



12/16/25

*I'm reading a book called, *A Chance to Die*, by Elizabeth Elliot. It's about a missionary woman from the 1800's named Amy Carmichael. I read a quote from Amy today that I think applies to today's passage... and it's a quote I pray will become true for me. She said, "Dead to all one's natural earthly plans and hopes, dead to all voices, however dear, which would deafen our ear to His." My prayer for you and me is that nothing in our life would deafen our ears, our hearts, or our minds to hearing and trusting what God says to us through His word by the power of the Holy Spirit. O Lord, please make it so.*

*Merry Blessings,
Jonna*

Luke 1:26-38

About 6 months after the Angel Gabriel announced to Zechariah that he and Elizabeth would have a baby who would prepare the way for the coming Messiah, God sent Gabriel to Nazareth where he appeared to a young virgin named Mary. Gabriel got to have some pretty cool jobs for the Lord.

Mary was betrothed to Joseph, of the house, the lineage, of David. Gabriel said to Mary, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" Mary did not understand, and this troubled her. It's not every day that an angel shows up and calls someone, "O favored one." What was he talking about? And why was an angel talking to a lowly teenage girl? Aren't there more important people to approach?

Gabriel said, "Do not be afraid..." It seems that this is a very common phrase he had to use during this time. How often do I get afraid of what I don't understand? But when God is involved, the encouragement is always the same, "Do not be afraid."

"Do not be afraid, Mary. You have found favor with God." This word, favor, is the same word we translate "grace." Mary, you have found the generosity of God's love poured out on you. You did

not earn this. God freely blesses you with His favor and grace. Wow.

What kind of favor was God showing Mary? He said, "And behold... check it out, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus (Yeshua is salvation). He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High (not the son of a human man!!!). And the Lord God will give to Him the throne of His father David, and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." In other words, Mary, you are going to give birth to the Savior of the world, the long-awaited Messiah! That's some pretty awesome favor!

Mary didn't get it. "How will this be? I'm a virgin." I know by Gabriel's response that this was not a lack of faith. It was just a lack of understanding. No virgin had ever given birth before... and none ever would again. Mary did not ask for a sign, like Zechariah did. Her sign was standing before her with a big smile on his face!

Gabriel explained, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God." I wonder if Mary knew the moment Jesus was placed in her womb. Could she feel something different? Was it nausea? 🤢 Mary was going to be the only woman ever in history to have the Holy Spirit plant the baby in the womb. This is a miracle.

May I never take it for granted! May it be a proof for my faith to grow stronger and my worship to grow deeper. The Son of God came to take away my sin and to give me eternal life. He did not come without the Father's blessing... In fact, the Father sent Him. He did not come without the covering of the Holy Spirit. Father, Son, and Spirit were in complete unity, and Mary received the blessing.

Even though Mary did not ask for a sign beyond what Gabriel said, he still gave her another sign... the same sign that he gave Zechariah... He told her that Elizabeth, her relative, was pregnant in her "old age" (rude... hahaha). How cool is that! God had the parents of the prophet who would prepare the way for His Son to be related to the mother of the Messiah... so that they would know each other and could encourage each other! God thinks of everything!!!

Mary knew Elizabeth's situation, that she and Zechariah had never been able to conceive and have a child. This was a huge deal! Where she had once grieved for them, now Mary was in awe. Gabriel said, "For NOTHING will be impossible with God." No law of nature can thwart the plans of the One who spoke the world into existence.

This is how I know Mary believed Gabriel and didn't need another sign. She didn't say, "I have to go see Elizabeth and THEN I'll believe." She said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." She trusted that the words were true BEFORE she saw them proven with her eyes. "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

I would love to say my faith is like Mary's, trusting without having to see a sign first. I'm sad to say, it's often more like Zechariah's. I look at what happened to Zechariah and I realize he was given another sign from God, one that I don't want to have... He was told he would be silent until the prophecy was fulfilled and John was born. That's a sign. As soon as Gabriel said it, John went silent... not by choice. Was it God's discipline? Yes. But it was also God's promise of hope. John could be assured for the next nine months, by his involuntary silence, that God would fulfill His promise. O Lord, my prayer is that You won't have to prove Your faithfulness by disciplining me. But even if You do need to discipline me because of my lack of faith, please help that be a sign to me of Your love! You discipline those You LOVE. And You never take away what You've promised!

Well... Gabriel heard Mary's response and said, "My work here is done... And the angel departed from her." She stood there alone, but her life was never the same. And because of Jesus who saved me from my sins, my life will never be the same. Let me never forget.

I pray that every day, I will say like Mary, no matter the circumstances, "I am the Lord's servant, let it be to me according to Your word." Let me remember and trust that You are lavishing ME with the generosity of Your love, Your favor and grace on me. Your purpose for me is not the same as Your purpose for Mary. But the promise of hope in Your purpose for me is. Praise Your name.