

# "Trusting God to Do What He Says"

*Luke 1:26-38*

Happy New Year! Before you think I am too early, in the church calendar Advent is the beginning of the year. The traditional Church calendar is a retelling of the life of Jesus so Advent marks another year of the telling of the story of Jesus. Advent, is an abbreviation of the Latin word *adventus* which means coming. Advent marks the coming of Christ. It's a reminder of His first coming in the flesh, born of a virgin, growing as a sinless, perfect man and dying a horrific death on a cross. Yet, proving He is God in the flesh by His resurrection. At His ascension, Jesus left the earth but promised to return 'in the same way', referring to His feet touching the Mt. of Olives on His return. A prophesied event recorded in Zech. 14 when Jesus returns to rescue the Israelites from annihilation and usher in His 1000 year reign on the earth.

So Advent marks a look back to Jesus' first coming and a look forward to His second coming. And as we look back at His first coming especially here in Luke 1:26-38, we see that Mary and the rest of Israel give us a great example to follow. Many believed and was expecting the Messiah to come. When Gabriel finishes telling Mary that the Messiah is coming he says in v.37,

*"For nothing is impossible with God."*

This is a familiar verse to us, one we've probably applied to various 'impossible' situations we may have encountered and prayed that for ourselves. But a few of you might be a little puzzled because your translation doesn't say that. I'm reading from the 1984 NIV but some of you are looking at the revised NIV which says '*For no word from God will ever fail*'. So why the variations? Because of the word for 'thing'. The Greek word is *rhema*. *Rhema* is most often translated 'word' referring to God's Words. *Logos* and *rhema* are the most common Greek words when it refers to God's Word. *Logos* usually refers to the whole Word of God while *rhema* usually refers to the specific words God has spoken. Now this makes more sense. Luke uses this word a lot and uses it 10 times in Luke 1-3 including the v.38 when Mary replies, "*May it be to me as you have rhemed/said.*"

So the "thing" that's not impossible are the very words of God spoken through Gabriel that Mary believes will come true. In other words, '*For no word from God is impossible to come true*' - including the coming of Jesus. I believe just as both translations are possible so are both truths as we'll see,

But what amazes me about Mary's faith and trust in God that we should work on is that she ...

## **Believes that God's Word Speaks to You** **(1:26-30)**

Luke intentionally weaves the stories of John the Baptist and Jesus together. Gabriel's announcement to Zechariah that they will have a son, John in 1:5-25, now Gabriel's announcement to Mary that she will have a son Jesus. 1:39-45, Elizabeth's joy when she hears Mary is bringing the Messiah into the world. Then 1:46-56, Mary's song of joy that the Messiah is coming. Then 1:57-80 the birth of John followed by Zechariah's song of joy. Then in Ch. 2, Jesus' birth followed by the song of Simeon in the temple. Then in Ch.3 the ministry of John welds into the ministry of Jesus.

Gabriel's prior visit to Zechariah in the holy place in the temple was initially doubted by Zechariah. How will it go with Mary? Mary believes the word from God and believes the Word applies to herself. When we read the Word of God, we probably don't doubt it's God's Word in our head but our failure to accept it personally makes us more like Zechariah than Mary. The Word of God is the breath/very words of God. He is speaking to us when we read them. We need to read them with that perspective praying that we will understand it so we can be obedient to it. Because like Mary and Zechariah, we too have found favour with God. Favour is the word for grace. God in His grace has revealed Himself to us through His Spirit. Now He wants to speak to us through His Word. Where we live; in the Nazareths of our world. A town of less than 200 people around the time of Joseph and Mary.

God sees us. He knows where we live. He knows how we can change our communities for His glory if we apply the Word of God to our life. When we sit down with God in His Word each day we need to listen with expectation that He wants to tell us something that we need to live out in our lives. Mary accepted God's Word to her because she believed God was with her.

Mary also models for us that we must ...

## **Believe God Wants to Use us to Bring Jesus to Others** **(1:31)**

Mary obviously believed that the Messiah was coming and she was willing to believe God that she was the one who would bring Jesus into the world. Her role specifically, to carry the Son of God in her womb, bring Him up with Joseph but to release Him to the world around her. We should be amazed at Mary's faith to believe she is that one whom God chose to be the mother of the Messiah. Yet why then are we so reluctant at times to believe we (who are part of a world wide church) are people in our generation and location that God wants to use to bring Jesus into our world and introduce Him to others who need salvation? You are the only believer in your work place or family or team or classroom or neighborhood. We must believe God has placed us there at this time to be the one who can bring Jesus to our connection points in the world. There are two passages of Scripture that convince me of this.

*Hab. 2:14 For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea.*

God has promised in His Word He will fill the world with the knowledge of His glory. And this text:

*Acts 17:24 "The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. <sup>25</sup> And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. <sup>26</sup> From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. <sup>27</sup> God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. <sup>28</sup> 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'*

If God has marked out the appointed times and places where each nation dwells that He means every individual. That means you and me. So we have been specifically placed in our little boundaries at this time to be the tool by which God helps people to seek Him and perhaps find Him through our witness and fill our corner of the world with His glory. Which is really no different than Mary's role.

Here's something else Mary believed about the promises of God that we would do well to emulate:

## **Believe Jesus is Coming to Rule** **(1:32-33)**

*<sup>32</sup> He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup> and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."*

There are three very clear pieces of information that we must note about Jesus' rule. His rule will be

### ***From Israel (v.32)***

He will be given the throne of his father David. Where did David rule? From Jerusalem in Israel. This is not a spiritual rule from heaven – a popular notion often taught so that we deny a literal rule of Jesus on this earth as we know it.

Secondly, his rule will be

### ***Over the world (v.33a)***

When David ruled he was king over the known world at that time. For Jesus to rule over Israel must also imply Israel will be in power over the nations that have tried to wipe Israel off the face of the map. We read about this in Zech. 14. The nations will one day surround Israel at Jerusalem and Jesus will return on the Mt. of Olives splitting the mountain in half which gives the Israelites an opportunity to flee to the wilderness. In Zech. 14:9 we read,

*<sup>9</sup> The LORD will be king over the whole earth. On that day there will be one LORD, and his name the only name.*

Jesus will rule on this earth from Jerusalem for 1000 years because Rev. 20 tells us six times Jesus will rule from Jerusalem for 1000 years. Rev. 20 also tells us that at the end of that 1000 years, Satan who will be locked up for those 1000 years, will seek to overthrow Jesus one last time. He will fail. Jesus will throw him in the lake of fire. He will then move His rule and His people to the New Jerusalem where we will enjoy His rule

### ***Forever (v.33b)***

Mary never questioned any of these things that many Christians doubt today. We doubt because we are trying to believe it with our eyes and not with our heart, trusting what God says. Christmas is a time when we celebrate the amazing detailed birth account of Jesus – citing prophecy after prophecy fulfilled – and it should reinforce our faith in God's prophecies about Jesus' return that also have many detailed prophecies that will be fulfilled.

Mary didn't doubt them but she couldn't see how they could happen. So she asks Gabriel '*How will this be? How can I be a mother when I am a virgin?*' Well, God looked after that because he prophesied in Is. 7:14 that a virgin would conceive and bear a Son whose name would be Emmanuel. Gabriel explains:

<sup>35</sup> *The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.*

The language used to describe the miraculous conception are similar words used in Ex. 40:34-35 that described the Shekinah glory of God coming down on the Tabernacle when Moses finished it. God will envelope you. God will take over. God's Spirit will do the work. So like Mary we also need to

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## **Believe the Holy Spirit is Working** **(1:34-35)**

He came to dwell in us when we accepted Christ. His work is to conform us into the image of Jesus. His work is to take the Word of God – when we speak it – and touch people's hearts with the gospel. Just as Moses obeyed God's Word and built the tabernacle before the presence of God appeared and worked, so also we have a responsibility to live out our faith in Jesus and share verbally the gospel so He can do His work. And just as God placed Jesus and grew Jesus in Mary physically, so also God's Spirit desires to grow Jesus in us spiritually, to show people in our world how Jesus can change them as we have been changed.

How do we know God can do these things (or make His words come true) that seem impossible? By the evidence of His miraculous work around us.

<sup>36</sup> *Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. <sup>37</sup> For no word from God will ever fail." <sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.*

God validates His ability to do what seems impossible – bring Jesus to rule on this earth – by doing other miracles, in this case enabling Zechariah and Elizabeth to have a child. When we see the evidence of God working around us in how other people's lives are being changed it is an encouragement for us to believe every promise of God. It's God way of reminding us that He's still working and for us to ...

## **Believe We're Not Alone** **(1:36-38)**

Mary accepts what Gabriel has said by faith and then goes to see Elizabeth, who is now 6 months pregnant. And the babies in the womb, one six months, another only days old – leap for joy in their mother's wombs. And Elizabeth gets it. She believes Mary is the One who is bringing Jesus to the world as she is bringing His forerunner.

Jesus and John completed the work on earth that God gave them to do. Now we must believe and wait for Jesus' return. Now we are the John the Baptists that are preparing the world for Jesus' return. It's getting more difficult to share Jesus in our own culture let alone talk about Jesus' physical return and rule in evangelical churches today.

God has set us here at this time in our locations to prepare people for the coming of Jesus again. Keep reading the Word, believing that God is speaking to you to encourage you to remain faithful to Him and allow the Spirit to form you into Jesus. Believe that you are in your place of work,

neighborhood, school, team to bring Jesus to others. Invite some to our dinner next Saturday. Invite some to church. Open your home and befriend your neighbours.

Believe the Spirit will work through the Word of God as we share it with others. And remember, we're not alone in this. Millions of disciples of Jesus are out there doing what we're doing. Be encouraged. Watch for other signs of God's miraculous hand changing people's lives and believe as Mary did that *Nothing is impossible with God* because *'no word from God will fail'*.

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If you have any comments or questions about this message please contact us at [olivet@rideau.net](mailto:olivet@rideau.net)