

Advent 2022 Week 2

## Mary's Yes Part 2

I want us to look again at Mary's surrender to the plan and purpose of God for her life: Mary's "Yes" to God's call. The response of this young teenager, the surrender of her plans for the future, her willing and obedient heart is really quite extraordinary and worthy of our attention. There are once again important lessons we can learn from Mary's obedient response.

As we did last Sunday, let's look at Luke's account. **"In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, 'Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.' Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. 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, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end.'**

**'How will this be,' Mary asked the angel, 'since I am a virgin?' 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. 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. For nothing is impossible with God.'**

**'I am the Lord's servant,' Mary answered. 'May it be to me as you have said.' Then the angel left her." Luke 1:26-38**

Mary was like all of us, or at least like we all once were. Young, in love, full of plans and potential, looking into a future with hope and expectation. Gabriel's arrival and message threw an unexpected curve into Mary's plans. Big changes were coming. This was unexpected, unplanned and for most of us that would mean uncomfortable!

We said last Sunday, at the place where God's kingdom and God's plans break in on our plans, it's likely to be uncomfortable. If you are pregnant (with anything) there is going to be change and discomfort, but at the end of that journey there is birth! There is going to be something brand new. Whether it is a child or maybe it's birthing a new business, maybe you are pregnant with a dream, a vision of something you're to build or create, something you will

become, pregnant with a new calling, a new ministry the Lord is birthing in you. There'll be change and you'll carry that baby and there'll be labor and delivery and there'll be blessing and celebration as God births something wonderful through you.

Gabriel's message was frightening and wonderful at the same time. Mary can either view this news and this pregnancy as trouble or blessing. It depends on her response. We pointed out last week, Mary asked "How can this be? I am a virgin." We can give the same response to God's call to us at times. "How can I do this? I'm a virgin, a novice, inexperienced. I've never done this before." The church can say, "We don't want to birth anything new. We like things just as they are. We can't. We've never done this before. We don't know what to do or how to do this!" What's the solution? What should we do? Gabriel gives part of the answer in verse 35. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you." This is how we take the next step, how we do what we don't know how to do, this is how we do the impossible: We allow the Holy Spirit to work in and through us. As a consequence of the Spirit's work, verse 37 tells us, "nothing will be impossible."

Redemption's plan was set in motion in the garden in Genesis 3:15 when the Lord spoke of the seed of the woman crushing the head of the serpent, defeating Satan. Everything is ready for redemption's plan to enter its ultimate phase, the birth of the Savior, heaven's sacrificial lamb, and it all comes down to a decision to be made by a teenaged girl in an obscure village in the Middle East. God will not force her to be an unwilling partner in this miracle. She has been chosen and has found favor, but she too must embrace this choosing. Yes or No. Everything rests on Mary's response. "Mary, what does your heart tell you?" What do we find when we look into the heart of this "one who gave birth to the one who is God."

**Mary had a surrendered heart.** The answer all of heaven was waiting for is expressed so beautifully in Mary's response. **"I am the Lord's servant. May it be to me as you have said." Luke 1:38** We focused on this last Sunday but notice again the importance of Mary's yes. It comes from her heart and life that are surrendered to the Lord. Regardless of the cost or the pain ahead, regardless of the unknown, Mary said yes because she was a servant of the Lord. Her life belonged to Him!

Consider this, that commitment and obedience to the Lord and surrender to his will allows for the anointing of the Holy Spirit which takes the limit off of every circumstance and

makes all things possible! Mary's "Yes" engages the power of heaven! The impossible becomes possible when we surrender to the Lord and say "Yes!"

**Mary had a believing heart.** Not only did Mary surrender to God's plan, she believed that impossible plan was possible with God. Her cousin Elizabeth said of Mary, "**Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!**" **Luke 1:45**

Mary was a girl with simple, childlike faith. When Gabriel told her the Holy Spirit would accomplish this miracle conception and birth, that was all Mary needed to know. Mary believed God. Joseph questioned at first, others I'm sure were skeptical. "How can this be?" was the question asked by more than just Mary, but Mary believed God.

God may have spoken something into your heart and it seems impossible. You may have shared it with someone else, "I think the Lord is calling me to this" and they've told you it's impossible. "No one in our family has ever tried anything like this. Who do you think you are?" Don't stop believing what God has shown you, what God has put in your heart. This is how we bring to birth what God has spoken. We surrender to God's plan and then like Mary we believe that what the Lord has said will be accomplished in our lives and we keep on obeying the Lord.

Mary had a believing heart. Further evidence of that is seen in the story of Jesus' first miracle at the wedding in Cana. It was at that wedding Jesus turned water into wine. You can read the story in John 2 and you'll see it happened because of Mary's believing heart. She told Jesus the host had run out of wine and then told the servants, "**Do whatever he tells you.**" **John 2:5** Mary had confidence in her son, a faith that would carry her through everything she would encounter. Other family members didn't believe until after the resurrection, but Mary knew. God had said it and she believed what the Lord had said would be accomplished. Whatever Jesus tells you to do, believe and obey. Do it!

**Mary had a thankful heart.** In what we call the Magnificat, Mary's song, she expresses her praise and thanks to the Lord. "**My soul glorifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed for the Mighty One has done great things for me - holy is his name.**" **Luke 1:46-49** If you read her song, Mary gives praise to God because his mercy extends to those who fear him. She praises him because his mercy is not just for one moment in time, but extends from generation to generation. She gives thanks because God has performed

mighty deeds. He has brought down the proud and lifted up the humble. He fills the hungry with good things. He has remembered his people and has come to fulfill his word and his promises.

How can we birth what God puts in our hearts? Acknowledge God's faithfulness and his mercy and give thanks and praise to God. Mary had a thankful heart, filled with gratitude for what God had done and great expectation of what He was going to do!

**Mary had a contemplative heart.** After Mary gave birth to Jesus, how was she able to carry on, to stay surrendered to all God was doing in her life and in the life of her son? Luke tells us, **“Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.” Luke 2:19**

Others expressed their opinions about what all of this meant, but Mary treasured up these things – it means to preserve, to conserve something from ruin – Mary took all of these things that were said and hid them like a treasure in her heart, remembering them, watching to see how God was going to bring to pass all he had said. She had a heart willing to wait on God's timing to fulfill his promises. She pondered them, considered them, guarded them, thought about them often, but she never stopped believing and trusting God to make good on his promise!

Too often we expect an immediate fulfillment of God's word when we would do well, like Mary, to treasure up these things in our heart, meditate on them, guard them and wait and trust God's timing. He will fulfill his promises in the fullness of his time and in his own way.

**Mary had a broken heart.** A few days after his birth, Mary and Joseph took Jesus into the temple to present him to the Lord. Simeon said to Mary, **“This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.” Luke 2:34-35** She pondered this in her heart for 33 years, wondering how all of this would come about, what it all could mean, what would the timing be for all God had said to her?

At the crucifixion of Jesus those prophetic words were revealed with raw and graphic effect as Mary witnessed the brutal execution of her beloved son. John tells us Mary was standing at the foot of the cross and Jesus spoke to her. I don't know how she could stand it, watching her son die this horrible death. Mary had a broken heart, but she knew she was told to name him Jesus because he would save his people from their sin. She knew that redemption had an awful price. Her broken heart pondered all God had said, all God intended, all God had promised, fulfilled in Jesus' life and in his death. Look at this powerful piece written by Luci Shaw.

### Mary's Song

**“Blue homespun and the bend of my breast  
 keep warm this small, hot, naked star  
 fallen to my arms. (Rest...you who have had so far to come.)  
 Now nearness satisfies the body of God sweetly.  
 Quiet he lies whose vigor hurled a universe. He sleeps  
 whose eyelids have not closed before.  
 His breath ( so slight it seems no breath at all) once  
 ruffled the dark deeps to sprout a world.  
 Charmed by doves' voices, the whisper of straw,  
 he dreams, hearing no music from his other spheres.  
 Breath, mouth, ears, eyes,  
 he is curtailed who overflowed all skies, all years.  
 Older than eternity, now he is new.  
 Now native to earth as I am, nailed to my poor planet,  
 caught that I might be free, blind in my womb  
 to know my darkness ended,  
 brought to this birth for me to be new-born,  
 and for him to see me mended  
 I must see him torn.**

...Luci Shaw

Mary had a broken heart, but because of that, in that, **Mary had a new heart!** Mary knew Jesus differently than any of us. We mentioned last week, the early church fathers gave her the title “*theotokos*”, God bearer. Indeed Mary carried Jesus in her womb as his mother and yet Mary had to believe upon him as not only her son, but as her Savior to receive eternal life. Mary carried Jesus in her womb to give him life, and she carried Jesus in her heart to receive his gift of eternal life.

The last time we hear of Mary is in Acts 1 when she is listed with all of the disciples who returned from watching Jesus ascend into heaven. They return and go into the upper room and begin to seek the Lord, waiting for the promised gift of the Holy Spirit. The bible says, “**They**

**all joined together constantly in prayer, along with the women and Mary, the mother of Jesus, and with his brothers.” Acts 1:14**

Mary was there, numbered among the believers, numbered among those in the upper room who were baptized in the Holy Spirit. In Luke’s gospel she carries him in her womb, in Acts she receives him into her heart and is baptized with the Holy Spirit that had overshadowed her 33 years ago. In Luke she nursed Jesus at her breast. In Acts she bows before him in spiritual worship and adoration. In Luke she calls him Jesus and son. In Acts she calls him Savior and Lord.

Mary was devoted, surrendered, obedient. Mary loved her son. She never left him. Peter denied him, the disciples fled from him in the garden but Mary stayed to the end. She was there at the cross as he gave his life for us, watching as he was torn so we could be mended. Blessed are you Mary, not because you were without sin, but because of your surrendered and obedient heart, your believing heart, your thankful heart, your contemplative heart, your broken heart, your new, born again heart. **“Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus.” Luke 1:42**

God is still birthing plans in the hearts and lives of his people. He is still calling people of all ages to surrender to him and to his will, to say yes to him. What new thing is God desiring to birth in you? Are you willing to say yes? Like Mary, everything rests on your response. **“I am the Lord’s servant. May it be to me as you have said.” Luke 1:38**

Perhaps you’ve said yes but you haven’t seen things happen yet. You are wondering about the timing. Don’t stop believing that what the Lord has said to you will be accomplished. Stay thankful, remain obedient, protect and ponder these things in your heart and keep saying Yes to him and to his will!

Are you willing to sing this to the Lord? *“I’ll say yes, yes, yes. I’ll say yes, yes, yes. I’ll say yes Lord, to your will Lord. I’ll say yes, yes, yes.”*