

The Courageously Obedient Faith of Mary

What does it mean to say "yes" to God and how does that bring us beauty and peace in life?

Enter the stage talking on the phone with Gabriel.

"Oh hey Gabriel, what's up?...wait what...God wants me to what...not be a math teacher anymore...He wants me to WHAT?!...move on and become a youth director...hum okay....oh there's more...okay...andddd he wants me to preach...like in big church!?...Ummmm that's kind of scary...okay well if He is with me and believes in me, then Yes. I am the Lord's servant."

Deep breath, okay lets do this!

Have you ever had a similar conversation? One where you know because of Faith, that gut feeling that something is right. That even though you know God is helping you along there is still confusion and fear. Even though you thought you had one plan, that God's plan is way better? Well as we enter the second week of advent we can't miss the opportunity to pause and look at the courageous obedience of Mary, mother of Jesus.

Courageous obedience. To be known as a woman of courageous obedience to the Lord, wow.

Her story is one that we can all find something to relate to and something we can all aspire to become.

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Luke 1:26-38

26 In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee,

27 to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David.

28 Gabriel appeared to her and said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!"

29 Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.

30 "Don't be afraid, Mary," the angel told her, "for you have found favor with God!"

31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus.

32 He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give him the throne of his ancestor David.

33 and He will reign over Israel forever, his Kingdom will never end!

34 Mary asked the angel, "But how can this happen? I am a virgin."

35 The angel replied, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God.

36 What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month.

37 For the word of God will never fail.

38 Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

As a kid who grew up in church I have read this a million times, as I am sure many of you have but now, as a young mom, wife, and a next gen director, it hits a little different. When this interaction with Gabriel began he said, "Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!" Wow. Favored woman. God saw Mary with favor enough to choose her as the mother of Jesus. When I look at my little Denali, I am blessed that God chose me to be her mother. I hope to raise her to be courageously obedient to God and the plan he has for her! When I meet with our high schoolers and middle schoolers I know that God has put me in their life for a reason. I get to speak about his power and love over them! I get to be a "Mary" in their life. How scary! Haha but truly that is a burden that I do not take lightly. I hope to show them that when we follow Christ that our life will be beautiful and full of peace.

I find so much comfort in knowing that Mary's first reaction was confused and disturbed! Silly I know, but she has such a human reaction to this angel appearing to her. *I think it was Pastor Jeff who once said that at that time when angels appeared it was typically to deliver bad news. So when the angel appeared to Mary she was confused as to what could be wrong. She was disturbed that this angel would come to her and say you are favored, but then braced for the bad news.* What beauty that Gabriel then says, "Don't be afraid, Mary!". He addresses her by NAME and the emotions that she is feeling. He is clearly there for her and is trying to calm her. As a teacher I learned that when you call home to tell a parent something you first have to start with your child is okay. Parents need to be reassured that things are okay, before they can process the information. Of course! Our gut instinct is to jump into action even before we have heard the whole story. After being told not to be afraid, Mary is ready for the news and bam! What a whammy!

"You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give him the throne of his ancestor David and He will reign over Israel forever, his Kingdom will never end!"

To which she then says "but how?!" okay dont lie, you have said um God that can't happen because of XYZ which makes sense in our logical human brains.

When I read this I read it in the patience I believe Christ has with all of us....

"The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What's more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail."

Not only does the angel address her question he then gives her someone to lean on and see the truth in. God doesn't want us to walk alone through these hard YES's so he gives us community. He gives us family, friends, youth pastors, and mentors of all kinds, for Mary it was her cousin!

"I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true."

Let that sink in. She was just told that she would become pregnant, while being a virgin, unmarried, with a Son who would become the Son of the Most High, take the throne of his ancestors David, and she just said, okay. I am the Lords servant. May it come true. Courageous obedience. In those days having a child out of wedlock would have led to her death but she chose to go forward in faith.

Imagine if Mary had said no, or fought, or ran, or really reacted in any other way? Mary is the example that we all strive to be.

What does it mean to say "yes" to God?

How does that bring us beauty and peace in life?

When we choose to say yes to being Christ's servant he will grow us in ways we never thought we were capable of. Mary's journey through being the Mother of Jesus was not easy. He was not a typical boy, but look at what it brought her? She is known as the woman who courageously said yes to bringing the Son of the Most High to walk this Earth. She was obedient to God's plan over her own, even through the confusion, disturbing news, and the fear.

A little further in Luke,

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Luke 1:42-45 Mary goes to visit her cousin Elizabeth.

"Elizabeth gave a glad cry and explained to Mary, "God has blessed you above all women, and your child is blessed. Why am I so honored, that the mother of my Lord should visit me? When I heard your greeting, the baby in my womb jumped for joy. You are blessed because you believed that the Lord would do what he said."

"You are blessed because you believed." How often do we need to just pause and believe that the Lord will in fact do what he tells us he will do? How simple an act that we will be blessed if we believe? In this season of advent, we get to remember that we are blessed because of that moment Mary believed.

Now, we all know that Mary's story does not just stop there. After this interaction with Gabriel and then Elizabeth she responded to Elizabeth with a Song of Praise to the Lord!

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Luke 1:46-55

"Mary responded, "Oh how my soul praises the Lord. How my spirit rejoices in God my savior! For he took notice of his lowly servant girl, and from now on all generations will call me blessed. For the Mighty One is holy, and he had done great things for me. He shows mercy from generation to generation to all who fear him. His mighty arm has done tremendous things! He has scattered the proud and haughty ones. He has brought down princes from their thrones and exalted the humble. He has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away with empty hands. He has helped his servant Israel and remembered to be merciful. For he made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his children forever.""

We get to rejoice because God sees us just like he saw Mary. He chooses each of us to go out and do his good work. He blessed each of us when he chose to come to Earth as a man and create a courageous relationship with him. We get to go out and be courageously obedient in our faith because he gave us examples and led the way. We get to praise the Most High, and by doing so we humble ourselves before him. When we turn our praise to him, no matter what we are going through, we will walk in your light, rejoice daily, and gain glorious strength.

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Proverbs 9:10

"The reverent fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom".

That said, Mary launched into motherhood, very wise for her years. As events happened throughout her pregnancy, and Jesus' birth and early childhood, she is said to have "treasured these things in her heart". Imagine trying to "train up **this** child in the way he should go"? Yet she marched on with courageous obedience. There is no biblical account of her having any doubts about following her God and her Savior, and she walked that path all of the way to the cross, courageously obedient.

We get to rejoice because God sees us just like he saw Mary. We get to go out and be courageously obedient in our faith because he gave us examples and led the way. The Gospel of Luke shows us courageous obedience through others, such as Elizabeth and Zechariah, John the Baptist, and the shepherds. The Gospel of Matthew has a more Joseph centered account of Jesus' birth, but Joseph also exhibited courageous obedience, which we will look into more next week with Pastor Jeff.

On this second Sunday of Advent, I hope you find **Peace** in being courageously obedient to your Savior.

Lets pray!

Med Moments

As we come to a time of offering we want to tell you about the recipients of our Christmas offerings. 100% of offerings marked for Christmas go outside the walls of this church. We have 4 different organizations we will be supporting. Let's take a look at their stories.

Lead into the [Christmas Offering video](#)