

Interrupted Plans
December 21, 2014
Luke 1: 26-38
Rev. Krystal Goodger

Knock Knock
Who's there
Interrupting Cow
Interrupting
Mooooooooooooo

It's not fun when things get interrupted, is it?
It's even less fun when it happens to be well laid out plans.

If you are a parent, you know all too well about interrupted plans. Also, if your work requires you to be on call... if you have animals...

Today's scripture lesson is all about interrupted plans.

Rev. Dow and Rev. Warren write,
About nine months before the first Christmas God intervened in human affairs and radically altered Mary's plans with an unwanted gift. She was planning on marrying Joseph, a descendant of King David, who made his living working in Nazareth as a carpenter. Matthew tells us that he "was a good man". He wasn't rich, but would have made a comfortable living. She planned on getting married, having children and raising a family. It was a good plan. It was a comfortable plan.

But then God came along and messed the whole thing up. God comes along and says through his angel, "Mary, I know that you have your plans in place and everything is on schedule, but I have a different idea. Before you and Joseph get married you are going to become pregnant and guess what? Joseph is not going to be the Father. I am." Talk about having a monkey wrench thrown in your plans!

Matthew tells us that, when Joseph found out that the good little girl he was planning on marrying was pregnant, "he decided to break the engagement

quietly”. We see here what a great guy Joseph was because he wanted to break off the engagement quietly so that Mary wouldn’t be disgraced publicly. How many guys do you know who would act in the best interests of the woman they believed had cheated on them? However an angel from heaven convinced him that Mary’s story was legit and that he should go through with the marriage.

But it wasn’t just Mary and Joseph’s plans that were messed up by the birth of Jesus. It pretty much messed up everybody’s plans. It messed up the plans of the shepherds who were planning on another peaceful night watching their sheep on the Judean hillside.

It messed up Herod’s plans for he was planning on being the King of the Jews.

The families in Bethlehem had their plans messed up as they were planning on another quiet night at home with the kids.

It also messed up the plans of the Jews who were planning on a political Messiah who would come to lead them into a state of independence from the Romans. Instead they got a Messiah who told them to “turn the other cheek” and to “go the extra mile” and to “love your enemies.”

God messed everybody’s plans up, but especially Mary’s. And not surprisingly she was in what I think could be described as a state of shock initially. Luke says: “Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean.”

You would be confused and disturbed too if your whole world had just been turned upside down and Mary was no different. And how do people often respond initially when they find themselves in such life altering circumstances? They question God and again we see that Mary was no different.

The scripture tells us: Mary asked the angel, “But how can this happen? I am a virgin.”

When something comes along and drastically messes up our plans we are often left questioning God. Why did this happen? How could this happen? And we find Mary asking a similar question of God.

It is significant to note that the angel doesn't condemn Mary for questioning God like this. God is not offended when we bring our honest questions before him. In fact, her child would grow up and one day say, "Ask and you will be given (an answer)." God invites us to bring our questions and concerns to him.

So the next time your world gets turned upside down don't be afraid to go to God with your tough questions. God isn't pleased when his children put on fake smiles and just pretend that everything is all right when really everything seems all wrong. He appreciates and respects your authenticity.

Eventually though... and thankfully... Mary submitted to God's plans. And often so do we... eventually... otherwise God will keep asking! 😊

Mary responded, "I am the Lord's servant. May everything you have said about me come true." And then the angel left her.

At the end of the day God does not expect us to know it all or to understand it all. What God wants from us is our willingness to be faithful to him by submitting to his plans and his agenda for our lives. This is really tough for us to do because we like to be in charge and we like to be the ones calling the shots. But this is what it means to become a Christian. It means to accept God has the Lord of our lives and that means that we no longer live for ourselves, but for him because your heavenly Father really does know best.

How many of us know the right the thing to do, but don't do it? For example, (and I shudder to mention this around the holidays) how many of us know how we should be eating in order to be healthy and maintain an appropriate weight? And yet how many of us eat that way consistently? How many of us know that we should be exercising several times each week? But how many of us are actually doing it?

So you can see the real key isn't knowing what God wants from you because 99% of God's will for your life is clearly spelled out for you in the Bible. It's not a guessing game or riddle you have to solve. The real key is simply being willing to submit your life to God and his plans. Are you willing to allow God to mess up your plans this holiday season?

As we close this morning I want you to know that anytime God interrupts your plans it is only because he has a better idea. Mary was simply planning on settling down, marrying a carpenter and raising a family. But God said, "Mary, I don't want you to just give birth to a kid. I want you to give birth to a king. I don't want you to merely raise a son. I want you to raise the Savior. I want you to give up your good plan for my great plan."

One of the realities that we need to be aware of this holiday season is that God's plans often come through unwanted interruptions – through unwanted gifts. Will you allow yourself to be bothered by God's interruptions this Christmas? Will you accept his unwanted gift? If so this might just be the most interesting, the most difficult and the most rewarding Christmas ever? Just think what loss our world would have suffered if Mary wouldn't have accepted God's unwanted gift.

In preparation for the very first Christmas Mary allowed the Lord Jesus to enter her womb. In preparation for this Christmas won't you allow him to enter your heart?