

December 20, 2015

Mary's Response To What She Had Heard Pastor Charles Mendenhall

The story of the birth of Jesus were the opening scriptures read from the Message bible:

Matt 1:18-25 "The birth of Jesus took place like this. His mother, Mary, was engaged to be married to Joseph. Before they came to the marriage bed, Joseph discovered she was pregnant. (It was by the Holy Spirit, but he didn't know that.) Joseph, chagrined but noble, determined to take care of things quietly so Mary would not be disgraced. 20-23 While he was trying to figure a way out, he had a dream. God's angel spoke in the dream: "Joseph, son of David, don't hesitate to get married. Mary's pregnancy is Spirit-conceived. God's Holy Spirit has made her pregnant. She will bring a son to birth, and when she does, you, Joseph, will name him Jesus—'God saves'—because he will save his people from their sins." This would bring the prophet's embryonic sermon to full term: Watch for this—a virgin will get pregnant and bear a son; They will name him Immanuel (Hebrew for "God is with us"). 24-25 Then Joseph woke up. He did exactly what God's angel commanded in the dream: He married Mary. But he did not consummate the marriage until she had the baby. He named the baby Jesus.

Matt 2: 1-12 After Jesus was born in Bethlehem village, Judah territory— this was during Herod's kingship—a band of scholars arrived in Jerusalem from the East. They asked around, "Where can we find and pay homage to the newborn King of the Jews? We observed a star in the eastern sky that signaled his birth. We're on pilgrimage to worship him." 3-4 When word of their inquiry got to Herod, he was terrified—and not Herod alone, but most of Jerusalem as well. Herod lost no time. He gathered all the high priests and religion scholars in the city together and asked, "Where is the Messiah supposed to be born?" 5-6 They told him, "Bethlehem, Judah territory. The prophet Micah wrote it plainly: It's you, Bethlehem, in Judah's land, no longer bringing up the rear. From you will come the leader who will shepherd-rule my people, my Israel." 7-8 Herod then arranged a secret meeting with the scholars from the East. Pretending to be as devout as they were, he got them to tell him exactly when the birth-announcement star appeared. Then he told them the prophecy about Bethlehem, and said, "Go find this child. Leave no stone unturned. As soon as you find him, send word and I'll join you at once in your worship." 9-10 Instructed by the king, they set off. Then the star appeared again, the same star they had seen in the eastern skies. It led them on until it hovered over the place of the child. They could hardly contain themselves: They were in the right place! They had arrived at the right time! 11 They entered the house and saw the child in the arms of Mary, his mother. Overcome, they kneeled and worshiped him. Then they opened their luggage and presented gifts: gold, frankincense, myrrh. 12 In a dream, they were warned not to report back to Herod. So they worked out another route, left the territory without being seen, and returned to their own country." MESSAGE

This is just a part of the Christmas story and can be traced back through Matthew and Luke with the lineage of Mary and Joseph, through David to Jesus.

Luke tells us the whole story of what transpired with Mary and Joseph and the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ, the hardships that they faced in making their way to Bethlehem, what they found in the way of accommodations when they arrived, there being no rooms available because of the large group of people who were being taxed by the Romans, that had also traveled there. The inn keeper, offered to them the only thing that he had available, that being the animals barn with hay. But had he known what was about to happen, maybe he would have done different and made room for them. The Lord had used many different sources, the angels and dreams, appearing to them, preparing them for the miracle that was to happen.

During the holidays season that we are in, don't let our lives become so busy that we are like the inn keeper, not having any room to honor the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The events that led up to the trip that Mary and Joseph were making was a challenge, she had become pregnant and was not married. But the angel Gabriel had spoken to her, telling her what the Lord was going to do and her response to what He had said, speaks as to what her heart was like, knowing that the Lord had a plan and His plan would benefit all involved. The angel had also appeared to Joseph, assuring him that she was pregnant by the Holy Ghost, setting his mind at ease regarding the situation, telling him what his part of this was to be. The birth would be supernatural and would bring blessings to all, Mary's visit to Elizabeth, who in her later years had become pregnant, the shepherds that were able to view the baby Jesus shortly after his birth, the wise men who had seen the star and traveled a great distance, bringing gifts for him.

When we as believers are faced with some impossible situations, there are some principles that we learn as believers through different examples in the bible and when we begin to apply them, God who is no respecter of persons, will work through us just as much as He worked supernaturally through Mary and Joseph. The angel Gabriel first appeared to Elizabeth and Zacharias, telling them of the miracle they were about to receive, but Zacharias didn't believe what was told to them and because of his unbelief, he was not able to speak for nine months, that same angel spoke to Mary and Joseph. Elizabeth was passed the period in her life to be able to have a child and Mary was a virgin never having known a man, so supernaturally, God brought the miraculous events about.

God had told Elizabeth her reproach among men was to be taken away. Sometimes because of life itself, wrong decisions are made, it brings reproach to us and men will look down on us, but Jesus is here to take the reproach from us no matter how bad it is. We are clothed through the righteousness of Jesus and we are to have life and have it abundantly.

Luke 1:26-45 "And in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God unto a city of Galilee, named Nazareth, 27 To a virgin espoused to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. 28 And the angel came in unto her, and said, Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed art thou among women. 29 And when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and cast in her mind what manner of salutation this should be. 30 And the angel said unto her, Fear not, Mary: for thou hast found favour with God. 31 And, behold, thou shalt conceive in thy womb, and bring forth a son, and shalt call his name Jesus. 32 He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: 33 And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end. 34 Then said Mary unto the angel, How shall this be, seeing I know not a man? 35 And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God. 36 And, behold, thy cousin Elisabeth, she hath also conceived a son in her old age: and this is the sixth month with her, who was called barren. 37 For with God nothing shall be impossible. 38 And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her. 39 And Mary arose in those days, and went into the hill country with haste, into a city of Juda; 40 And entered into the house of Zacharias, and saluted Elisabeth. 41 And it came to pass, that, when Elisabeth heard the salutation of Mary, the babe leaped in her womb; and Elisabeth was filled with the Holy Ghost: 42 And she spake out with a loud voice, and said, Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb. 43 And whence is this to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? 44 For, lo, as soon as the voice of thy salutation sounded in mine ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. 45 And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." KJV

When God gets ready to do something for us in a miraculous way, He will remind us that we are highly favored and blessed. Our lives run parallel to that of Mary and Joseph, nothing seeming to be right in the natural, but with the message received from the angel, we learn that they, like us are to be blessed. In the natural, we don't always see blessings but Jesus says we are blessed.

v. 30 - addresses the fear situation; that many times in our response to making decisions we become fearful instead of exercising our faith. The angel told Mary that she should not fear but have a believing heart. This should be our response to the things that we are faced with, we cannot fear, but must have a believing heart with faith, in order to receive our blessing.

v. 34 - Mary speaks back to the angel in response to what he has said; it is not wrong for us to ask questions or try to find out everything we should be doing in the natural in order to receive what it is the Lord is wanting for us. Mary was needing to know the plan.

v. 35 - The angel begins to answer her, how the Holy Ghost would come upon her and the power of God would overshadow her, because the baby that she would be having would be called the Son of God. Jesus was not conceived by the seed of man which carried sin, but was conceived by God Himself. Peter tells us that the word is the seed of God, and refers to the word as the incorruptible seed.

v. 36 - The angel gives Mary a word of encouragement because he had told her that no word from God would be without power and with God nothing is impossible.

Luke 1:37-38 " For with God nothing [is or ever] shall be impossible." 38 Then Mary said, "Behold, *I am* the servant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." AMP

v. 38 - What was Mary's response? "be it unto me according to thy word". During the impossible situations in our lives, what should our response be?

There were some principles that Mary had to come to grips with in her life. 1) implement humility, pride would have given a different response 2) had to displace fear and respond in faith. She had no doubt or unbelief, was not feeling inferior but had a believing heart and a believing mind.

v. 39 - What actions did Mary do after receiving the word? She immediately went to see her cousin Elizabeth who was in her sixth month of her pregnancy, getting into the presence of someone who was believing God and staying away from unbelief. This is the same thing that believers need to do, get away from unbelief and associate with those of like belief, in order not to be robbed of the blessings of God. We have to believe the word and have a close relationship with Jesus.

John the Baptist was the child that Elizabeth was carrying, he was the forerunner of Jesus.

Heb 4:12 "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." KJV

The angel gave Mary the word regarding the incorruptible seed and she had the choice as to

whether she accept it or not, this is the same choice that we as believers are given, to either accept or reject the word when it comes to us.

v. 45 - Mary had to believe what had been told her in order for conception to take place. She believed the word of God making her choice. God has a word for each of us, it is the incorruptible seed and when we believe the word that God speaks to us, conception takes place on the inside of us. We go through a season in order for a growing time to take place in the natural. The word we receive from God has the power in it to bring to pass whatever is promised when we believe. What was Mary's response? "be it unto me"

Luke 1:45 "And blessed is she that believed: for there shall be a performance of those things which were told her from the Lord." KJV

When we begin to believe the things that God has promised and they begin to come to pass, what we have been hearing the spirit of God say to us, it is going to come to pass what we have been reading, we can do all things, we shall be healed and shall prosper, and even though we might slip, He will hold us up and not let us fall, we are blessed. Mary was overcome with thanksgiving and praise, she was so convinced that what God had told her would be done.

The principles that Mary had to know and as believers we must know.

1) that God was for her - if we never believe that God is for us, we will have the attitude of inferiority and unworthiness and God won't answer our prayers

2) deal with fear and unbelief - fear not but develop a believing heart

3) get God's plan - after we get God's plan we must believe and pursue that plan, that plan many times will be out of alignment with natural things but when God said it and as we are living day by day with the incorruptible seed, conception will take place and God will meet all our needs. God is our source!!