



Sunday 11th December 2022

WHY MARY?

Scripture: Luke 1:26-38

Our approach to Advent this year has been to ask the question – Why? Why Jesus, why Joseph and today is why Mary?

Both Mary and Joseph were descended from David. Mary from David's son Nathan and Joseph from David's son Solomon, so they were distant cousins.

This fulfills Old Testament prophecies that the Messiah would come from the lineage of Abraham, Isaac, Judah, Jesse, and David.

I would like to share 3 reflections about Mary.

Mary teaches us to have faith and trust in God.

God chose Mary as He needed a humble person to accomplish His work. One translation of the Bible says that Mary was a “handmaiden” which can be seen as another word for “servant.” The Bible says that Jesus was born of a woman under the law, a woman of low estate.

Mary was not from a noble class of people, she perhaps would not have won any beauty pageant, would not be valedictorian of a university and her family struggled to eke out a living.

As happened in those times and still happens today in certain cultures, Mary's father arranged for his daughter to be engaged to a young carpenter named Joseph. It is suggested that Mary was between 13-15 and Joseph between 30-40. Their engagement would last one year to

allow Mary and Joseph to get to know one another, without any intimacy and prepare for the marriage.

God chose a lowly person of most common origins, a small, hemmed in country of Israel and a backwater town called Bethlehem to accomplish His purpose.

I wonder if you were choosing, would you have looked high and low for a woman, who came from an upper or middle-class family, someone a little showier and more assertive.

Would you choose a land like Egypt which was the superpower of that historical era or Babylon or Assyria which both had grand powers of human civilization.

But this was not part of God's plan. Jesus was born in a humble stable, so Christ today is only born in humble hearts. Proud people think they have no need of Christ, but those who humbly cry out to God need His presence to heal, guide and forgive. We don't need to have beauty, money and brains to be used by God.

Have you ever had a moment when Almighty God speaks to you, or something happens that you can't explain? It causes you to pause and ponder what God has said. Like Mary, we often find ourselves surprised in our walk with God. We do not have a blueprint for our lives but when we submit to the Lord by faith, we discover He always is there for us, He hears our prayers and meets our needs.

Mary teaches that devotion is about obedience

We don't know what Mary was doing when the Angel came to her with God's message, but one suggestion that seems plausible was that Mary was filling her pitcher at the nearby well when Gabriel appeared. There

is still a well in Nazareth known as Mary's well. This has symbolic implications as the Bible reveals many instances of women and wells. Isaac and Jacob met their brides by the well and Jesus spoke to the Samaritan women at the well. Wells are associated with women because they are womb-like.

When Gabriel appeared and spoke to Mary, she didn't say: "Me, I am only engaged, I am not married yet. I don't have a husband yet. I don't do that hanky-panky outside of marriage. To get pregnant like that is punishable by death."

A young unmarried girl who became pregnant risked disaster. Unless the father of the child agreed to marry her, she would probably remain unmarried for life. If her own father rejected her, she could be forced into begging or prostitution to earn her living. And Mary, with her story about becoming pregnant by the Holy Spirit, risked being considered crazy as well.

What was Mary's response? To simply believe that God has chosen her. Lord, I don't understand this, I don't comprehend it, but whatever You desire, be it unto me according to Your Word. And she submitted in obedience as God's servant, trusting God.

There comes a moment when God ask each of us to do something that we should obey. And we face the same dilemma as Mary did. Will we accept or turn from it? When God asks you to do something that may be hard, or certainly, that you don't understand, pray like Mary - I am Your servant, I will do what You ask me to do.

Mary teaches us that obedience requires sacrifice.

The third point encourages us to pause from the joy and gladness of Christmas and remember that Christmas is only meaningful because it is

the beginning and not the end. Christmas, by itself, is a beautiful story and nothing more.

But when you put Christmas together with Easter, when you realize that the cradle and the grave have a straight line drawn between them, then Christmas becomes more profound and more meaningful.

The transition from the birth of Jesus to His death is a normal and natural one. Jesus Christ was born to die, that's why He came to this earth.

Mary would have been remembering the words spoken by Simeon when Jesus was an infant and was presented in the temple. He told her that a sword would pierce through her own soul.

This prophecy was given 30 years before the crucifixion, but it was fulfilled. Mary knew more pain in her life than most of us will ever know. She knew about the godliness of suffering. The day Jesus was crucified, Mary experienced the fulfillment of Simeon's words.

We have much to learn from Mary. Mary was the mother of Jesus, but she needed Jesus to be her Saviour as much as every one of us.

The saviour who was born in the womb of Mary had to be born again in the heart of Mary.

And the Saviour whose birth we celebrate during this season is a Saviour who must be born in our hearts as well. He comes into our hearts from the outside.

Conclusion:

God chose Mary, a common and ordinary person. God has also chosen you and me, common and ordinary people. I do not believe that it is an accident that we are together as pastor and people. God has brought us

together to do a mission and to do ministry together. I believe that you are seated here in this congregation today because God has chosen you. God has chosen to use your life in His mission for the world. God has chosen you and me as instruments to carry Jesus Christ into the world.

Believe that God has some significant missions for your individual life and our congregational life together. Fantastic things will start to happen if we all dare to believe that we have been chosen. It is truly amazing what God has done and is doing through us and our congregation.

Praise be to God and let's allow our hearts to be filled with the wonder of God.