

Mary: Faith and Difficult Assignments*Luke 1:26-38*

Introduction: During Advent, we will take a break from our sermon series on the Sermon on the Mount (we will return to it in January.) Advent is a time of waiting and preparation for the celebration of the birth of Christ. This year, in order to prepare for this celebration we are taking a look at Mary. What an incredible role she was called to play in salvation history. Today we start by looking at the difficult assignment that she received from God and how she responded. May we be encouraged by her faith.

Opening Discussion: What is one of the things you've enjoyed about Life Group this fall?

Read Luke 1:26-38

1. Assume that you have never heard anything about Mary before. What information does this passage give you about her?
2. How did Mary's willing obedience express faith?

Brian said:

It is easy for us to take her response for granted. Of course she would respond in faith because that's the Christmas story. She had to. But if we simply take her response for granted, we miss the very real faith of Mary that can encourage our faith. Mary was a real flesh and blood person who had a choice to make. And it was a choice that she had to make living in the her religious, social and cultural context. . . I believe it is Mary's "real faith" that we need to see and be encouraged by

3. How would you describe Mary's "real faith"? Without knowing the full story like we do, what were some of her possible fears and uncertainties about being unmarried and with child?

Brian said:

The second principle relates to a perspective that we see in Mary's response that if we can share it, it will help us respond with the same willing obedience to difficult assignments from God. And that perspective is this: **When we understand that we exist for God, we are in a better position to respond in faith to difficult assignments.**

4. In what ways did Mary's response show that she understood that she existed for God and His purposes?

5. How does believing that we exist FOR God affect our willingness and ability to respond well to difficult assignments from God?

6. What are some of the signs in a person's life that might indicate that she really believes God exists for her as opposed to her existing for God?

Brian said:

Finally, here is the last principle that I want to mention that we see illustrated in this passage: **God has the right to give us difficult assignments.** Mary is just a typical young Jewish woman growing up in Israel at the time. She's preparing for her marriage to Joseph and looking forward to what life will bring for them. And then all of a sudden, an angel from God shows up and presents Mary with an assignment that will rock her world. Nothing will ever be the same for Mary. All her plans and hopes and dreams of a certain kind of life with Joseph is tossed upside down. God has the right to do that.

7. Why do you think it is important to embrace the truth that God has the right to give difficult assignments?

8. Are you currently facing any difficult assignments from God?