

## **“Stirred Up: Freed to Serve”**

12-21-14

Open to Luke 1. Let's start off this morning with a little exercise. Don't worry, you don't even have to get up, but I do want you to remember being 15. Can you remember that far back? What were you doing at 15? Some of you here today may have children or grandchildren about that age! What was it like to be fifteen?

Most religious scholars say that Mary was probably 15 when the angel appeared to her. Verses 26-30, *“In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, “Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!” But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God.”*

The incredible message from the angel tells Mary she will be the mother to carry God's Son. So why did God choose this 15 year old, and why did she find favor with God? It wasn't because of her education, she didn't have any! It wasn't because of her wealth, she was poor! She was just as ordinary as you or I! Even though she was ordinary, God used her in an extra-ordinary way. Look at what kind of people God uses.

Look at Mary's words in verse 38, *“And Mary said, “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”* God uses people who desire to do His Will.

God has a plan for your life, but God never takes away your freewill. You have the right to waste your life and not make it count for anything. Or do you have the desire to go to God and say, *“I want to be what You want me to be.”* Mary didn't say, *“But God, I don't think I'm a good choice. I have my goals, my dreams, my desires.”* Mary desired to do Gods Will!

Do you want to be used by God, or do you want to do as little as possible and still be called a Christian? You must desire God's Will! Listen to David in Psalm 40:8, *“I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart.”* Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:9, *“So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him.”* It has to be our heart's desire to do God's Will every day in every way!

God uses people who decide to pay the cost. While becoming a Christian isn't difficult, living out your responsibility as a Christian is! There's a price to be paid for your commitment to Jesus. The closer you get to God and the more you're in tune with His Will, the more it will cost you! There will be risks. It will require faith in the unknown. You're really putting your life into God's hands and telling Him, *“Use me as You wish!”*

Mary decided to take the risk. What did it cost Mary? It cost her reputation. She was a virgin, pregnant and engaged. She was betrothed to Joseph which meant she had accepted the marriage contract of her family and Joseph's. Being a virgin and pregnant would put her in an outcast group. She would be open for rejection and criticism. If Joseph wanted, he could have legally stoned her! It also cost Mary her comfort. How would you like to be 9 months pregnant and take a 70 mile journey walking or on the back of a donkey!

God uses people who dare to trust His promises. We need to be people of faith! Courage doesn't mean that you aren't afraid. But it does mean moving ahead in spite of your fears. Another word for courage is faith! Mary had questions and doubts. Verses 34-35, *“And Mary said to the angel, “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”* And

*the angel answered her, "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."*

When faced to what seems like an impossibility, we need to follow Mary's example of trust and realize everything is possible with God! We tend to like to play it safe! Instead of panicking about the unknown, Mary praised God and worshiped Him! Listen to Jesus' words in Luke 18:27, "*What is impossible with man is possible with God.*"

Think about this. If God can take a poor, uneducated, peasant girl and make her the mother of His Son, don't you think He can do something with your life, as well? What can God do with this congregation if we step out on faith, realizing that nothing is impossible with God!

God uses people who put God's mission first and totally. Jesus was very clear as He gave His commission. It's our mission to share Jesus with everyone around us. God's been asking people to share His Son for over 2000 years now. It started with Mary. But the question is still the same: Are you willing to share Jesus with the world?

God uses people who give themselves to Him in worship and praise. In sharing Christ, we risk upsetting someone or being embarrassed. So what? People of God, God's relying on you to continue the invitation to Jesus and come to His table. It's up to you now to share with others the Good News of the Savior come to earth. You know, I think most folks are afraid that they will do or say something wrong and therefore don't even try. But it's not about you, it's about the Spirit working through you. You just have to be willing!

Be a Christian who has faith like Mary and change your allegiance. Rather than serving your flesh and the world, become a willing servant of Jesus Christ! There's no greater gift of love you can show to the Lord than to become His servant and follow His Will. Live in submission to Jesus Christ! Proclaim boldly, "*Christ the Savior is Born!*"