

MARY, MAKING IT THROUGH DIFFICULT TIMES

Dear Friends:

When we think about all that surrounds the months leading up to Christ's birth, we have this romanticized vision of angels (4 times), Elizabeth and Mary swapping mother-to-be stories, and Joseph receiving assurance that his wife-to-be was pregnant but still a virgin.

Step back and think about it for a moment. Was it an easy 9 months for Mary? Probably not. Read the whole pre-birth story in Luke 1 and think about what Mary had to go through and what God wanted her to do. First, she just accepted God at His word through the angel Gabriel. In Luke 1:31-32 the angel told Mary: "You will give birth to a son, and you will give him the name Jesus, he will be great, and he will be called Son of the High." Wow...that's a whole load to carry (besides the weight of the baby). How did Mary process this? I imagine she pretty quickly did the math in her head: "Sure I am going to tell people I'm a virgin and will actually be having a baby who will ACTUALLY be the Son of God. Sure...everybody's going to believe me, how fast can I get out of town?" But...she doesn't run, she doesn't hide, she just accepted God at His word. What about you? Can you accept God at His word no matter what?

What else did God want Mary to do? Accept His ways! Instead of God choosing a couple who was already married or at least waiting until Joseph and Mary DID marry, God put her life at risk by choosing Mary the unmarried (in reality she was not fully at risk, God is a pretty reliable protector). Joseph and Mary were betrothed, to be betrothed was a legal matter that could be only changed by divorce. IF a woman was pregnant during betrothal and her husband was not the father, clearly it was adultery, punishable by stoning to death. Read all the text, Mary doesn't question God's way of doing things, not even once! Do you always have faith to accept God's ways? Mary did.

A third thing God asked Mary to accept was: Accept God's work, do what he asks you to do. What do I mean? Fully make yourself available to God and do His will with your life. Interestingly, in the passage Mary says: "I am your handmaiden, your servant." The phrase in English is best translated: "Your slave." You see, servants had some rights, slaves had absolutely none, totally given up to their master. Mary was telling God:

"Whatever you want to do with me, I will obey, I will follow you, and I will do your work". How about you, are you at the point of full surrender? If not, it is time to be there!

In Christ's Love and Merry Christmas,

Pastor Mike

Prayer: Ron Eller (stomach/esophagus surgery), Those lonely at Christmas

Event: Sunday, Christmas Eve Service, 7:00 p.m.

P.S. No In Touch Next Week