

Conceived  
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Luke 1:26-38 (ESV)

At this stage of life have you noticed that adults in important positions look like kids to us? *“Are you sure you’re old enough to be my doctor, lawyer, pastor?”* This text is in many ways about a “kid;” a humble, young girl with GIANT faith.

We’ve all heard about “child-like faith.” That term is not actually in the Bible verbatim, but Jesus DID say, in Luke 18:17 (ESV) <sup>17</sup> *Truly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a child shall not enter it.* [The context there was not only about faith but really about humility.]

In this week’s text we see someone who received the kingdom of God like a child because she wasn’t much older than a child at the time. She displayed humility, surrender, and faith. Of course, I’m referring to Mary the mother of Jesus.

Big Idea: The angel’s announcement to the Virgin Mary presents us with three lessons: 1. God has a magnificent plan to redeem sinful mankind; 2. He uses human beings to fulfill His purposes; and 3. Mary the mother of Jesus is an inspiring role model and example of great faith in God and surrender to His will.

- Let’s begin by reading these verses to get the full event in our minds then we will unpack some specific points.

<sup>26</sup> In the sixth month **[of Elizabeth’s pregnancy with John the Baptist]** the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin’s name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” <sup>29</sup> But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup> And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you

shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end.” <sup>34</sup> And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” <sup>35</sup> And the angel answered her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup> And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For nothing will be impossible with God.” <sup>38</sup> And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.” And the angel departed from her.

- An incidental observation, when Mary said “yes” Gabriel departed! Every good messenger or sales person knows when they say yes, say thanks and goodbye. 😊
- This passage is known as the “annunciation” (announcement.)
- Verse 26: Again God sent the angel Gabriel for this assignment.
- Several important facts in 26-27: A virgin, betrothed to a man named Joseph, of the house of David, from Nazareth, her name was Mary.
- All of this was in God’s plan and to fulfill specific Old Testament prophecy.
- Mary was a Virgin – (Is. 7:14) (ESV) <sup>14</sup> *Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.* [Not only of “marrying age” but a virgin.]
- Engagement in that culture began with commitment before consummation. Phase one was a marriage commitment followed by separation for a time, then the marriage would be completed when it consummated physically.
- The important point: Mary was a virgin (v.34)
- Mary and Joseph were both of the lineage of King David (Is. 11:1.)
- Joseph would have to be in Bethlehem at a certain time (Micah 5:2.)
- *“Mary was from Nazareth. Prophecies given hundreds of years before Jesus’ birth declared that the Messiah would be of little reputation (Isaiah 53; Zech. 9:9; cf. Matthew 2:23). To be called*

*a Nazarene or a Galilean was something of an insult in those days (see John 1:46). Had Mary been wealthy, socially prestigious, or from an affluent city, Jesus could not have easily connected with lowly people, the ones He'd come to save (Luke 19:10; Mark 2:17). But because He was from Nazareth, Mary's hometown, the humility and commonness prophesied about Him was fulfilled.*<sup>41</sup>

- Verse 28: Gabriel describes her as “favored one.” Related to the word “grace,” this tells us “[s]he was a special recipient of [God’s] grace.”<sup>41</sup>
- Let’s think again about Mary’s age. Based on the age of young Jewish brides in that day, Mary was likely a teenager. Her age and humble status (1:48) make her response to Gabriel in verse 38 even more remarkable.
- Mary was understandably frightened at Gabriel’s appearance!
- Gabriel calmed her and again said she had “*found favor with God.*”
- Let’s pause and make an important point. Often, the church has gone to one of two extremes with Mary the mother of Jesus. She has either been minimized or ignored, or she has been elevated almost to deity.
- This is a sensitive topic if you have Catholic family or friends. I don’t want to get bogged down on it but I also don’t want to be a coward.
- Scripture is clear that we are not to worship anyone or anything except God (i.e. Ex. 20:4-5; Matt. 4:10.) Scripture never confers deity on Mary. She is to be respected for her special role in God’s plan of redemption and as an amazing role model of faith, but not elevated beyond that.
- What did Mary herself say? Look at the “Magnificat” later in Luke 1:46-55:

*Luke 1:46–49 (ESV)* <sup>46</sup> *And Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord,* <sup>47</sup> *and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,* <sup>48</sup> *for he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed;* <sup>49</sup> *for he who is mighty has done great things for me, and holy is his name.*

- I go with what Mary said on this subject in those verses, but let’s be gracious and not belligerent while remaining biblical on this subject.

- That's a great segue back to the text in verse 31. Let's talk about Jesus!
- Mary would conceive and bear a son and call Him Jesus.
- [T]he Hebrew name *Yeshua* mean[s] "*Yahweh shall save.*"<sup>iii</sup> (See Mt. 1:21)
- Gabriel was very specific about Who this baby would grow up to be:

<sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David,<sup>33</sup> and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."<sup>34</sup>

- Mary asked the obvious question, "*I'm a virgin, how can this be?*"
- This wasn't asking for proof (like Zechariah), it was a sincere question.

<sup>35</sup> ...the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God."<sup>36</sup> And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren **[then to really drive home the point]** For nothing will be impossible with God."

- Back to our first lesson from this text: God has a magnificent plan to redeem sinful mankind and He uses human beings to fulfill His purposes.
- Praise God for His amazing plan of Christ coming down to mankind!
- Now, let's talk about what we can learn from Mary's response:

<sup>38</sup> And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

- What an example of GREAT FAITH!
- This girl might have been young, humble and, in the eyes of the world, unsophisticated but her FAITH was mature and solid.
- Let's contrast her response here to last week's text in verses 1-25 and Gabriel's announcement to Zechariah the priest. Zechariah was a godly and dedicated priest but HE asked for PROOF and got a rebuke.
- Young Mary didn't ask for proof or a sign. She just said, "Yes, Lord!"

- Did she have questions? No doubt. Was she scared? Who wouldn't be?
- Still, she simply trusted God to work it out and surrendered to His plan.
- She believed the words of Gabriel: Nothing is impossible with God.
- What can we learn from Mary's display of great faith?
- Faith is not about accepting what makes sense; it's about trusting God even if His will doesn't seem to make sense.

Hebrews 11 is the famous FAITH chapter in scripture. Verse one says (ESV) <sup>1</sup> Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.

- Mary had assurance God could and would do what seemed impossible.

Later in Hebrews 11, verse six tells us, (ESV) <sup>6</sup> And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him.

- That verse hadn't been written yet in Mary's time, yet she lived it out by trusting God the Father for Who He is and seeking to please Him.
- Key: Faith in God's plan, purpose, and promises is really about FOCUS.
- The Apostle Paul said in 2 Corinthians 5:7 "*we walk by faith, not by sight.*"
- He was talking about not being afraid of physical death! Serious stuff!
- If we have to "see it to believe it" then by definition it's not faith.
- Mary's "sight" was not just on the situation but also (and more importantly) on God's power to accomplish His will.
- Think of other examples of this kind of great faith in "things not seen."
  - Daniel in the lions den (Daniel 6)
  - Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the furnace (Daniel 3)
  - Abraham and Issac (Gen. 22)
  - The Roman Centurion whose slave was healed (Luke 7)

- Syrophenician woman with a demon-possessed daughter (Mt. 15)
- The woman who had had a discharge of blood (Luke 8)
- All these were examples of great faith that God could and would do what seemed to be impossible. Some of them were heroes of the faith and some were just common people who had uncommon faith.
- By the way, Mary wasn't facing an easy situation and she would have known it. Imagine the shame in the eyes of family and friends not to mention gossiping townspeople. Imagine telling them what the angel told her ("The Holy Spirit is the Father? Yeah, right.")
- Mary exercised great faith in God's plan despite the most stressful and overwhelming circumstances a young girl in that day could have imagined.
- Mary's problems were just beginning. In Luke 2 she was told Jesus would be opposed and, "*a sword will pierce through your own soul also.*"<sup>iv</sup>
- When we say focus on God and not the situation, it doesn't mean we don't acknowledge reality. It means we look at the size of the circumstances compared to the size of the power and love of the Creator of the Universe.
- We put the situation next to God's power and trust that God is bigger.
- When we allow Satan to persuade us to doubt God will do what He has promised, we do not just doubt OUR ability, we doubt GOD's ability.

#### So, What's the Takeaway?

- Faith is not about accepting what makes sense; it's about trusting God even if His will doesn't seem to make sense.
- Mary got that and we need to embrace it too.
- You and I are going to need this lesson.
- If we don't need it this week, we WILL need it in the future at some point.
- Aren't we all really glad that young Jewish girl embraced God's plan for redeeming us? Aren't we glad she's also such a role model for us?
- When God makes His will plain through His word and calls on us to TRUST and OBEY, I pray that we'll picture Mary, a

humble Jewish girl with GIANT faith in God and GIANT desire to do His will.

- May we also have the faith to trust God even if His will doesn't seem to make sense and (like young Mary) to live "by faith and not by sight."

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.gotquestions.org/why-did-God-choose-Mary.html>

<sup>ii</sup> Martin, J. A. (1985). [Luke](#). In J. F. Walvoord & R. B. Zuck (Eds.), *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Vol. 2, p. 205). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

<sup>iii</sup> Carpenter, E. E., & Comfort, P. W. (2000). In [Holman treasury of key Bible words: 200 Greek and 200 Hebrew words defined and explained](#) (p. 313). Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers.

<sup>iv</sup> [The Holy Bible: English Standard Version](#). (2016). (Lk 2:35). Wheaton, IL: Crossway Bibles.