

Confirmation - A Leap of Faith

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In the text we read today....Mary who is about 13 years old (how many of you are 13?)
...sees an angel...the word angel means messenger...(no wings...necessarily)
And the angel gives her this news that she is to have a baby who will be the
Messiah....but its not going to happen in the regular way but.... by the power of the Holy
Spirit
She hears what the angel says...how great this news is on the one hand cause she gets
to be God's Mom...pretty cool...

And yet on the other hand she can't help but be thinking some other thoughts as
well...

Women who get pregnant outside of marriage according to Jewish law, get
stoned – how on earth is that going to work out?

She can't help but think...how is Joseph to whom I am engaged going to take
this news? He will never understand...I love him. I don't want to be without him.

She can't help but think...*what about all the plans I had, for my life*...I wasn't
planning on being the mother of the Messiah...never thought about it really...I guess I
am glad but it had never crossed my mind that this would define and encompass my
life...

Don't you think God knew that she would be thinking these things?
And in the same way God knows each of you; he knows what your concerns are today.

I don't. He does.

Mary struggles with thoughts in her mind about her life, and her circumstances, and his
plan for her...and we all struggle sometimes with concerns and issues that keep us up at
night, or pull us down...
we may have troubling circumstances or difficult days

So God sends this angel to Mary to essentially say three things to her that I hope
you will remember are key to your faith in Jesus Christ; I hope you take with you this
morning...

1. DO NOT FEAR:

As much as God wanted Mary to follow him without fear, so he wants you
to do the same.

You haven't confirmed your faith in God by accident by the way.

You have been led, guided, and brought to this place today, because God brought you.

You have made your own decision (apart from your parents at this point)
to receive...**Receiving Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and it is the greatest**

decision you could ever make because every other decision you make is temporal...lasts for this life only.

The decision you made today is eternal. Lasts beyond this life. As soon as we accept Christ as Lord his promise to us is that we have eternal life with him after we die. **So we don't have to fear death...**

But we also don't have to fear life. God says to you Teresa, Elisabeth, Evan, Shane,..... **I've got you. Trust me.**

Whatever you are going through right now, whatever troubling thoughts you might have in your mind (just like Mary had in hers), whatever doubts you have or concerns about life or people or circumstances, I've got you.

You belong to me now. I am faithful. I am your advocate, your friend...I will never ever let you down.

I did this amazing thing yesterday. I went with Bill Johns in his glider. Do you know what a glider is? It is a freaking airplane without an engine. ..folks...that you ride inside of.

It's crazy!

I would never do this normally. You have this tow plane that brings you up to the heights. And then you go off of this cliff...with no engine...people!

You know what though? I wasn't afraid.

You know why? Because I trust Bill. He's an amazing pilot.

I completely trusted his ability, even though going off that ledge in a plane with no engine for someone who didn't know and trust Bill could have been seen as absolutely foolhardy.

I asked him actually before we went up, just to make sure, if I had recently offended him with anything I said in a sermon recently...and I apologized if I had just to make doubly sure...

I put my life in Bills hands yesterday and he didn't let me down. Would I have gone off that ledge if he hadn't been with me? Never!

When you give your life to Christ...that's essentially what you are doing. Putting your life in his hands. As Mary said, "Let it be to me according to your word..essentially...**Let it be to me according to YOUR PLAN FOR MY LIFE.**

I surrender to you! I give my life, my plans, my will over to you – in your hands I put all that stuff. Cause I am just mortal...you are eternal. Your *eternal life-giving healing powerful-to-save-hands* are where I want to be...not my own mortal frail sinful hands.

And all these folks here at WVPC can tell you with me, that there are no better hands to put your life in...There's a lot of other things and people you can trust to get you through life...but they will all let you down

But when you put your life in God's hands, which you have just done in your confession of faith...when you do that...put your life in the hands of the God of Jesus Christ...you do not need to be afraid. As soon as you make that decision he's got you...And he says to you, "Don't be afraid. Trust me and I will pilot you through life."

The second thing that the angel says to Mary is...

The Holy Spirit Will Come Upon You

It was the Holy Spirit working in the situation that made Jesus' coming and transforming the world possible.

It wasn't Mary trying so hard to make it happen...she just surrendered...as you all have today given your life to Christ...Essentially saying, I am yours God...I receive you into my heart...let it be to me according to your plan for my life...

And then for Mary and for you, the rest is an act of the Holy Spirit...

So today I want to encourage you to **Get to know the Holy Spirit in your journey of faith.**

The Holy Spirit in the Bible is often compared to wind, or to power.

There's this great scripture passage that says, **"It's not by your power (our own strength), or by your might (our own resolutions to be good), but its by My Spirit (that all is accomplished) says the Lord.**

Do you know why Bill is such a good pilot and can stay up in the air for sometimes as long as three hours at a time with no engine?

Is it because the glider is trying so hard to keep itself up in the air on its own strength that allows it to fly for that amount of time? No.

It's because Bill knows the wind, the air currents, the way the airflow happens. He has studied them. He knows how to catch the airflow in just the right way so that he can get that glider to soar.

The Christian life is about learning how to soar. Not trying so hard to be good on our own strength. We will burn out real fast if we do it that way.

After Jesus left this earth, he told his friends, I am going to give you the Holy Spirit as a gift. It's my presence with you always.

So for us as Christians, one of the best things we can do is to get to know the movement and person of the Holy Spirit;

As you pray, you can ask the Holy Spirit to come upon you.

Over time you will begin to recognize his presence, through daily prayer, scripture reading, participating in worship and praise...and as you do you will be able to hear his voice...follow his leading...and recognize that **It is his power at work in you,**

not your own effort,

that will allow you to live the victorious Christian life...to soar...

Finally the angel says to Mary...**"Nothing is Impossible With God"**

Do you believe that?

Do you believe that nothing is impossible with God?

You see I believe that each of you were created by God for a purpose. That he has a wonderful plan for your life.

The road won't always be easy, as it wasn't easy for Mary...

As she surrendered to God's call on her life....multiple things happened to her that were very discouraging...ending in Jesus being executed on a cross which just devastated her...and yet she never gave up and millions have been rescued because of this cross...cause the true ending of this story was resurrection.

And I also believe that each of you has a dream or an aspiration...that God has put deep inside of you.

You see when God calls you to do something, he also created you for that purpose in the beginning, so his call on your life ought to resonate with who you are, deep inside.

What I want to say to you today is, if you feel called by God to do something in your life that seems impossible to others impossible to accomplish....keep at it. Don't let anyone steal that dream.

If God is calling you to do something for him, yes you need to pray about it, check it out with other Christians and your parents who can pray for and with you, and then go for it.

Don't let anyone discourage you or limit that calling.

Don't let circumstances weigh you down

Because, Nothing Is Impossible With God.

One of the ways to test out our calling is this great phrase that Dallas Willard coined. He said God's calling on our life is,

"Where our greatest joy, meets the world's greatest need."

What is your greatest joy?

Where do you see the world's greatest need?

Where do those things overlap?

Your answer to those two questions will equal your call...

Because when God calls us and we say, "Let it be to me according to your word/plan." as Mary did, and as you all of you did today in giving your life to Christ...

We find meaning

We find purpose

We find fulfillment because we are giving ourselves back to the One who created for this purpose to begin with...

We find ourselves, when we give ourselves to God's purpose for our lives...to his calling

Today as we approach this table we are reminded that Jesus gave his life, because he was following the call and purpose of God for him...starting out as a baby from a peasant woman, Mary, of 13 years old, who also dared to believe in God's call on *her* life ... that she was to nurture and raise the one who would bring healing, salvation and hope to so many millions of people.

That she would be intimately involved in God's plan of salvation down through generations.

Who would have thought it would happen that way?

God has a purpose and plan for you too.

I encourage you all to ruthlessly follow God's call on your life without fear by the power of the Holy Spirit....

Remembering that...*Nothing is impossible with God.*