

Dreaming the Impossible

Advent #3 – 12/11/22

Scripture: Luke 1:26 – 38

For this third week of Advent, let us look at Mary who is the primary character in Jesus' birth story and Jesus' mom.

The angel Gabriel was a hardworking angel. First he visits Zechariah and when Zechariah hesitated at his message, the angel Gabriel makes Zechariah speechless until his son is born. Then the angel Gabriel stops at Mary's house. The angel Gabriel's opening line did not go over well with Mary! When the angel Gabriel tells Mary that she is highly favored, Mary has trouble with that description – 'highly favored'.

I am the middle son of three boys and I sure did not feel highly favored in my family. I am a middle child – enough said. I always got the middle seat in the back seat of our station wagon. I would sit on the lump in the middle of the backseat! I sat at the dining room table the farthest from my Mom & Dad – Oh, maybe that was a blessing because I was out of reach from my father's hand. So I know how Mary was troubled with the description of 'highly favored'!

Have you ever felt 'highly favored'? Has there been a moment in your life when something happened to you that made you feel 'highly favored'? Anyone to share? (Pause)

Was not the status of highly favored reserved for kings or priests? Was not the status of highly favored for the wealthy and powerful? But here was a poor young woman named Mary – highly favored – far from it!

Mary continued to listen to the angel Gabriel, although she remained cautious. Upon hearing that she was to give birth to Jesus, Mary asks a very practical question. Her question was – 'How will this be since I am a virgin?'

Mary knew this was an impossible dream. It could only happen with and from and through God. Let me repeat that - Mary knew this was an impossible dream. It could only happen with and from and through God.

The angel Gabriel assures Mary that nothing will be impossible with God. And from there on, Mary is on board! Mary is trusting that this impossible thing will happen to her because God has chosen her. Mary is trusting that a virgin will get pregnant because God makes the impossible – possible! Mary knew impossible dreams can happen with and from and through God.

Do you know that the impossible can happen? Do you know that nothing is impossible with God? Have you ever dreamed the impossible? Mary was on board with the impossible, are you? The impossible can happen with and from God!

At the end of this encounter with Gabriel, Mary identifies herself as a servant of the Lord. Mary does not identify herself as Joseph's fiancé or as a poor girl from Bethlehem, but by her relationship to God. Mary says boldly – 'I am the Lord's servant!'

How do you identify yourself? Do you identify yourself as a large person or a small person? Do you identify yourself as an educated person or uneducated person? Do you identify yourself as a teacher or doctor? Do you identify yourself as a farmer or laborer? Do you identify yourself as blue collar or white collar? How do you identify yourself?

Mary is changed completely, not only in her pregnant body, but also in her mind and soul. Mary is now fully devoted to the Lord!

How often do we encounter dreams for our lives that seem so impossible? How often do our dreams seem so impossible that we do not even give them a chance? How often do our dreams seem so impossible that we do not allow the seeds of the dream to take root and grow? How often?

Remember impossible dreams can happen with and from and through God. Think about that - impossible dreams can happen with and from and through God.

What if next time we trust that God is present in the impossible? What if next time we allow ourselves to be transformed with and from and through God?

When the angel Gabriel told Mary she would become pregnant, she at first thought it was an impossible dream, but once the angel told her that nothing is impossible with God – she believed fully.

May we have this same faith in Jesus Christ - impossible dreams can happen with and from and through Jesus Christ!

Let us pray:

God of small beginnings open our bodies up to the impossible; open our minds up to the impossible; and open our hearts up to the impossible. May each of us become the vessels of your love and may we have the same faith as Mary had – AMEN.