I am the Lord’s Servant

Luke 1:26-38

Key verse 38

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

**Introduction:**

This portion is unique in that the author Luke as a historian describes what happened in a town called Nazareth in great detail. He elaborates one on one dialogue between angel and Mary. The angel says, “You who are highly favored!” Mary says at the end, “I am the Lord’s servant.” Let us see what led her to confess such a believing word despite her situation. We can follow her footstep in accepting God’s words and experience the great work of God. May the Lord help us to increase our faith and live a blessed life on earth. Amen.

**1. Read verses 26 - 28. When does God send the angel Gabriel to Nazareth? (26) To whom was the angel Gabriel sent? (27) How did the angel greet Mary? (28)**

**1-1. Read verses 26 - 28.**

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

**1-2. When does God send the angel Gabriel to Nazareth? (26)**

* God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee in the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy.
* Regarding Jesus’ birth, Luke tells the time, place, and person.
* time - in the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy.
  + “In the sixth month” refers to the six month of Elizabeth pregnancy.
  + At the start of the second trimester, you will feel your baby's movements, which get stronger as the baby grows bigger.
* At the end of the fourth month, your baby can move and hear your voice.
* By the end of the fifth month, you'll be able to feel light movements (called quickening) of your fetus. Your baby is sleeping and waking at regular intervals, and is more active than before.
  + place - Nazareth, a town in Galilee.
    - Luke mentions that Joseph and Mary were from Nazareth before Jesus was born.
  + person - to Mary.
* It’s similar pattern of a birth of John, the Baptist. (1:5)
  + In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron.
  + At God’s time God faithfully fulfilled his promise.

**1-3. To whom was the angel Gabriel sent? (27)**

* A virgin’s name was Mary.
  + A virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph.
  + Joseph is a descendant of David(Matthew 1:16)
* Mary is clearly identified as a virgin not once, but twice in verse 27.
  + Also in verse 34, Mary admitted that she had not known a man.
* Virgin conception
  + Isaiah 7:14 says that “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel.”
  + Matthew 1:18, 25
    - 18 This is how the birth of Jesus the Messiah came about: His mother Mary was pledged to be married to Joseph, but before they came together, she was found to be pregnant through the Holy Spirit.
    - 25 But he did not consummate their marriage until she gave birth to a son. And he gave him the name Jesus.
* Mary was already "betrothed" (pledged) to Joseph.
  + There were three stages to a Jewish wedding in that day:
    - engagement - a formal agreement made by the fathers.
    - betrothal - the ceremony where mutual promises are made.
    - marriage - approximately one year later when the bridegroom comes at an unexpected time for his bride and last for a week.
  + Betrothal usually lasted about a year. Although it was regarded as equally binding as marriage, the girl having the same legal position as a wife, it was not normal for intercourse to take place during this period.
  + when a couple was betrothed, they were under the obligations of faithfulness, and a divorce was required to break the betrothal.
* Mary was a virgin and she was chosen by God.

**1-4. How did the angel greet Mary? (28)**

* “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”
* The angel said two things to Mary.
  + She is highly favored.
    - Mary is one of sinners like us. However God highly favored her and used her preciously as a mother of Jesus.
  + The Lord is with you.
    - It is found in the OT which meant to be a statement of fact rather than a wish.
      * Judges 6:12 - When the angel of the Lord appeared to Gideon, he said, “The Lord is with you, mighty warrior.”
      * Ruth 2:4a - Just then Boaz arrived from Bethlehem and greeted the harvesters, “The Lord be with you!”
      * 2 Samuel 7:3 - Nathan replied to the king, “Whatever you have in mind, go ahead and do it, for the Lord is with you.”
    - It also speaks to more than God's presence, as in "The Lord is with you." It carries the meaning that the "The Lord is on your side to help you."

**2. Read verses 29 - 33. What is Mary’s response to the angel? (29) How does the angel comfort Mary? (30)  What does the angel tell her about who her son will be? (31-33)**

**2-1. Read verses 29 - 33.**

29 Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. 30 But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. 31 You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. 32 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, 33 and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

**2-2. What is Mary’s response to the angel? (29)**

* Mary was greatly troubled at the angles’ word.
  + She was troubled greatly because she might have wished ordinary time without any disturbance during her period of betrothal.
  + Mary wondered what kind of greeting this might be.

**2-3. How does the angel comfort Mary? (30)**

* Do not be afraid Mary; you have found favor with God.
  + The angel assured her by saying, “Do not be afraid, Mary”
  + The Angel again says, “You have found favor with God”
  + It reminds me of Noah. Although he had been faithful in following God, still the Bible clearly says that he found favor in the eyes of the Lord.
* You have found favor with God.
  + The expression, "for you have found favor with God," gives the reason why Mary should not fear.
  + Mary did not earn His grace but merely found it. God’s word of blessings are available in his words anytime.
  + In Genesis 6, people became corrupt despite God’s truthful words. Only Noah had maintained holy fear about God’s words and made the ark in holy fear. As a result he was enabled to find favor with God.
  + Likewise Mary is about to find God’s favor. The same principle is applied to her in finding God’s favor to be used in His redemptive purpose.

**2-4. What does the angel tell her about who her son will be? (31-33)**

* “You will conceive and give birth to a son”
  + “will conceive” is clearly in the future tense.
  + In verse 34 Mary’s question, “how will this be?”, is future tense.
  + In verse 35 Gabriel’s answer is consistently future tense.
* Compared to Matthew 1:22 and 23 which quoted Isaiah 7:14, it doesn’t quote it.
  + It is the Angel’s message.
  + Luke’s account is more weighted in the naming(Jesus).
  + Also, Gabriel is declaring that the incarnation of the Son of God shall be similar to the conception of any child in one sense.
  + God's Son will be conceived and gradually develop in the womb just as any other child does.
* “You are to call him Jesus”
  + God himself names the child.
  + Jesus means “God saves” (Matthew 1:21b)
* “He will be great and will be called **the Son of the Most High**.”
  + The Most High refers God.
  + Jesus will be the "Son" of the Most High God.
* “The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David”

As for David, God’s blessing was upon him in a unique way. The New Testament identifies Jesus with David more than with any other human ancestor.

· Matthew 21:9 - Hosanna to the Son of David!

· Revelation 22:6 - I am the Root and Offspring of David, the Bright and Morning Star.

* “he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”
* It reminds us of 2 Samuel 7:11b-16
* “‘The Lord declares to you that the Lord himself will establish a house for you: **12** When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom.**13** He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. **14** I will be his father, and he will be my son. When he does wrong, I will punish him with a rod wielded by men, with floggings inflicted by human hands. **15** But my love will never be taken away from him, as I took it away from Saul,whom I removed from before you. **16** Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever.’”
* According to this promise of God, God fulfills it despite unfaithfulness of David’s descendants.
* The Prophet Ezra quoted 2 Samuel 7:11b-16 on his book, 1 Chronicles 17:1-15 *after* the exile, when there was no independent kingdom of Israel and the throne of David seemed vacant. He had the faith to see that this promise was not broken even when it plainly seemed to be. He knew that Messiah would indeed come from the seemingly dead line of David and reign forever. He had personal faith in what the Lord foretold as a greater fulfillment of these promises.

**3. Read verses 34 - 37. What does Mary ask the angel? (34) What does the angel tell Mary about how God will help her? (35a)  What will Mary’s son be called? (35b)  What does the angel tell Mary about her cousin Elizabeth? (36)  What is true about God’s words? (37)**

**3-1. Read verses 34 - 37.**

34 “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?” 35 The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on 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. 36 Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. 37 For no word from God will ever fail.”

**3-2. What does Mary ask the angel? (34)**

* How will this be since I am a virgin?
  + She reasoned and asked logically.
  + Compared with Zechariah’s believing remarks in Luke 1:18, she honestly asked the question. She must have believed what the angel says.

**3-3. What does the angel tell Mary about how God will help her? (35a)**

* “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.”
* The author Luke is a physician as well as a gentile. But what the angel has said is nonsense from his background. But he set it aside and sees God’s work by faith.
  + Therefore only in the book of Luke among four synoptic gospel, he described what happened the most.
* “The Holy Spirit will come on you”
  + The Holy Spirit is a person who will come on Mary.
* “The power of the Most High”
  + The power of the Most High reminds us of the power of creation. In John 1:14, “the Word became flesh.” John 1:1, 2 also read, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning.”
* “Overshadow” means “cover with the cloud.”
  + It has to do with the cloud of Shekinah glory in Exodus 16:10
  + “It came about as Aaron spoke to the whole congregation of the sons of Israel, that they looked toward the wilderness, and behold, the glory of the LORD appeared in the cloud.”

**3-4. What will Mary’s son be called? (35b)**

* “The holy one to be born will be called the Son of God.”
  + This recognizes the fact that he is the Son of God from all eternity.
  + Jesus is fully God and fully man.
  + The holy one indicates that Jesus never sinned (2 Co 5:21).
    - **“**God made him who had no sin to be sinfor us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”
* The holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. (John 5:17-18)
  + “In his defense Jesus said to them, “My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I too am working.” **18** For this reason they tried all the more to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God.”

**3-5. What does the angel tell Mary about her cousin Elizabeth? (36)**

* “Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have in her old age.”
  + God brought an evidence of the power of the Most High in the case of Elizabeth.

**3-6. What is true about God’s words? (37)**

* “For no word from God will ever fail.”
  + God will absolutely fulfill what he says!
  + It never hinged upon any condition or situation.
  + God is determined and fulfill without fail.

**4. Read verse 38. How does Mary respond after hearing everything the angel had to say? (38)  What do you think we can learn from Mary here?**

**4-1. Read verse 38.**

38 “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

**4-2. How does Mary respond after hearing everything the angel had to say? (38)**

* She responds by saying, “I am the Lord’s servant,” as well as “May your word to me be fulfilled.”
  + Mary must have known exactly what Gabriel was talking about because she was a woman of the word of God.
  + When he said you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, she would know that he quoted from [Isaiah 7:14](http://www.studylight.org/desk/index.cgi?q1=Isaiah+7:14&t1=en_nas) : the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son.
  + Her identity is clear before the Lord. She does not say that she needs to discuss about it with Joseph at least. She could have asked more time.
  + She puts trust in the word of God rather than what she may think or feel.
  + She knows about the consequence if she turns out to be pregnant in such a culture.
  + But she accepted the word in her heart and prayed for its fulfillment.

**4-3. What do you think we can learn from Mary here?**

* Mary must have experienced the power of God’s word.
  + Her situation was not favorable to accept the word of God.
  + It is relatively easy to give up a big dream but it is hard to give up a small dream.
  + Mary could have been wrapped up in her wedding preparation.
  + But she needs to deny herself and trust in the word of God.
  + It is a miracle and a greater miracle than being pregnant as a virgin.
* May the Lord raise up many women of faith like Mary in our generation.

**In conclusion:**

Mary answers, “I am the Lord’s servant, May it be to me as you have said.” Still is it possible to hear the same answer in our times. Yes, of course! We are witnesses to see many women of faith following Mary’s footstep. No doubt the author Luke wanted to share the story of Mary. Maybe May was still alive while he was writing this passage. We are often amazed by the story of Mother Barry who fully devoted her life for world mission purpose. May the Lord raise up many believing women and America becomes a great kingdom of priests and a holy nation. May the Lord help us to uphold the word of God daily so that we may develop our spiritual muscle to obey his words absolutely at the critical momentum like Mary who set a good example. Amen.

**One word: I am the Lord’s servant!**