we can hear a whisper from another place. Sometimes in admitting that we don't get it, we open ourselves to get something from God. Sometimes when we stop talking and stop giving ourselves the answers to our own questions, we allow ourselves to be filled with something new. With Jesus even. Who chose someone who was confused to bring him into this world (*Journal For Preachers*, Advent 2005, page 28).

When we come to the end of our own understanding of what is happening around us, we are ready to pay attention to what God is doing. That is the message of hope the angel was offering to Mary. God is at work bringing heaven down to earth. God is building the house that was promised to David. Jesus is the house that will endure forever.

