8-31-2025 Sermon

Pastor’s Message “Angels Among Us”

As I mentioned in our Children’s Message, I have been called an angel before. It was quite a compliment, but I don’t feel like I deserve such a grand compliment for many reasons. One of which being: I’m not perfect! I have always thought of angels as perfect beings. Obedient to God at all times - serving God wherever He sent them. For someone who poo-poo’d God’s call to ministry over half of her life, I don’t feel like I’ve been obedient enough to qualify as an angel.

I could put on a white robe and fake wings, but that still won’t qualify me as an angel. We always think we know what an angel will look like if we encounter one, don’t we? We expect to see humanlike figures with big and beautiful wings, wearing white robes and glowing by the illumination of their golden halos. We also expect them to offer comfort, soothe our worries, and sometimes provide protection from various troubles. It’s alright for us to have these expectations, but this isn’t how the Bible always depicts them.

Let’s look at what the Bible tells us about angels: First of all, they are often described as causing fear. In Luke 1:30 the angel Gabriel says to the virgin Mary, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.” In Luke 2:10, an angel of the Lord appeared to the shepherds watching their flocks by night and said, “Do not be afraid, for see, I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people”.

One of my favorites is from Matthew 28 at the tomb of Jesus where it is written: “After the Sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. 2 And suddenly there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. 3 His appearance was like lightning and his clothing white as snow. 4 For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. 5 But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6 He is not here, for he has been raised, as he said.”

So apparently, it is frightening to see an angel. I don’t know if they look frightening or if they are simply so beautifully and miraculously surrounded with a heavenly glow that it scares the pants off of us mere humans, but it is a frightening experience that calls for the angel to assure the humans they encounter to “be not afraid”.

Angels bring comfort in this way, and protection as in Genesis 19 when angels escorted Lot and his family out of Sodom before it was destroyed.  They are also known to be guardians of the things of God like the cherubim who guard the entrance to Garden of Eden alongside a flaming, turning sword after Adam and Eve’s expulsion.

Messengers: angels are God’s messengers, sent to communicate with human beings on God’s behalf. The English word “angel” is derived from the Greek “angelos”, which literally means “messenger”. Angels, as messengers, are depicted as obedient servants who execute God's commands with precision and authority.

We also know some angels to be warriors. For example, the Archangel Michael is known as a “great prince and protector” who does battle against Satan and other demon princes as found in (Daniel chapters 10 & 12, Jude chapter 1 and Revelation chapter 12).

Since I mentioned Satan, what is a fallen angel? Fallen angels are angels who fell from heaven due to immoral behavior or rebellion and now live either on earth or in hell. Most Christians believe Satan (or the adversary) to have been an angel who rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven along with many other angels who followed him. That understanding comes from piecing together clues throughout the Bible.

Remember when I said I had always thought of angels as perfect beings? Those fallen angels are definite proof that are NOT prefect, are NOT always obedient to God, and do NOT always serve God.

Aside from fallen angels, (whom we should avoid at all costs), we also know from scripture that angels are also visitors sent by God to offer guidance like in Exodus 23 where God said to Moses, “See, I am sending an angel ahead of you to guard you along the way and to bring you to the place I have prepared.”

We find comfort in the belief that angels are among us to guide us and protect us. I’d like to share with you the memorable story of angelic visitors titled, “The Tale of Two Traveling Angels” was told by Brigitte Franssen:

Two traveling angels stopped to spend the night in the home of a wealthy man. The wealthy man did not think much of the two angels of light. He thought they were two useless vagabonds and refused to let them stay in one of his many guestrooms. Instead the two angels were given a small space in the cold and damp basement. As they made their bed on the hard floor, the older angel saw a hole in the wall and repaired it. When the younger angel asked why, the older angel replied: "Things are not always what they seem."

The next night the two angels arrived at the house of a very poor farmer and his wife. The poor couple immediately recognised the two strangers and were more than happy to welcome them into their home. They shared the little food they had and let the angels sleep in their own bed, where they could have a good night's rest. When the sun came up the next morning the two angels found the farmer and his wife in tears. Their only cow, whose milk had been their sole income, lay dead in the field.

The younger angel was shocked. He turned to the older angel and asked him bitterly: " How could you have let this happen? The first man had everything but gave us nothing, yet you helped him. This couple had nothing but gave us everything and yet you let their cow die."

"Things are not always what they seem," the old angel replied calmly. "In the basement of the wealthy man's house a treasure of pure gold and diamonds is hidden in that hole in the wall. Since the man was so obsessed with greed and so unwilling towards us, I sealed the wall so he will never find the hidden treasure. Then last night as we slept in the farmer's bed, the angel of death came for his wife. I gave him the cow instead. That old sickly beast was the cause of their poverty anyway and very soon now they will find a new and healthy cow." " Just remember", the old angel said to his young companion, "Things are not always what they seem."

We never know when we might be entertaining angels, but we can be assured that when God’s obedient angels are among us in whichever way God commands them to be, we are in good hands, for we are told in Psalm 91:11 “For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways.” and Hebrews 1:14 “Are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?”

May this bring us comfort, knowing that God’s shelter is all around us, providing shelter, guidance and comfort. Thanks be to God. Amen.