



Empowering People to Change the World

The Mary Miracle Part I

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Christmas 2017: “The Mary Miracle” part I

Introduction:

God chose a poor virgin girl 2,000 years ago, from an obscure country, from an obscure village, from an obscure family to birth a miracle.

God is still taking obscure people, from obscure backgrounds to birth the “Mary Miracle” today!

God is still taking normal people like you and me...where life or love, hope or strength, promise or patience have disappeared, or maybe never present at all. He comes to offer the “Mary Miracle.” It is a timeless kind of wonder that is still happening today. It is not mystical, but it is miraculous.

That is to say, what Almighty God did in the physical/biological realm-supernaturally begetting life, promise and hope where none existed. He is fully ready and able to do now with anybody, anywhere today!

Read Luke 1:26-33

Luke 1:26

Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth

Nazareth

- Nazareth is usually forgotten in the Christmas story, but this is where it all began. An inconspicuous city in a tiny country.
- Actually Nazareth is a very forgettable town. In ancient times it is hardly mentioned. The Old Testament never mentions it or the Talmud.

- Even later on, one of Jesus' disciples said sneeringly, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth." (John 1:46)
- Even today, Nazareth is a small town of 57,000 nestled in the hills of lower Galilee.
- The city of Nazareth was so small that Joseph would have had to travel 4 miles northward to get to the town of Sepphoris in order to purchase his tools and items not available in Nazareth.
- Nazareth is in the province of Galilee, the northern most region of Israel. Israel is a kind of accordion of three regions going from west to east.
 - The southern region, where Jerusalem and Bethlehem are located, is in the region of Judea.
 - The middle region is called Samaria.

Gabriel

- When God wants to move He often uses these powerful messengers, angels.
- The purpose of angels are to minister to the saints.
- **Hebrews 1:14**
¹⁴ Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who will inherit salvation?
NKJV
- When God wants to speak to his people, he often sends angels.

Luke 1:27

to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.

“Yosef” and “Miriam”

- Yosef and Miriam, as pronounced in their own languages were common names among Jews at that time.
- God invades a drama that is already taking place. Two people who are about to be married.
- Romance and courtship did not play a large role in ancient times, and most marriages were arranged by the parents.
- However couples were not just thrown together in a loveless match. Directly or indirectly, their comments and conduct often alerted parents as to which family to contact.
 - Probably what happened is Joseph asked his parents if he could marry that shy village girl who was a distant relative.
 - The parents knew the family well. There were family outings and festivals that they attended together.
 - They already had a hunch and had seen the conversations at the well and they had watched the eyes of both.
 - Both were poor and humble, everyone in Nazareth was.
 - More than likely Joseph was around 25 years old, having needed to work and save to provide for a wife. But he was now ready.
 - Mary would have been about 15 or 16 years old.
 - But one day, during the months of preparation for the wedding ceremony, Mary’s wedding plans are momentarily interrupted.

Luke 1:28-30

28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" 29 But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. 30 Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

Angels and People

- Angels must be really different than the way Hollywood presents them. This is no Clarence or Monica!
- Almost every time an angel shows up in the Bible, the first thing they say is "Fear Not."
- I think the most surprised person in all of history was Mary that day.
- Mary is troubled and fearful.
- And yet it is the greeting that we must consider. This just might be one of the most powerful and encouraging greeting in all of the bible!
- **Luke 1:28**
28 And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" NKJV

- A peasant girl, who more than likely, had never heard such a thing!

Rejoice!

- What a strange way to start off a conversation - rejoice. For what? This the only place in scripture where an

angel starts off this way. More often than not, it is “don’t be afraid.”

- Indeed, in **Luke 2:10**, the angel says, **“Do not be afraid, for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy.”**
- The angel wants Mary to know that something good is coming. Something amazing is in her future and he says it with 3 of the most amazing statements.

1) **Highly favored one**

The Greek word expressing Gabriel’s declaration of God’s gracious generosity toward Mary is *charitoo*.

Charitoo is derived from the root, *charis*: “highly favored.” It literally means grace.

- It means “one who is uniquely graced” by God. Mary is being given a unique role, no one else will have the unique calling and unique ministry that she will have.
- To be highly favored means to be the favorite. How wonderful it is to be favored, to be considered someone’s favorite.
- It means that you’re noticed and loved.
- You are highly favored. God notices each of you. You may never have been favored at school, in your family or at your work, but here you are! Jesus says to each of you this Christmas season: “Rejoice, you are highly favored by Me.”

2) **The Lord is with you**

- Mary must understand that with favor comes presence, the presence of the Holy Spirit covers her—she will not be doing this alone.
- Because she belonged to God, chosen by God and given this task, God’s Spirit would be with her in a new and unique way, for a mission from God.

- Beloved, when you gave your heart to Christ, when you chose to follow Christ, the Holy Spirit came upon you, the Holy Spirit in dwelt you.
- **Ephesians 1:13** *“In Him, you trusted, after your heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, in whom you having believed you were sealed with the Holy Spirit.”*
- We are favored; we have received the presence and power of the Holy Spirit.

3) Blessed are you among women

- A form of verse 28 occurs 3x in Luke’s account.
- Over the years strained meanings of this phrase “blessed are you among women” have caused entire church movements to separate.
- Some so venerate Mary to the point of worship. Others barely acknowledge the unique and profound role that she played.
- Let us first look again at Gabriel’s greeting.
 - First clarity must be brought to the word “blessed.”
 - Blessed comes from the Greek word, “eulogeo” and is a simple forthright prophecy that Mary will be “well spoken of “ in generations to come.
 - It is not extolling anything particularly worthy of Mary.
 - It is rather an assuring, comforting phrase to allay her fears.
 - But he is saying that Mary has been chosen, identified for a special assignment, a special calling and if she follows that plan, she will “well spoke of” in the generations to come.

- Turn in your Bibles to Ephesians 1:3
- **Ephesians 1:3**
3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, NKJV
 - Mary is a type for you and me to look at.
 - All of us have been blessed.
 - All of us are ordinary, but uniquely called to do something for the Lord.
 - God has a destiny on each person's life. It is our responsibility to discover it through seeking God.
 - **God's MO is to take ordinary people from ordinary places at ordinary times to use them for supra-ordinary, supernatural, super works of His Spirit.**
 - **God desires to birth a work within each of us, but we have the same struggle as Mary.**

Luke 1:29-30

²⁹But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. ³⁰Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.

- Our great struggle is fear. Mary is troubled and fearful.
- It is the same with us.
 - We fear that our hopes will never be realized.
 - We fear that our desires will be dashed and come to nothing.
 - We guard our heart from disappointment by not trying again.

- Yet trust comes only by first facing our fears, facing our hurt and pain head on.
- We must face what we fear...name it, speak it out, and trust God with it.
- Often it is shame area that no one knows about.
- Trust is risk. Trust is vulnerability. Trust takes courage.

Luke 1:31-33

³¹And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. ³²He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. ³³And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

The Fountainhead of the Miraculous

- Mary is now told by God that the purpose of her life is to bear the Son of God, the Messiah, the Son of the Highest!
- Mary, if there were such an award in Nazareth High, would have won, “Miss Ordinary.”
- Mary, who is poor, without any distinction to speak of.
- Mary, whose greatest desire is to be a wife and mother.
- She will bear the fountainhead of the miraculous!
- The “Mary Miracle” is the fountainhead miracle:
 - Redemption is the beautiful word that embraces all of God’s divine program of recovery.
 - He is reclaiming the lost.
 - He is forgiving the sinful.
 - He is setting the captives free!

- His is a kingdom with no end. It goes on from generation to generation!
- All miracles in the Bible point to the Redeemer! This is the purpose of every plan of God...God's glory!!

You will conceive!

- This is always how the Fountainhead of God begins to work. The Lord conceives within each of us a work that He wants to accomplish.
- For example, I came to staff meeting just like any other day. It was March 1st, 1994 in Anaheim, California. Liz and I had been fasting and praying for wisdom about whether or not to move to Colorado Springs to plant a church. After that meeting, a woman walked up to me. I had never met her and she had never met me.
- This is how the “Mary Miracle” begins. It is conceived by God’s voice! You become pregnant with a vision, a plan, a miracle!
- For example, I am pregnant right now! I am carrying a miracle right now! This miracle involves this whole church and I think it will be born two years from now!
- Are you pregnant? God wants to speak to you.
- The theme of 2018 at The Road @ Chapel Hills is **BREAKTHROUGH**
 - God’s going to speak to you about an area in your life, in your family, in your marriage, in your work, in your fears of a new work of God.
 - God wants to bring a breakthrough.
 - God will not call us to something that He will in turn provide the grace we need and resources we need to accomplish.

God is calling us to greater possibilities than we could ever produce ourselves, asking only that we let him work with and through us.

God wants to begin the “Mary Miracle” in your life.

Next week we will look at:

- How you can hear from God and really trust God’s voice;
- How much we can learn from Mary’s response to the God’s voice
- And the grace God will give you to birth the “Mary Miracle”

Vs. 28

“Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you...you will conceive in your womb.”