

The Stories That Remain

Choices Before Us

Pastor Craig Sweeney | December 17, 2023

Thread: Saying “yes” to God can seem like choosing to walk into the impossible.

“In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, ‘Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!’ Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. ‘Don’t be afraid, Mary,’ the angel told her, ‘for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his ancestor David. And he will reign over Israel forever; his Kingdom will never end!’”
Luke 1:26 – 33

Miracles = when the kingdom of God breaks through into our lives.

Ingredients for a miracle:

Obvious

- A problem you can’t solve
- A risk too great to bear
- A price too high to pay

Less Obvious

- God wants to accomplish something great/impactful for others *through* me.
- God wants to accomplish something great/impactful *for* me.

Do you believe it? (“Favored...The Lord is with you”)

- *“But God has protected me right up to this present time so I can...”* **Acts 26:22 NLT**
- *“For God is working in you, giving you the desire and the power to do what pleases him.”* **Philippians 2:13 NLT**
- *“...What is impossible for people is possible with God.”*
Luke 18:27 NLT

Miracles can often involve others.

- “engaged...to a man named Joseph”
- Joseph was not along for the ride.
- What is God doing in those around you, and how are you supporting them?

“Mary asked the angel, ‘But how can this happen? I am a virgin.’ The angel replied, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God. What’s more, your relative Elizabeth has become pregnant in her old age! People used to say she was barren, but she has conceived a son and is now in her sixth month. For the word of God will never fail.’ Mary responded, ‘I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.’ And then the angel left her.” **Luke 1:34 – 38 NLT**

Mary took God at His Word.

- Not naive...trusting.

Mary knew this would be a work in progress because she was.

Today, “servant” is a soiled word.

- Mary believed being God’s servant was a privilege to be sought, not a hardship to avoid.
- She could/would embrace the long-term results for her life because this choice.

What does it say about Jesus’ advent to be born into a family and not assume a throne?

Challenge:

-Is God trying to break into your life? Does it seem impossible?

“...What is impossible for people is possible with God.”

Luke 18:27 NLT

-Whose servant are you?

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