

“Pardon the Interruption: Mary”
Luke 1:26-38
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I’ve been interrupted from what I’ve been doing by the ringing of a phone. I’ve been interrupted in a meeting by a text. I’ve been interrupted when stopped at a red light and daydreaming by the honking of a horn (sometimes....in my opinion they are a little aggressive on the horn.) I have been interrupted by children that are so excited to tell me something. I’ve been interrupted by a knock on the door. I’ve been interrupted in many ways....but there is one way I’ve never been interrupted....by an angel. I take that back...Sarah has interrupted me (hope that scores me some me some points towards a nice Christmas gift!)

Last week we began the series Pardon the Interruption...and Joseph was interrupted in a dream by an unnamed angel, today Mary is also interrupted by an angel. This angel today is one of 2 angels that are actually named in the Bible. Many angels appear...but only Michael the Archangel and Gabriel are mentioned by name. We do not know if it were the angel Gabriel that appeared to Joseph, but he is the named angel that appears to Mary.

Now before we go much farther let me mention where else in scripture we find the angel Gabriel discussed. He is mentioned early in the chapter that Rory read from. In Luke 1:11-12, but he is also mentioned in the Old Testament in the book of Daniel, chapters 8 and 9. When the angel appears to Daniel he says he “was frightened and fell on ‘his’ face.” (Daniel 8:15-26). We also realize as it mentions Gabriel again in Daniel chapter 9 that he came in swift flight to give insight and understanding. You see an angel is a messenger...a messenger of God.

He gave Daniel a message and earlier in Luke 1 he tells Zechariah about the birth of a son to his wife Elizabeth who had never had a child and was passed child bearing age. Like Daniel Zechariah was troubled when he saw him and fear fell upon him, but Gabriel said, “Do not be afraid.” This child that Zechariah and Elizabeth was going to miraculously have was going to be the one who was to make ready for the Lord....he would be known as John the Baptist...I mean John the Baptist.

So now we have Gabriel who had frightened Daniel and Zechariah appear to the virgin Mary. Now let me say that we have no exact Biblical indication of how old Mary was when all this took place. However, the custom and culture of the day was that girls were betrothed and married somewhere between the ages of 12-16. If angel Gabriel frightened Daniel and the elderly Zechariah what would he do to a young girl like Mary?

Gabriel’s greeting is a bit different. He said to her, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” So a positive greeting, but like Daniel and Zechariah she was greatly troubled and in verse 30 Gabriel says, “Do not be afraid.” Yeah, right....easy for you to say. Minding her own business when, “Shazaam!!” there is this angel standing before her! Pardon the Interruption.

Let's look at this Birth Announcement: **Luke 1: 31-33**

³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus.

The name Jesus means "God saves." Couples often have trouble deciding what to name a child. All 3 of our children have middle names that are family related names. Their first names are names we just liked. But to make sure we put the first name and the middle name and last name together as if the child was in trouble to make sure it sounded right. Such as Benjamin David Baldrige, stop that!!! Yep, good solid ring to it. But in this case Mary's firstborn child was named for her. Call His name Jesus. This angel, this named angel Gabriel, this messenger from God declares to Mary that this is God's child...and He will save.

Imagine Mary trying to take it all in. **³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end."**

Here's the message.... "Son of the Most High." Son of God. A descendent of King David and the Lord God will give Him the throne, but on His throne he will reign forever and ever and ever. No end to His kingdom. Foreverness in a sense is represented by Gabriel....mentioned in the Old Testament, and now mentioned in the New Testament...God's kingdom is for all time!

Pardon the Interruption young maiden Mary....You are a virgin, but you are going to have a baby. And you are not just going to have any baby, but this baby is God's son, oh and by the way He is going to reign forever and ever and ever. Excuse me for the interruption.

Wow. Now this is a major interruption. In the process of writing this sermon I got interrupted with the news that a major water pipe had burst on our campus....and we would probably need to close the schools as well as the church facilities down on Friday. Interrupted my sermon was nothing...but now the parents schedule, the faculty, the children, the church staff...all interrupted. Wasn't the phone call I wanted to get, wasn't what I was expecting...indeed an interruption. So that interrupted affected us for a day or 2. It produced some stress, but was handled the best way it could be.

But what if you were Mary....it is not just a day or 2 that is interrupted, but your life is interrupted with this news. It makes me wonder, as I did with Joseph, what was the makeup, what was the character of the young girl named Mary. She was called by Gabriel, "Favored one." And then Gabriel said, "The Lord is with you." If the Lord was not with Mary how would she have made it through this 'life interruption'?

So she does ask Gabriel, "How can this be?" She in essence says, "I'm too young and not really married." And Gabriel's response in essence is, "Well, your relative Elizabeth is too old and been married a very long time and she's going to have a baby too!" If we wanted to add to the sermon series we could have said: "Pardon the Interruption: Zechariah and Elizabeth." Surprise, surprise, surprise.

Oh, Pardon the Interruption Mary but “the Holy Spirit will come upon you and the child to be born will be called---holy---the Son of God.”

And then Gabriel says something that we need to explore just a little bit further. Notice **VERSE 37: For nothing will be impossible with God.**

That is not a new phrase or Biblical idea. In the first book of the Bible, Genesis, Abraham receives a message that his wife Sarah will have a baby. Abraham is 100 years old and Sarah is no spring chicken at age 90. Whoa...pardon the interruption....that means when Isaac is in High School Sarah is 105....wowza. Hard to believe...can this interruption be true? God says to Abraham, “Is anything too hard for the Lord?” Certainly a variation of “For nothing will be impossible with God.”

The Old Testament prophet Jeremiah proclaims that same message when he prays for understanding and says this:

Jeremiah 32:17 English Standard Version (ESV) ¹⁷ “Ah, Lord GOD! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you.”

Jeremiah reaffirms.... “nothing will be impossible with God.” This is God who made the heavens and earth by His great power....if he can make the heavens and the earth surely nothing is impossible for Him.’

When Jesus was in ministry he actually Himself uses that phrase as he talks to His disciples about who can be saved. Jesus says, “with God all things are possible.” (Matthew 19:26)

Mary has this experience of being interrupted by the angel. Hears how her life is going to be interrupted and her response is astounding. Hearing that “nothing is impossible with God,” her response is a humbling... “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord.” What a response to an interruption.

This interruption changed Mary’s life forever. Are we able to accept God’s interruptions as Mary did?

Yes, some interruptions in our life are more major than others. There are some interruptions that we will encounter that will change our life forever. It will change everything.

Let’s fast forward a bit. Let’s contemporize and think through how Mary would have perceived this interruption. We know the rest of the story. We know that Mary and Joseph whose lives were interrupted traveled to Bethlehem where this baby was born. This one named Jesus was her child and yet the Son of God. This child will change everything. This interruption---Jesus--- has the potential of changing you.

////SERMON SPICE VIDEO----First Christmas: Mary (from Skit Guys)////