

Luke 1:26-38

Georgia Hoover

In today's passage, Mary is visited by the angel Gabriel and is told she has received favor from God and will become pregnant with Jesus, God's son. Immediately after telling her this, Gabriel goes into some detail about who Jesus is; I imagine Mary on some level had to have been somewhat excited to hear this news considering she had been anticipating the Messiah's coming as much as any Jew. How incredible that the Son of the Most High was finally going to appear on earth to establish His kingdom through David's line as it had been promised and foretold long before Mary's time.

Even amidst the initial surprise and possible excitement, fear and doubt regarding the logistics for such a plan and her own involvement in it could have caused Mary not to believe the angel's words - after all she was a virgin. Indeed, Mary had questions about how things were going to unfold as anyone might (v. 34). Gabriel provides a bit more insight into how she will conceive and even encourages her with Elizabeth's news of a pregnancy despite old age, reminding Mary that nothing is impossible with God.

But Mary's more surprising response comes in verse 38 when she humbly states, "Behold I am the servant of the Lord, let it be to me according to your word." Despite not knowing all the details and in the midst of so many unknowns, Mary's heart posture is one of trust. This stands in stark contrast to the passage before this, in Luke 1:5-25, where Zechariah responds in unbelief to the angel's announcement that his wife Elizabeth will conceive and bear a son in her old age. In verse 36, we read that God has kept his promise to Zechariah, and Elizabeth has indeed conceived just as the angel said she would. Verse 36 encourages me in a special way because in God's mercy he provides Mary with a relative whom she can experience fellowship with in a time where she could have felt very alone. I'm so thankful Luke includes this detail because it reminds me that whatever we face, God is with us, strengthening and upholding us even when the path ahead seems impossible.

Mary's response and attitude toward the angel's announcement is both humbling and encouraging. She believed God that the long anticipated promise of the Messiah would be fulfilled and that she herself would play a role. This Advent season, we all find ourselves in many different situations and life circumstances. Whether good or bad, we all have the opportunity to respond in faith just as Mary did. After all, God already did the impossible in sending His son Jesus. Let us trust Him, believing in his love and care for us and eagerly anticipating all that He can do in our lives.