

# “How Will This Be?”

Luke 1:26-56

Last Wednesday, our lesson told us of the disbelief and doubt that Zechariah had when the angel announced to him that his wife Elizabeth would conceive a son. Zechariah asked, “How can I be sure of this?”

Today, we witness the bewilderment, yet belief, of Mary the mother of our Lord when the angel announces the Good News of her finding favor with God, and that she will bear a son who “will be called the Son of the Most High.” She says, **“How will this be, since I am a virgin?”**

Mary knew that this would “be.” She knew that this event would happen. But she didn’t understand how this was going to happen. She was probably about 14 years old. That was the typical age when a young lady would be engaged and preparing for married life. But as a 14-year-old girl, she had obviously payed attention in her Biology classes, because she understood where babies come from.

From a scientific standpoint, it would be impossible for her to have a baby. But then, the Lord is not restricted to the laws of science. And as the angel says, “Nothing will be impossible with God.”

This young lady places her full faith and trust in this message of God from the angel. Her life was not going to be the way that she had envisioned it. She was now going to be an unmarried pregnant girl in a society that frowned upon that greatly to say the least – you could even be stoned to death for such an offense. By legal right, Joseph could have brought charges against her.

Her wedding was certainly off. If Joseph was going to marry her, it would have to be done quietly and without celebration. The wedding feast was generally considered the highlight of a person's life. Especially in poorer families, it was the one time in your life that you could have luxuries. Wedding feasts could last as long as a week. It was the one event that every young girl dreamed about.

All of that was lost. Her family would suffer great shame and embarrassment, and depending upon the arrangement of Mary and Joseph's wedding plans, Joseph's father may have even had legal grounds to sue Mary's father.

Mary's life was going to change drastically, but she was a young lady who had her priorities straight. She says, "I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." There was no disappointment on her part that her wedding day would be ruined. She doesn't say, "There goes my plans." In faith, she answers the angel and says, "I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word."

Her faith and devotion is first and foremost to God. Unlike Zechariah, as we saw last week, she sees God as being God. She understands her role as one of God's chosen people. God comes first. Then other priorities fall in line.

We can learn much from the faith of this young lady who willingly gave up the life that she had planned. She willingly gave up her wedding celebration – the most important thing happening in her life at that time. Without hesitation, she answers the angel because God is her God. And willingly and joyfully she receives her calling to be the mother of the Lord. Very often we go willingly, but not always joyfully. Mary says, “My spirit rejoices in God my Savior.”

We are urged continually to pray for a willing spirit. We pray “Thy will be done.” We also pray for a joyful spirit, because life within the church, life within the kingdom is often a very bumpy ride.

Mary understands that she will become a social outcast because of the baby Jesus. Yet, she calls herself “blessed,” as did Elizabeth and so do we. She has her priorities straight. Her relationship with God comes first. The material things that she is going to give up for the sake of God, she counts as nothing. She does not even mention them. There is no hesitation to give them up.

It begs the question, “What would you be willing to gladly give up for the sake of God?” That is a question we all need to ponder.

In the face of her life changing, Mary's strength was the God in which she trusted. She believed the words of the angel and of the Old Testament that told of this coming Savior. She trusted in the promises. And she knew that whatever difficult circumstances arise as a result of her social status changing, she knew that God would provide for her.

When Christ entered her life, the world's perception of her and her perception of the world completely changed. The world would have hated her because of Jesus, but she saw the value (or the lack of value) of the world and its opinion. It does not matter what the world thinks of you. The only relationship that matters is your relationship with God.

As baptized Christians, forgiven of all our sin, we confess that in thanks to God for that great gift of forgiveness, we would give up everything at a moment's notice for the sake of the Good News of Jesus Christ. That is what we confess with our words, but that is exactly what Mary did through her actions. Without hesitation, she gave up her comfortable plan for her life, so that she could be scorned by the world, but be blessed by God.

That is the burden and the joy she carried with her as she carried that child. Sacrificing certain things in this life, the cost of discipleship, living in this world and declaring through your words and action that God is your God, there is a cost. Mary answers the angel and says, "My spirit rejoices in God my Savior. Amen.