

## Mary – Lessons Learned (Part 2) – Luke 1:26-56

Lk 1; Have you ever known someone who doesn't want to *be* anyone?

Who wants to be a “nobody”?

Who actually *wants* to be relegated to the trash heap of life?

Have you ever known anybody like that? (**Intro**)

I haven't; Including those who act like it from time to time, or have given up in life

Everybody wants to be somebody – it's a universal desire

A desire to be significant, or important, or famous, or remembered

A desire to do something big, or accomplish something great

Or at the very least be close to someone who does, or a part of something that is

Everybody wants that

From sports stars who want to be the best, and businessmen who want to be successful . . .

To kids who want to be accepted; Or couples who want to be parents . . .

*Everybody* wants to *be* somebody; *Everybody* wants to *do* something with their life

- And it's no less true of believers – followers of Jesus Christ
- Every single one of us wants to accomplish great things for the Kingdom of God
- Every single one of us wants to be a part of something bigger than ourselves
- Or do something significant for eternity
- Every single one of us wants to be *used* by God

The question is, how does that happen?

How is it that we can be used by God to the greatest extent possible in our lives?

How is it that we can make a significant kingdom impact in our families, or at our workplaces, or in our communities, or even around the world?

How – that's the question

And to answer it, I want to look at the example of *Mary*, the mother of Jesus

So that we can learn the lessons from *her* life, and be used by God in ours; Lk 1:26-38

From v37, one of the first lessons we can learn from Mary, is that . . .

**God can use anyone, anytime, anywhere to accomplish his purposes (v37)**

The angel told her that she would give birth to a son in v31 . . .

And then goes on to tell her that he would not only be the Messiah, but somehow God in the flesh, *the Son of the Most High* (32) – who would rule over his people forever

And it's almost like she didn't even hear anything after the give birth part, b/c the first words out of her mouth in v34 were, “*How will this be, since I am a virgin?*”

IOW – “Who cares about all the other stuff – this is impossible”

“I'm single and don't have sex; I don't know a man”

And the angel replies in v35-37 by basically saying – “Mary, God can use anyone, anywhere, anytime to accomplish his purposes, including you”

“Case in point – your relative Elizabeth, who's barren and getting up there in years, is pregnant herself”

*For nothing will be impossible with God* (37); Nothing; That's the lesson

- And b/c God is forever unchanging, what was true then, is true now

Nothing is impossible for God – if he could use *her* to accomplish his purposes, he can use *you*

If he could use Elizabeth, he can use anyone

That's the fundamental lesson to be learned here from her life

That God can use anyone, anytime, anywhere to accomplish his purposes . . .

And *will* – if you make yourself available to him

That's the first of 4 caveats, or qualifiers, to this lesson from Mary's life

God can use anyone, anytime, anywhere to accomplish his purposes . . .

• **But he works most through those who are available to him (v38a)**

Those who confess like Mary in v38 – *Behold, I am the servant of the Lord*

The word for servant in Greek is *doulos* – literally “bondservant”

Referring to one whose will is “swallowed up in the will of another”

One who serves another to the disregard of his/her own interests

It was Mary's way of saying – I'm available; I *live* to serve God; I *live* to do his will

I'm constrained as a bondservant, by choice, to do whatever he wants

If there's anything I can do to be of service – I'm in; Wholly available

*That's* the attitude God is looking for

That's the person he uses most to accomplish his purposes

The person who's wholly available without regard to their own interests

- Does that describe *you*?

Are you wholly available to do whatever God wants?

Or only when it's convenient? Or when you have the energy?

Or when the situation is just right?

I hope not; I hope that your words and *your* heart are the same as Mary's words and

*Mary's* heart – *Behold, I am the servant of the Lord* (38a)

She was available, and God used her

And he'll do the same with you, if *you're* available

Not only that, but she was submissive as well

God can use anyone, anytime, anywhere to accomplish his purposes . . .

But he works most through . . .

- **And those who are submissive to him (v38b)**

That's the implication of the second part of her statement in v38 – *Let it be to me according to your word.*

IOW not only am I available as a servant to be used by the Lord, but however he wants to do so, is fine with me

I don't have to know the details ahead of time; I don't have to check off on it . . .

I don't even have to think about it, b/c I already have; And I totally trust him

Whatever he wants to do *to* me, or *in* me, or *through* me – I'm good; Let's get at it

That's submission – the submission that God looks for, to accomplish his purposes

- **One of the reasons** so many people want to be used by God, but aren't, is that they're not submissive

Which usually manifests itself 3 ways – with control issues, authority issues, or pride

1. For those with *control* issues – “It’s my way or the highway”

“If I’m not drivin’, I’m not ridin’ – so scoot over”

“Jesus can take your wheel, but he’s not takin’ mine”

Oh, I realize it’s not that blatant

And most control freaks don’t have a clue they’re guilty, unless someone points it out

But even then, it usually doesn’t do any good; B/c chances are, they also have . . .

2. They have *authority* issues

“Don’t tell me what to do; Nobody tells me what to do; I’ll tell *you* what to do”

“In fact, I’ll tell you what to *tell* me what to do”

Again, it’s far more subtle than that; And sometimes it’s even shrouded in spiritual talk

But it’s no less insidious, no matter how good it sounds

3. They have *pride* issues

“What do I look like, a fool? I’ll send ya’ a memo if I want to do something like that”

“And when I do, I’ll tell you how to do it”

People with pride issues think they know it all

They’re not teachable *or* submissive

And they wonder why God isn’t using them much to accomplish his purposes

Hello – it’s b/c they have issues

Control issues, authority issues, **or pride issues**

- Any of those fit?

**Do you may pay** lip service to being submissive to God, but chafe against the authorities he’s put in your life?

Authorities like the government – *just* b/c they’re an authority?

Or how about your employer? Or your coach? Or your husband?

Or your spiritual authorities like your pastor, or your elders?

If you had a little tightening in your chest as I mentioned some of those authorities in your life, chances are you have issues, and you’re not submissive

- Here’s the point

If you don’t submit to the authorities that God has appointed to lead you, or teach you, or exhort you – then you don’t submit to God himself

It’s a contradiction to say u submit to God, but not to his under-shepherds

That would be like a private in the military saying they submit to their commander in chief, but not their CO

It doesn’t even make sense, and certainly doesn’t work

And the same is true when it comes to submitting to God, and those he’s put in authority over *you*

And if you *don’t* submit, he may very well by-pass you in order to accomplish his purposes, in favor of someone who *does* – someone who *does* submit

Because from Mary’s example, he uses most, those who are **most submissive to him**

And third . . .

- **And those who believe in him (v45)**

Look at v39-45

**God uses most,** those who believe in him

Those who believe in who he is, what he says, and what he does

Those who believe he’s not only capable, but trustworthy

- Think about it from an employer’s standpoint, especially that of an entrepreneur

It’s almost impossible to have someone working for you who doesn’t believe in what you’re doing, or how you’re doing it

Or doesn’t believe that you’re capable of success and profits in the business

If they don’t believe, instead of adding value to your endeavor, they will detract from it

And it won’t be long before you let them go

Or if you’re a coach, and one of your players doesn’t believe you when you say that a new play will work – you’re not going to put them in the game

Why? B/c they won’t perform; They’ll hinder your purpose

And the same is true of us, when it comes to being used by God

If we don’t believe that what he says is true, or that what he says he can and will do . . .

We’re of little use to him in **making it happen**

- **Belief is a fundamental** prerequisite to being used by God

Belief first of all, that he exists; And then, that he wrote a book

And that what it says is true – namely, that he loves you, and wants to save you from your sins

So much so that he sent his Son to die your place, so you wouldn’t have to

That’s where being used by God to the utmost, begins

With belief in who he is, what he says, and what he’ll do

Short of that, you’re on the outside looking in when it comes to his purposes and plans

- Don’t go there; And if you are, don’t stay there

Take the step of faith to believe – really believe

The step of faith to entrust your entire life to Jesus – past, present, and future . . .

Based on *his* word, and *only* his word; And then live it out each and every day

And when you do, get ready

B/c God won’t just use you *anywhere* – he’ll use you *everywhere*

And not just *some* of the time, **but all the time**

God can use anyone, anywhere, anytime to accomplish his purposes . . .

But he works most through those who are *available* to him, those who are *submissive* to him, those who *believe* in him, and finally from Mary’s example . . .

• **And those who magnify him (v46-56)**

Look at v46-56 – often referred to as “The Magnificat” which comes from the Latin translation of v46 . . .

Where Mary says in response to the events thrust upon her – *My soul magnifies the Lord*  
Magnifies comes from the Latin “Magnificat” – hence the name that’s been given to her response here (v46-56)

**In v46 Mary said, “My soul magnifies the Lord”**

Meaning, my heart swells with the thought of him

Or, he’s “more awesome than I know” as we sometimes sing it

It’s an expression of worship meant to enlarge, and draw attention to, and magnify the goodness/greatness of God

The result of which was the overflow of her heart in . . .

1. *Rejoicing* – Mary rejoiced in God

It’s the first of 3 responses that come naturally from those who truly magnify the Lord

Who worship him with soul-enlarging, heart-swelling passion – they rejoice

*My spirit rejoices in God my Savior* Mary said in v47

She gave him the glory for all that had happened, and he lavished her with joy as a result

That’s how God does it when he uses you to accomplish his purposes

He gets the glory, and you get the joy – **joy that overflows**

That’s the first result of soul-magnifying worship; The second is the . . .

2. *Recounting* of God’s deeds – Mary recounted God’s deeds

49 – *He who is mighty has done great things for me*

Things like looking on her *humble estate* (48a) – i.e. noticing the lowliness of the life she lived

And things like calling attention to her blessing in the eyes of future generations (48b)

*For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed*

The swelling of her heart with God’s goodness and greatness, led her to recount some of the things he had done to bring it about – great things

And then third, she praised God; **The soul-enlarging** overflow of her heart led to . . .

3. *Praise* – praise for God’s attributes

Like the *holiness* of his name (49b) – referring to the complete and unique *otherness* of who he is

And his attribute of *mercy* toward those who fear him (50) – i.e. those who honor him, and revere him, and tremble at the thought of incurring his wrath

Which by the way, is something we’ve totally lost these days

We so emphasize the *love* of God, and so minimize the *wrath* of God, that we no longer *fear* God

“Jesus is my best friend” has totally displaced “God as my Father”

That’s not to say that Jesus is not a friend of sinners – he is

But he’s also our judge and King

And yes, God is our loving heavenly Father, but he’s also just

Leading Mary to praise him for his *mercy* – for *withholding* his wrath toward those who **fear him**

And then in v51-52, she praised him for his *strength* – strength to tear down even the mightiest, and exalt even the lowliest

And his *compassion* toward those who need him (53)

And finally, she praised him for his *faithfulness* in v54-55, to follow thru on his promises

The swelling of Mary’s heart toward God – led her to *rejoice* in him, *recount* his deeds, and *praise* his attributes

• **God’s not looking** to use those with *cavalier* attitudes toward him

Or people with *casual* feelings for his work in their lives

Or those with *care-less* reactions to his goodness and greatness

No, he’s looking to use those who *magnify* him for all he’s done

Whose hearts *swell* with his greatness; And mouths *speak* of his goodness . . .

And lives *show* his righteousness

People who make *known* the wondrous deeds of the Lord, instead of sitting on them

People who aren’t *bashful* about all he’s done, but bold

People who aren’t *obnoxious* for him, but winsome (attractive, pleasant, appealing)

All of which Mary was, and did

Showing us and teaching us, that (**Summary**). . .

If he can use her, he can use us – anytime, anywhere

But he works most through those who are *available* to him . . .

And those who are *submissive* to him; And those who *believe* in him . . .

And those who *magnify* him

Learn the lessons, and live the life – a life of **being used by God**

Worship

O Happy Day

Close

Christmas services – invite someone

CM Christmas Program & Project – Sunday from 4-6p.m.