

12/16/2018

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.

Some years ago, a large moose wandered into a residential area in Calgary, Canada. The moose ended up on the lawn of a house. A Fish and Wildlife officer was dispatched to try to coax the moose back into the wild. After two hours of absolutely no progress, the officer finally shot the moose with a tranquilizer dart. The moose collapsed on another nearby lawn.

The reporters who had been following this event interviewed the lady at the house where the moose collapsed. They asked her what she thought about the moose which had passed out on her lawn. "I'm surprised," she answered, "but not as surprised as my husband will be. He's out moose hunting."

Her husband had gone out looking for moose and a large moose had come to him. That is the message of Christmas. While men spend their time seeking after God, God comes to men in a miraculous way. He comes to men through a baby conceived by a virgin.

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- **a virgin's conception of a child**- proves that nothing is impossible with God.

God's favor for all

When God makes something impossible in our lives possible, he does us a favor. When God used Mary to have the child, Jesus, in her womb, she was an ordinary person. She was not rich or famous. She had nothing special or unusual which could distinguish her from other people. She was an ordinary woman 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 proves that our value is not dependent upon what we have achieved. 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 Midianites 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). By God's favor, Gideon, who was an ordinary man, became a mighty warrior to defeat the powerful army.

When Jesus called His disciples to be great leaders, He did not choose famous, rich, well educated 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.

The 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.*

When a person works an eight-hour day and receives a fair day's pay for his time, that is a wage. When a person competes with an opponent and receives a trophy for his performance, that is a prize. When a person receives appropriate recognition for his long service or high achievements, that is an award. But when a person is not capable of earning a wage, can win no prize, and deserves no award yet receives such a gift anyway that is a good picture of God's unmerited favor. This is what the favor of God means.

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

It's all about Jesus

When the angel told Mary God's plan to do something impossible in her life, 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: *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).

There are three key points in this message. They are:

1). **Jesus would be great** - Jesus would be great in His love, great in His compassion, and great in His sacrifice. He would live a great life, teach great parables and give great sermons. He would heal with great power. He would die a great death and would be resurrected in great power. He would be greater than all great people.

2). **Jesus would be called the Son of the Most High**-The title “Most High” in the Old Testament is el elyon in the Hebrew and is a statement of God’s surpassing supremacy. There is no one higher than He is. He is sovereign in every dimension possible. To say that Jesus is the Son of the Most High is to say that He bears the character and nature of the highest.

3). **Jesus would become the king of eternal kingdom as God promised**– Jesus has become the King who fulfills the promise of God. He has conquered the world not with weapons but with the power of the cross. He is the King of peace. He rules the world with love and peace. He reigns over the people of God forever. Since He came to the world, His kingdom has grown constantly until today and will keep growing.

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 but Jesus.

But often, people try to find Christmas blessings in other things. They are thinking and talking about Mary, Joseph, the shepherds, the angels, the gifts, 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 about her but Christ who suffered and died on the cross to bring God's forgiveness and love for all. She encouraged him to focus on not himself, not her, not the Hindu religion, not his karma 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....*** 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 simple: *The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you...(verse 35)*. Nothing but the power of the Holy Spirit would make the impossible task possible.

If God turns your impossible task into a possible task, He does it only 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.

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

Do you remember the last time you filled out a job application? You have to give them all your vital statistics, your background, your education, your experience. Most of them ask one important question: what is it that makes you qualified for this position? What the employers really want to know is your ability, skills, and talents.

But God doesn't operate this way. God is not as interested in your abilities as He is in your availability. God's question for you is "*Are you available for me?*" No matter who you are, God can use you if you make yourself available to him. To be available to God, one thing you need to do is "obey."

But, 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 publicly and 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 if it is comfortable or convenience for us. After all, being chosen by God would bring none of the ideals or goals that consume our daily lives 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 no matter what the consequence of obedience may be.

At the end of Paul’s third missionary journey, he was praying to seek God’s guidance: “God what is your will for me now?” And he was convinced that going to Jerusalem was God’s will. He obeyed the will of God and was heading to Jerusalem. But some believers begged him not to go to Jerusalem. Their reason was that a prophet prophesied that if Paul went to Jerusalem, he would be arrested and be handed over to the Gentiles. There would be suffering. But Paul did not stop. He took suffering as a part of obeying God’s will. He said: *“Why are you weeping and breaking my heart? I am ready not only to be bound, but also to die in Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus”* (Acts 21:13).

The Holy Spirit worked powerfully in Paul’s life through such unconditional obedience.

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 reputation, your comfort, your money, or your life.