



## **“They Said, ‘Yes’.”**

Pastor Andy CastroLang

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### **Scripture (ERV):**

#### **Luke 1:26-38**

<sup>26-27</sup> During Elizabeth’s sixth month of her pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin girl who lived in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. She was engaged to marry a man named Joseph from the family of David. Her name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> The angel came to her and said, “Greetings! The Lord is with you; you are very special to him.”

<sup>29</sup> But Mary was very confused about what the angel said. She wondered, “What does this mean?”

<sup>30</sup> The angel said to her, “Don’t be afraid, Mary, because God is very pleased with you. <sup>31</sup> Listen! You will become pregnant and have a baby boy. You will name him Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great. People will call him the Son of the Most High God, and the Lord God will make him king like his ancestor David. <sup>33</sup> He will rule over the people of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.”

<sup>34</sup> Mary said to the angel, “How will this happen? I am still a virgin.”

<sup>35</sup> The angel said to Mary, “The Holy Spirit will come to you, and the power of the Most High God will cover you. The baby will be holy and will be called the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And here’s something else: Your relative Elizabeth is pregnant. She is old, but she is going to have a son. Everyone thought she could not have a baby, but she has been pregnant now for six months. <sup>37</sup> God can do anything!”

<sup>38</sup> Mary said, “I am the Lord’s servant. Let this thing you have said happen to me!” And the angel went away.

## **Sermon:**

Ask any kid and they will tell you, they get a lot of NO's in their lives. NO, you can't eat that, stay up that late, watch that show, play that video game, paint your room black...

And news flash...once you are a grown up, you still get a lot of NO's from life.

So I bet you can tell stories of some of the great NO's in your life? I sure can.

But what amazes me more, if I stop and ponder it well, is the number of YES's there are in my life, in our lives.

Recently, the Trustees said YES to the idea of the church being an emergency warming center for young adults, in the dark and cold winter months. Then a week later, when they presented this idea to the Church Council, that body also said YES. Then a few days later, at the close of worship, in discussion with all of you, you also said YES.

The city said YES to helping us get ready, and funding some really important improvements in preparation for our building to be a warming center. They said YES to funding staff for this desperate need in our community.

The volunteers, like Randy, Maxi, Jane, Cathy, Alan, Kent, Jerry...they all said YES to hours and hours of hard work getting our bathrooms redone, and getting us ready for our homeless visitors.

Then, each and every group using our building also said YES.. the Spokane Youth Symphony Board, the Board of the Spokane Area Youth Choirs, the three different 12-step groups that use our building, the chef of Inland Curry, the Lego League teachers, the union members that have their meeting and meal in our social hall, once a month. I even discussed it with the Spokane Symphony, because they will have one concert in our sanctuary in February and they, too, said, YES.

It's not a simple thing to get to YES, it took a lot of conversation, a lot of listening, asking questions, answering questions. It is going to take the shape of a camera at the East door. And new doors, that lock, in the Narthex. It's gonna take extra light and heat, and probably coffee and tea and cocoa and cookies, if we feel up to it. It means getting pushed out of our comfort zone, and feeling a little confused, and maybe even anxious, sometimes.

It's not unlike the situation that Mary finds herself in today.

She has questions, she has concerns, and even confusion. That may be an angelic messenger of God, but she still needs to ask her questions and get her answers!

But here is the big takeaway for you, for me, for anybody who is listening to the challenging messengers of God in their life: say YES.

Say YES more often.

Of course, you need to know your limits and you need to be fair to those around you, but still...what might happen to you, to me, to all of us if we said YES more often?

If we spoke out of faith and courage and some trust, like Mary did long ago?

You don't necessarily have to know how it will all come together when you offer that first YES. Certainly, when I got that first email from Tija Danzig at the City...I gave a single YES to a single meeting.

And we don't know how it is all going to come out in the end, do we?

But I really, really believe that God is a YES kind of God, full of affirmations for us, saying YES to us in so many ways; asking us to say YES, and to experience the new, amazing, and sometimes hard surprises that come from saying YES.

Now, we have costumes here in the front pew, and we have a storybook, and I really hope some of you will join in and give a YES to acting out the story of Jesus' birth, here in the front of the church; for our children to see, and to experience with you, today!

Be playful, be bold, step out and do something that surprises you!

This will give all of us a chance to experience, and yes, to see, young and old together, the power of Mary's first YES to God that led to such a difference for all the world!

Ready?

Here we go!