

Remnant Life Church
December 7, 2025
A Beautiful Heart:
The Story of Mary
Luke 1:26-38

- We have observed in the past that the story of Joseph, the earthly father of Jesus, receives little attention compared to Mary and Jesus – and that is certainly understandable
- Yet Mary’s story is, like Joseph, one that required much of this young girl
- Mary, perhaps more than any other person in the Bible however, is misplaced by churches today
 - The Catholic church has venerated and elevated her to a place of deification and worship
 - Although Pope Leo recently announced that the Catholic church no longer supports the position of Mary as a co-redeemer
 - In other words, they are stating that redemption from sin and the salvation of humanity comes only through Jesus Christ
 - On the other extreme, the Protestant church has, because they don’t want to give the appearance of going too far that way, have often relegated her to a side note in the story of Jesus
 - Neither of those is correct
 - But we have not come here today to debate but to understand what the Bible says about her and the role she played in the birth of Jesus

READ – Luke 1:26-38

- Nowhere in the Bible does it say Mary was perfect – she was favored – just like God favors and loves each of you (**Isa 49:8**)
- Nowhere does it say she should be worshipped or prayed to
 - That is reserved for God alone
 - **Ex 20:3** – *You will have no other Gods before (besides) me*
 - That is the first of the 10 Commandments
- What the Bible does say is that she was highly favored and the Lord was with her (**1:28**)
- What we also discover about Mary, is that she was willing to be a servant of God (**1:38**)
- As we heard Doug and Deb read earlier, she willingly gave herself to become a “servant for life” to God’s will

And so, while Mary should not be worshipped, she is central to what God was going to accomplish

- So where does she fit into God’s plan of salvation for us? Who was she?
- We read that Gabriel, sent by God, appeared to a young woman who was a virgin
 - The word virgin carries with it multiple meanings
 - It meant a woman who had never had intimate physical relations with a man
 - It meant she was a woman of marriable age

- In that same definition it means she was a young woman
- In the culture of Jesus' day families would arrange for their daughter or son to be married when they came of age
 - That is still a custom practiced in some countries
 - Mary was most likely somewhere around the age of 14 or 15 as this was a normal custom
 - Joseph's age is less certain although there is speculation based primarily on a desire to prove a particular belief or doctrine
 - Many in the Catholic church put his age as high as 80 or 90 in order to account for their tenant of Mary's perpetual-virginity
 - This would also then help to account for Jesus' brothers and sisters who would then have been Joseph's children from a previous marriage
 - Both of those scenarios seem to be very unlikely given the 2 trips they had to take
 - Nazareth to Bethlehem – approx. 90-100 miles (**Lk 2:4**)
 - Bethlehem to Egypt – likely over 100 miles depending on the route taken (**Matt 2:13-14**)
 - Certainly more than a man of that age could handle
 - Given that Joseph needed to pay a dowry of sorts to Mary's family and then be able to care for her his likely age was probably late 20s to early 30s – but, again, we do not know for sure
 - What is certain is that Joseph is not mentioned again after Jesus is found in the temple at the age of 12 (**Lk 2:48**)
 - And when Jesus dies on the cross 21 years later Joseph is not there because Jesus asks John to care for his mother (**John 19:26-27**)
- But what I believe is important to understand about Mary today is less about the woman herself and more about her response to God's mandate for her life
 - Like Joseph, prior to this time, everything for Mary's life was mapped out
 - She would have spent the traditional 1 to 2 years of her betrothal planning her wedding
 - Anticipating being a wife and mother
 - Praising God for this good and wise man that He had given her
 - But, again like Joseph, her world was turned upside down
 - And, like Joseph, she responded in a way that glorified God and the perfection of His plans
- So, again, what type of young woman was Mary?
- To answer that question, we only need to look at her heart.
 1. Mary, by her own words, had a **servant's heart**
 - We use that term freely in church but what does it really mean?
 - A servant and a slave were most often two different things

- In biblical times, a slave was a servant, but a servant was not necessarily a slave
- Those captured in war were made slaves of the conquering country
 - Perhaps the most well-known story of that is Daniel and his three friends who were captured by the Babylonians
 - Aside from being freed by another nation (which was not likely) or their master setting them free they were slaves for life
- A servant, on the other hand, had the opportunity to leave after a period of 7 years (**Ex 21**)
 - But they could also stay and commit themselves for life
 - In **Ex 21:5-7** we read that a servant who wanted to stay with his/her master would have their ear pierced against the door frame of the house as a physical mark of their commitment
- That is the true heart of a servant – someone willing to give up their life for another
 - That was Mary's heart
 - It meant total surrender

2. Mary also had a **trusting heart**

- a. We are told that Mary went to visit her relative Elizabeth (**1:39**)
 - i. Elizabeth and her husband Zechariah had experienced their own heavenly birth announcement (There are at least 7 times in the Bible that this happened – Samuel, JTB, Isaac, Samson, and of course, Jesus)
- b. Why did Mary make this 80-mile trip?
 - i. Was it that she doubted the angel and wanted to confirm or verify it by visiting her pregnant, much older relative?
 1. Because these two were related it means that Jesus and JTB were cousins and likely spent a lot of time with each other growing up
 - ii. Was Mary scared and needed to run away to someone who would believe her story?
 - iii. Or was she going to celebrate with Elizabeth?
- c. Mary had already declared that she was submitting her life to God but she was still a very human girl with all of the same emotions we each deal with
- d. Notice Elizabeth's greeting to Mary
 - i. *Blessed are you among women!* (**1:42**)
 - ii. Now this is a verse often used to support the worship of Mary
 1. But Elizabeth was not proclaiming the sin-free righteousness of Mary
 2. She was declaring the work of God in Mary as blessed
- e. **Prov 3:5-6** says, *Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight*
 - i. It was only Mary's trust in God and her full submission that allowed her road to be made straight despite what it appeared to others
 - ii. That is still true today

iii. “Lean not...” is the very definition of faith

Mary had a servant’s heart
She had a trusting heart

3. Mary had a **grateful heart**

- a. In Mary’s song, called the Magnificat (Latin for ‘my soul magnifies the Lord’) found in **Luke 1:46-55** we see the condition of her heart toward God and it is filled with gratitude
 - b. **Luke 1:46-47** - “*My soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior*”
 - c. This was not everyone’s response to God’s call on their life in the Bible
 - i. Moses gave God 5 reasons, 5 excuses why he was not fit for what God wanted him to do (**Ex 3**)
 - ii. Jonah, of course, ran away and tried to escape God’s call to go to Ninevah
 - iii. Gideon said he was too weak and small to lead God’s army (**Jud 6:15**)
 - iv. Saul hid from Samuel even after he had been anointed King (**I Sam 10:22**)
 - v. And Joseph probably did not feel like singing when Mary broke the news to him about her pregnancy
 - d. God knew that Mary would be grateful for the privilege of bearing the Christ-child (**1:48**)
- How many of us this morning can say we carry within us a heart like Mary?
 - Are you more of a slave in your relationship with God?
 - Many come to church and do the things expected of them in that way because of family obligation, guilt, or their past
 - My question for each of you this morning is have you allowed your heart to be pierced by God willingly?
 - Like both Joseph and Mary, do you trust God fully in the dealings of your daily life even when they get difficult?
 - That is not possible unless you have fully surrendered your life to Him
 - It is not possible unless you have full trust in God
 - And it is not possible unless you live in gratitude for all that God has done beginning with sending His Son Jesus to die in your place and forgive you of your sins

The story of Joseph and Mary is one like no other

- Because no one else was ever placed in such an uncomfortable and unique situation like this
- There was no blueprint, no precedent for them to follow
- It meant trust and trust alone
- I can think of no better way to embrace this season of the year than to do it with a surrendered, trusting and grateful heart for the greatest gift ever given, the gift of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.