

Theme: Mary is an example for all believers as she receives God's staggering promise with a humble, thoughtful, obedient faith.

I. There's Something About Mary

- A. Picture of Mary shrine in Wyoming
- B. Many Protestants uncomfortable with Mary
- C. Reaction to Roman Catholic exaltation of Mary
- D. But we should not overreact to this - Mary is important!
- E. She is unique - the Mother of the Son of God!
- F. But she is also an example to all believers

II. The Staggering Promise of God

A. Gabriel sent on another mission

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." Luke 1:26–28

1. There are clear links with story of Zechariah
 - a. Same angel visits both Zechariah and Mary
 - b. Mary's story told in middle of Zechariah's
 - c. Time reference for Mary is month of Elizabeth's pregnancy
 - d. Both stories are about miraculous pregnancies
 - e. John the Baptist & Jesus linked throughout life
2. There are also important differences

- a. Zechariah had been seeking a child - Mary had not!
- b. Zechariah an old man, Mary a young girl - probably 12-14 years old!
- c. Zechariah was in the Temple, Mary at home
- d. (Zechariah's doubt is a literary foil for Mary's faith)
- e. This must have been quite a shock to Mary!

B. The angel's astounding greeting

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you." ²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. Luke 1:28–30

1. What a greeting - you are favored! Lord is with you!
2. Mary is troubled by this greeting - how is this?
3. Her circumstances did not warrant such a greeting
4. He repeats - no fear; you have found favor with God

C. God's staggering promise through the angel

You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end." Luke 1:31–33

1. You are going to have a child - but not just any child
2. This child will be great - the Son of the Most High
3. Your Son will be the long awaited Messiah

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”³⁵ The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Luke 1:34–35

1. Mary’s question - how can a virgin conceive?
2. The answer - this Child will be God in the flesh
 - a. The stress on virgin in the passage (3x)

In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary...³⁴ “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” Luke 1:26–27, 34

1. Making clear the fact she is a virgin
2. The Child not just be human - human father not involved

“How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”³⁵ The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Luke 1:34–35

- b. Holy Spirit will come upon you - not by normal means
- c. The Child will be the Son of God
 1. Not just in Messianic, economic role sense
 2. In an ontological sense - this Child is God the Son

D. Gabriel’s faith bolstering words

Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.³⁷ For nothing is impossible with God.” Luke 1:36–37

1. Elizabeth the barren, old woman is pregnant!
2. Nothing is impossible with God
 - a. A quote from Genesis 18:14 - Abraham & Sarah
 - b. A virgin conceiving is even more amazing - but nothing is impossible for God

III. Mary’s Response of Faith

- A. Mary responds with faith to Gabriel’s assuring words
“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May it be to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her. Luke 1:38
 1. Unlike Zechariah, Mary responds with faith
 2. Some of the most astounding words ever uttered
 3. In this she is an example for us!
- B. Mary’s humble faith
 1. The whole story is framed in humble circumstances
In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,²⁷ to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. Luke 1:26–27
 - a. The location is humble - Nazareth in Galilee
 - b. Mary’s situation is humble - young girl of no account

2. Mary is astounded God's favor is on her - it is grace, not Mary's perfection

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

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- a. Mary is shocked - she does not deserve this
 - b. Mary has to be reassured - as any other sinful human would
 - c. It is God's gracious favor - unmerited favor
3. Mary's song of praise is all about humility
And Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, ⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,... ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty. Luke 1:46-48, 52-53
 4. Faith always begins humility before God - it is about His power, not our faith

C. Mary's thoughtful faith

1. Mary does not doubt but is thoughtful at Gabriel's greeting

Mary was greatly troubled at his words & wondered what kind of greeting this might be. Luke 1:29

2. Mary is presented as thoughtful throughout Luke
"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" Luke 1:34

But Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. Luke 2:19

Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. Luke 2:51

3. Faith is not blind - it thinks, ponders, wrestles with what God says
4. Faith and reason are NOT opposed - they go hand in hand
5. Faith does go beyond reason, but it always grows as we think and reason.

D. Mary's obedient faith

1. Mary's faith ushers in obedience
"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Luke 1:38
 - a. She is the Lord's servant - and will submit
 - b. She embraces God's Word fully and obeys
2. Mary is an obedient servant - no matter the cost
 - a. Who will believe a virgin has conceived?
 - b. She could be stoned as an adulterous
 - c. Joseph will almost certainly send her away

- d. Simeon tells her this will be costly - a sword will pierce her soul (Luke 2:35)
- 3. Obedience is costly - but faith always leads to obedience
- 4. A faith that does not produce obedience is not real faith

IV. Mary, Jesus, the Spirit - and Us

A. Mary is being set out as a model for us to emulate

- 1. We have been highly favored - like Mary
“Greetings, you who are **highly favored!** The Lord is with you.” Luke 1:28

to the praise of his glorious grace, which **he has freely given** us in the One he loves. Ephesians 1:6
- 2. We are called to receive God’s word of promise like Mary
- 3. We are called to humble, thoughtful, obedient faith like Mary

B. Our blessings come through Jesus - the Son of Mary

- 1. We are highly favored - in Jesus
“Greetings, you who are **highly favored!** The Lord is with you.” Luke 1:28

to the praise of his glorious grace, which **he has freely given** us **in the One he loves.** Ephesians 1:6
- 2. Our only access to blessing is Jesus, the Son of Mary

C. Mary, Jesus, and the Spirit

The angel answered, “The **Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power** of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.” Luke 1:35

- 1. The Spirit is the power of God
- 2. The Spirit comes upon Mary
- 3. Mary becomes fruitful by power of the Spirit

till the Spirit is poured upon us from on high, and the desert becomes a fertile field, and the fertile field seems like a forest. Isaiah 32:15

- 1. Hebrew word “poured out” translated “come upon” in LXX
- 2. Luke 1:35 is alluding to this text
- 3. When Messiah comes, age of Spirit begins
- 4. When Spirit is poured out and comes upon us, the desert becomes fertile - and the Virgin can conceive
- 5. This is also in Jesus’ mind in Acts 1:8
But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8
 - a. Through Jesus the Spirit now comes upon us
 - b. He is poured out and we receive power
 - c. In Jesus through the Spirit our infertile lives can now bear fruit
 - d. Through the Spirit we say “I am your servant - fulfill your word!”

- e. Through the Spirit we take the message of Jesus, Mary's Son, to all the earth

V. Applying the Word

- A. We are called to a humble, thoughtful, obedient faith - through the power and work of the Spirit
 - 1. We need humility - not trust in ourselves, but God
 - 2. We must ponder and meditate on God's promise - this is the soil in which faith grows
 - 3. We must be obedient - following God's Word even when we do not fully understand
 - 4. The Spirit has come through Jesus - receive His power
- B. A prayer for a humble, thoughtful, obedient faith

Mary - A Humble, Thoughtful, Obedient Faith

Luke 1:26-38

December 7, 2014

Prayer

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Teaching keywords: Advent and Christmas, biblical characters, faith, meditation and silence, humility, obedience, deity of Christ

23 May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 24 The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

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