



Shelby Christian Church

CHRISTMAS - HOLY MOMENTS - A MOMENT OF SURRENDER

LUKE 1:26-56 * 12/7/2025

MAIN POINT

We must be willing to humbly follow God's plans, even when they don't match ours.

INTRODUCTION

When was a time you made plans and then God changed them for you? How did you respond?

In the Christmas story, we see God's use of the unexpected. In everything from the young virgin mother, to the birthplace in a stable, to revelations via dreams and angelic choirs, no detail about Jesus' entrance into the world was expected. Mary's humble willingness to accept, follow, and even celebrate God through the changes these unexpected events brought to her life is a lesson for us all.

UNDERSTANDING

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 1:26-38.

From verse 27, what plans and dreams do you imagine Mary had?

How do you think Mary felt when the angel Gabriel called her "highly favored one"? Why do you think she was troubled by the greeting? What does it mean to you that God chose a young, humble woman to play such a crucial role in His plan?

How might you have reacted in Mary's position? Compare Mary's initial response to God's "interruption" in her life with the way you typically respond when God brings or allows unexpected changes into your life.

Mary was betrothed to Joseph, which made them legally husband and wife even though the marriage wasn't finalized. According to religious law, Joseph had the right to divorce Mary publicly or privately for her apparent adultery. In an instant, Mary's plans for her life were shattered. The quiet life she'd no doubt imagined with her future husband was suddenly and dramatically derailed. In the moment, it was probably difficult for her to see that God had swapped her ordinary existence for an extraordinary one. Despite the angel's presence and his assurance that she was in God's favor, Mary's initial response to the angel was an honest one: "How can this be?"

What is the difference between questioning God and asking questions of Him?

How does her subsequent response, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled," show her faith? What do you think are some reasons Mary was able to face her troubling fears?

In Luke 1:38, we read that Mary showed resolve to obedience. She wholeheartedly accepted her new role and mission even though she didn't see the whole picture. No doubt, she wondered what her obedience would cost her—she didn't even know what Joseph's reaction would be—but she trusted in the One who called her.

The angel announced that Mary would have a son named Jesus and that his kingdom would be everlasting. What does this promise of an everlasting kingdom mean for us today? How does this promise inspire you?

What circumstance in your life right now are you resisting taking on the attitude that you are the Lord's slave?

HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ LUKE 1:39-56.

What is the significance of each statement in Elizabeth's greeting to Mary (vv. 42-45)? How did Mary respond?

Elizabeth declared Mary to be the most blessed among women and recognized the extraordinary nature of the Child she would bear. She felt humbled that the mother of her Lord would visit her. Even though God had miraculously given Elizabeth a son, she affirmed the far greater significance of the One Mary carried. In response, Mary broke into a beautiful song of praise (1:46-55).

What reason did Mary give for her joy in Luke 1:48?

Why did God choose to bless Mary? Why would God choose to bless you and I?

Mary's joy flowed from recognizing God as her Savior. She celebrated that He had drawn near, lifting her from her humble position and granting her an extraordinary honor. God's grace gave her both the privilege and the freedom to serve Him wholeheartedly. In time, she would come to understand that the salvation brought through the Child she carried reached far beyond earthly status or human privilege.

In verses 49-50, Mary rejoiced in God's attributes. What specific attributes of God does Mary draw attention to in these two verses?

How does reflecting on God's attributes affect the way you respond to Him when unexpected things happen?

What works of God does Mary mention?

How can you find joy in the reliability of God despite your circumstances? How can you rely upon Him in the face of delay, defeat, or even death?

Mary praised God for three key attributes—His power, His holiness, and His mercy. She also remembered the "great things" He had done for her. When we take time to reflect on God's character and His work in our own lives, our hearts become more willing and prepared to follow His plans, even when they differ from our own.

APPLICATION

Think of a time when you were asked to do something challenging for God. How did you respond? What can we learn from Mary's "yes" and her willingness to submit to God's will even when she didn't fully understand how it would work out?

The angel told Mary that "nothing will be impossible with God" (Luke 1:37). How can you apply this truth to a current situation in your life where you feel

overwhelmed or things seem impossible? How does Mary's story encourage you that God knows what He's doing in that situation?

Name something God has asked you to sacrifice in order to follow His plan for your life. What are some practical ways you can remind yourself that God is working His plan in your life?

PRAYER

COMMENTARY

Luke 1:26-35

1:26-27. The announcement of Jesus' birth carried the authority of God. It came in the sixth month, a reference to the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy with John the Baptist. The term virgin emphasized the purity associated with a young, unmarried woman. Although engaged to a man named Joseph, Mary did not yet live with Joseph. In first-century Jewish culture, engagement (or betrothal) bound them together legally as husband and wife. The wedding and consummation of the marriage, however, followed at a later time. Luke identified Mary's husband, Joseph, as a member of the house of David. The Jews knew from the Scriptures that the future Messiah would be a descendant of the great King David. This fact supported the identification of Jesus as King. The Child to be born, then, would be identified with the lineage through which the Messiah had been promised (see Isa. 9:6-7; 11:1-5).

1:28-30. Mary was favored because the Lord set His undeserved grace upon her, not because she had earned good standing. Understandably, she was deeply troubled (Gk *diatarasso*; "confused, perplexed") by Gabriel's visit and greeting, wondering how she had come to receive such an honor. Gabriel's admonishment that Mary not be afraid was the same thing he said to Zechariah (v. 13).

1:31-33. Mary's conception would be miraculous because she was still a virgin (v. 34). The name Jesus is equivalent to the Hebrew Yeshua (Joshua), meaning "the Lord is salvation." In Genesis 14:18, God is referred to as "God Most High." Humanly speaking, Jesus' lineage would be traced legitimately through the royal family of David because Joseph, Jesus' adoptive father, was a descendant of David. This made Jesus heir to David's throne according to God's eternal covenant (see 2 Sam. 7:13,16).

1:34-35. The difference between Mary's response (how can this be) and Zechariah's (v. 18) is that Mary asked her question not from unbelief but from puzzlement (v. 38; see note at v. 20). The answer to Mary's question about how she could get pregnant without being intimate with a man is that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her and cause her to conceive. Because the Holy Spirit was the agent of conception, the child (the holy One; 2 Cor. 5:21; Heb. 4:15) would be the Son of God.

1:41-45 The baby (John) being filled with the Holy Spirit (v. 15) fulfilled Gabriel's prediction to Zechariah. Elizabeth, too, was filled with the Spirit (v. 41), and through the Spirit's revelation she came to understand the blessed roles and identities of both Mary and her unborn Child. When the baby John leaped within her, she recognized it as a sign of his joyful response to Mary's presence.

1:46-55 Mary's hymn of praise is known as the "Magnificat," so named for the Latin term rendered as proclaims the greatness (Gk *megaluno*). It is similar in tone to the song of Hannah (1Sam 2:1-10).

1:46-49 There is a beautiful balance in Mary's hymn of praise. She expressed humble recognition of the greatness and holy nature of God and His grace (favor) on His voluntary slave, but also an

awareness that God's unique calling on her life would result in all future generations calling her blessed. She viewed herself as both humbled and exalted.

1:50-53 These verses recall the descriptions of God's justice found throughout the Psalms (e.g., Ps 100:5; 103:11). Those who fear Him is an OT expression that is equivalent to the NT idea of faith. Fear of God is faith in God. His arm is figurative for God's power. God is a Spirit being (Jn 4:24) and does not have a physical body, but bodily metaphors are effective in communicating some of God's attributes and actions. God is against the proud... the mighty, and the rich, who imagine themselves self-sufficient. By contrast, He champions the cause of the lowly and the hungry, for they acknowledge their need for Him.

1:54-55 In sending Jesus to be born to Mary, God mercifully helped... Israel, in keeping with promises He had made centuries earlier to Abraham and his descendants (see Gen 12:1-3; 22:15-18).

1:56-57 Mary visited Elizabeth shortly after hearing she was "in the sixth month" of her pregnancy (vv. 36,39-40) and stayed with her about three months. Mary may have returned to Nazareth either shortly before or after the birth of Elizabeth's son, John. Given their spiritual bond and the great roles their sons would play in God's plan, it seems likely that Mary stayed for John's birth.