

12/14/2014

ESF, Lord's day service message

Nothing Is Impossible With God

Luke 1:26-38

²⁶In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, ²⁷to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. ³¹You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give him the name Jesus. ³²He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴"How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month. ³⁷For nothing is impossible with God."

³⁸"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.

For many of us, this is our favorite time of the year. We will sing our favorite Christmas Carols, eat our favorite meals, visit with our favorite friends and relatives, and hear our favorite Christmas story. At Christmas time, life is packed full of (all kinds of) favorites.

In the Christmas story of Mary, God shows us how we can receive his favor.

————→ **Movie clip** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LXVArTlpmmw>
(start at 2:00 End at 4:20)

When the angel delivered God's word to the virgin Mary that she would conceive a baby without knowing a man, Mary thought that it was impossible. Then the angel said, "**Nothing is impossible with God.**" That word is given not only for Mary but for all of us today.

Sometimes life seems impossible. But the miracle of Christmas proves that NOTHING is impossible with God.

God's favor for all

When God makes something impossible in our lives possible, he may use ordinary people. That is his favor. When God used Mary to have the child, Jesus, in her womb, she was a virgin. She was not rich or famous but an ordinary person. She had nothing special or unusual which could distinguish her from other people. She was an ordinary girl who was living in a small town called Nazareth.

Also, she had done nothing particular which made her deserving of God's special blessing. She received this blessing by God's favor. So, the angel who delivered God's blessing to Mary said,
*"Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."
"Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God."*

Although God may use anybody according to his own will, he gives his gracious favor to ordinary people to do extra ordinary things, to do something impossible.

Why does God do that? By doing so, he wants to make men humble before him and give glory only to him. 1 Corinthians 1:28-29 says: *He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised*

things--and the things that are not--to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him.

What God did through an ordinary person, Mary reminds us that our worth in God's eyes doesn't depend on human conditions. It reminds us that our value is not dependent upon what we have achieved with our lives. To God every person is acceptable; loved; favored; approved; important; valuable; dignified; distinguished; priceless; significant – you matter to God! In the Psalms we are reminded that we are “Fearfully and wonderfully made” (Ps 139:14).

In every person's life, there is potential to make the impossible possible if the person's life is in God's favor. In Judges chapter 6, when God called Gideon to deliver His people from the powerful army of the Midianites, he was just an ordinary man. He was afraid of the Midianites and was threshing wheat in a winepress to keep it from the Midianites. Nobody, including himself thought that he could be a warrior to fight the might Medianites and defeat them. But when God called him, God did him a favor:

When the angel of the LORD appeared to Gideon, he said, “The LORD is with you, mighty warrior” (Judges 6:12). In God's favor, Gideon became a mighty warrior to defeat the powerful army.

When Jesus called His disciples to be great leaders, He did not choose famous, rich or highly recognized people. He chose ordinary people.

So, don't think that you can't do great things because you have nothing unusual, nothing special or prominent. Believe that God favors ordinary people like you.

Psalmist confesses that he is secure when he dwells in the Lord's favor: *LORD, when you favored me, you made my royal mountain stand firm* (Psalm 30:7).

2 Corinthians 6:2 confirmed this truth, *For he(the Lord) says, "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, now is the time of God's favor, now is the day of salvation.*

By his favor, God may use you in a most precious way regardless of your human condition. Believe in God's favor for you.

It's all about Jesus

When the angel told Mary God's plan in her life to do something impossible, the focus was not on Mary herself but on Jesus. The angel did not talk about who Mary was, who Mary would be, but what God would do through Jesus. The message was that her son Jesus would be called the Son of God, that God would give Him the throne as He had promised, that He would reign over the people of God forever, and that His kingdom would never end: *He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever; his kingdom will never end* (verses 32-33).

God reveals His almighty power and makes impossible things possible through Jesus' name and achieves His promise through Jesus.

God has put all His best blessings in Jesus. The greatest blessing of Christmas is nothing or no one but Jesus. But often, people try to find blessings in other things. They focus on men, money, and power. They are thinking and talking about Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the angels, and the magi. While they are doing that,

they may miss the main point of Christmas which is God's blessing in Jesus Himself.

When God wants to use you to do something impossible, He has you focus on Jesus and His promise which can be achieved through Jesus.

Mother Teresa took care of many sick and abandoned people in a care facility in Calcutta, India for many years. One day while she was taking care of a very sick man in the facility, the man told her that as a Hindu he believed that he got sick and was suffering because of his past sins and no one could change his fate. He also asked why she was taking care of him so sacrificially. Mother Teresa told him that it was not she but Christ who suffered and died on the cross to bring God's forgiveness and love for all. She helped him to focus on not himself, not her, not the Hindu religion, but Jesus Christ to overcome his hopeless fate.

If you focus your eyes on Jesus, you can overcome your hopeless fate.

Hebrews 12:2 says, ***Let us fix our eyes on Jesus***, *the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.*

When Jesus is at the center of your heart, nothing can defeat you, nothing can make your life miserable. Focus your eyes on Jesus, he will make the impossible in your life possible.

The power of the Holy Spirit

When Mary asked the angel how such an impossibility - a virgin conceiving a baby, could be possible in her life, the answer of the angel was that the Holy Spirit would come upon her and the power of God would overshadow her. If God is showing you something impossible you can be sure that it will be by His Spirit. Zechariah

4:6 says, *'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.*

If you want to see a powerful miracle from God in your own life today, depend upon the power of the Holy Spirit. God commands us to live life filled with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 says, *Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.* It is God's will to be filled with the Holy Spirit.

But there is just one thing which Mary had to do to let the power of the Holy Spirit actually work in her life. It is to obey. When Mary obeyed God's word regarding the power of the Holy Spirit, the impossible became possible.

For Mary, to obey the way of the Holy Spirit could mean risking her life, because getting pregnant as an unmarried woman could be regarded as a crime punishable by stoning in those days.

A lot of things might be going through Mary's mind

- How will I explain this to my family & friends?
- Is my engagement to Joseph in jeopardy?
- Will I be found guilty and be stoned to death?

However, she surrendered herself to God and obeyed the word by saying: *"I am the Lord's servant, May it be to me as you have said."*

Following God's word may not always be safe. Sometimes it will lead us into difficult places. When God starts something great in our lives he may not consider our comfort or if it is convenience. After all, being chosen by God would bring none of ideals or goals that consume our daily life today. We assume those whom God favors will enjoy the good life: fame, wealth, comfort. Such was not the case for Mary here. She obeyed God's word not for a comfortable, famous, or rich life but for God's own glory.

God releases the power of the Holy Spirit through those who obey his word. If you want to see the power of the Holy Spirit in your own life today, obey what you hear from the Lord, even if it means risking your life.