

Anything is possible with God (Afternoon Message)

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[0 : 00] So this afternoon we're carrying on a bit like with Mary's interactions with Jesus, but we're going right back to the beginning with her and her son.

And we've seen how she was the mum who was like, hey, get Jesus involved in your party. See what he can do that you can't do. But actually there was a decision that she made years previously to go for what God had for her.

And I'd just love us to journey a bit together this afternoon with how that little girl, I mean it's strange to think, isn't it, how young she would have been back in those days and in that culture, that this young girl could have been picked by God.

I mean that flies in the face of God doesn't use women, doesn't it? Whoops. I hate to bring you this passage, but he picked her. You know, to do incredible things in his world.

That's how Jesus the Saviour came. And actually, you know, that should just give us such confidence. He can just do whatever he wants to do with whoever we think we are, whoever we thought we were.

[1 : 07] God can do these amazing things. Anything is possible with God. And so here we have this young girl who actually becomes isolated in her society because of what God did within her.

And you know what, sometimes that happens to us. Because we feel like we're the mad bonkers ones, like carrying God around with us. We're literally like Mary's, you know. We're prototypes of the same thing really.

Not necessarily conveying like babies coming out. But you know, we're like, we carry the life of God in us. And just like with Mary, it will change our shape. It will change how people relate to us.

It will change what we have to decide and the choices that are set before us. Do we get rid of what God's doing in our lives? Or do we carry it through? Do we take a decision to say, whatever you want, God, I'm going to do this.

And you know, this young girl, she made those choices. And she did that completely isolated. And we've got each other. And so if she can do it, then we can definitely do it.

[2 : 03] And so we're going to kind of journey a bit with her and put ourselves into her situation. Listen to those phrases that I felt the Holy Spirit really go, tell them this. So you'll see those come up bold.

But we'll do a little bit of a journey with her this afternoon. But I wanted to introduce you. Now, I did confess earlier that I got jealous of my one-year-old niece. But this is her when she was born. Isn't she gorgeous?

She's called Sarah. And my brother married a French girl, which was quite inconvenient because we have to go to France to see her quite a lot. But oh, well, I must go. And but I was going, you know, I told you a bit about my context.

Now, in the context of me feeling like my trust in love was failing, like love never fails and I was going well. I think it might. And feeling like new things could happen. And I was like, no, I don't think they can.

Everyone's leaving and people are sad and marriages are breaking and la, la, la. And I don't know who to trust. Into this context, the other thing I was thinking is this sounds really bad, but some of you might relate to it.

[3 : 01] I just thought, oh, my parents are getting old. I'm going to end up wiping their bums and then I'm going to just rot away and die. Honestly, that's what I thought. I thought, if I don't leave this town, that's my fate.

There we go. I've been really honest. This is being recorded. Sorry, mom and dad. I really love you. But that's what I was thinking because I'm like the one who stayed in Cheltenham and like, you know, my dad had a heart attack. And I was like, I'm going to take time off.

Let's be there because that's I want to do that for my family. But I was thinking if I don't get out of here, that's my fate. And I was literally thinking we're all getting old. It's all going downhill. I had silver glitter coming out of my head, going gray.

And I was just thinking, oh, no, it's all going down, down, down, down. I'm rotting away and there is no hope and I'm going to die. That's how I felt. But then in that context, my brother and his wife said, we're about to have a baby.

And honestly, when she was born, I was like, oh, suddenly it doesn't feel like everyone's just getting older and older. Suddenly it doesn't feel like we're all just going downhill. Suddenly, even though it wasn't my baby, this is how the church works, guys.

[4 : 05] Even though someone else brought the life into the family, it was like it came to me. And I have to say, I wasn't that gracious when she was one. But when she was first born, we'll reverse a bit.

I'm going to adapt. I'm going to be world's best auntie. I'm going for that prize. But when she first came, it was literally like I looked at the purity of her face. I looked at her bright beady eyes and I just thought, wow, what hope.

And it was like she was a symbol of hope for my life. And it was with that I felt suddenly confident I can move away. My parents will be okay. We're not all just rotting away and going to pop our clogs and go to heaven.

We actually, there is hope for this life, which I know it sounds really weird, but I wonder if anyone has felt a bit like maybe a different circumstance. But we are all getting old. That is factual, isn't it? But even though the Bible says, even though we waste away inwardly, we're made alive daily.

And I just felt like almost she was a little picture that came into my life. And I thought, actually, that's why Jesus came as a baby. You know, when we see these little babies, we see like the innocence.

[5 : 09] And you know what? God knew exactly what he was doing, choosing a young woman and choosing a baby. Because, you know, I looked at this one-year-old over Christmas, feeling like she was annoying me slightly because of the way that we were being told to parent and all of that.

But she actually, you know, that's what they call the power of the powerless in a baby. Everything changes because of a baby. You know, we couldn't watch the telly because of the baby. We were like, we had to be quiet after a certain time because of the baby.

All of our mealtimes changed because of the baby. I couldn't watch even the queen's speech because of the baby, let alone Poirot. So, you know, God knew exactly what he was doing, picking a baby.

And he knew exactly what he was doing, picking a teenage girl. And he knows exactly what he's doing, picking you. He knows exactly what he's doing. He's not at all confused. You might be going, oh, I don't know why you choose me to do this.

I can't carry you very well. I can't be the body of Christ, the hands of Jesus, the eyes of Jesus. Can't walk around God. God's good news everywhere. Don't pick someone else. He knows exactly what he's doing.

[6 : 15] And he's not falling off his throne and he's not devoid of his mind in picking this. But there's my brother and there's my little Sarah. And this is a picture of hope. Hoping for families, hope for all of us.

So let's have a little journey through the way that Luke recorded it in chapter one and kind of see what the Holy Spirit wants to say to you as you sit here today receiving these words.

So in the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy. So you know what? We're all carrying life in some form, aren't we? And so was Elizabeth. In the sixth month of her pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David.

The virgin's name was Mary. God knows your name. He's picking you, handpicked. And the angel went to her and said to this little Mary, greetings you who are highly favoured.

The Lord is with you. And you know what? In the scripture, when God had said it then, he says it again. If he says it for her, he says it for you.

[7 : 32] And if he did it back then, he can do it again. In fact, he can do it even better, more differently. But this is kind of a demonstration of our impossible God.

And he wants to say to you today, I think, you, you who I know the name of, you are highly favoured by God. And God himself is with you.

He is with you. But Mary was greatly troubled. And you know when God starts to say things that we're like, oh, that's a new one on me.

It sort of disrupts us, doesn't it? It disrupts our minds. And she was troubled at his words and she wondered what kind of greeting this might be. We're always a bit suspicious of compliments, aren't we?

We better learn to take them from God. Especially our Christians, brothers and sisters as well. So she's like, uh-oh, what kind of greeting is this? What do you want?

[8 : 33] Oh, just your whole life and I want to put my son in your body. Oh, okay, great. So in a way she was right to be a bit suspicious. Because God had plans. But the angel said to her, do not be afraid.

Do not be afraid. Daughters of the Most High God, do not you dare be afraid. Because God is up to something and he wants to tag you into his plan.

So do not be afraid. Even if you don't fully know what's coming. Mary had no idea what was coming. But what was coming was favour with God.

You have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son. And you are to call him Jesus. Which means saviour or God saves.

Inside her, she was walking around a message that was going to scream at the world. God saves. God can save that. God can save you. God can save that situation.

[9 : 38] Look. And inside you is a message from the Most High God. Who knows your name. Who thinks you're highly favoured. And he's tagged you.

He's picked you to carry around a message that says, I have hope in that situation. With God all things are possible. God could save that. Watch my walk change. Watch my life change.

Actually watch people isolate me a bit. Because I'm the only one at the moment still standing and believing it. But it's changing me. This was Mary. And you know what? This is us. This is us.

And I love that what she was going to birth, she knew what to call it. She kind of got a heads up from the angel. That's quite handy, isn't it? And some of you sitting there, it's like you're about to give birth.

There's new things on the horizon. And you know what? God is perfectly within his power and capabilities to say, and that's what it's going to be. And we're going to name it.

[10 : 37] My friend got her business name almost like as a download from God. Then she was like asking God, oh, I don't know about a logo. And she saw in her mind a picture of a crown. She makes the most amazing cakes.

And like every time she makes cakes or gets booked for booking, she prays over them, prays like God bless these people. And she gets them say things like it's really weird, like, you know, meeting you.

It just changed the atmosphere in our home. And oh, I just felt, you know, there was a different kind of presence. You know, and she's like, ha ha, it's Jesus. Allow me to introduce you to my friend, Jesus.

He can save you. Sorry, I can't. Do you notice in worship, who's a kind of a flinger in worship? Any flingers? Am I the only flinger? I think I might be the only flinger.

I knocked cap a couple of times. And I confidently sang the wrong words. Possibly heresy, accidentally. Just with my confident singing. Sometimes I have to rain it down and like hold myself.

[11 : 37] Imagine it's Jesus holding me. No, I'm actually trying to keep my arms down. I'm so enthusiastic. Anyway, moving back. And then this is what she was going to birth was going to be.

He will be great. He will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord will give him the throne of his father, David. He will reign over Jacob's descendants forever. His kingdom will never end.

You see, God wants to put things in you that make a difference. But change things. That have kind of like an authority over something. There's all these spheres of society.

It's like the new buzz thing, isn't it, for Christians. Like, oh, there's seven spheres of society. Cultural mountains. And do you know what? God wants us to take our stand in them. He wants us to have our stand in education system.

We need to get Christians in there. We need to get the mind of Christ and the voice of Christ into schools and education. He needs Christians in the government. Does he not? God, he needs

Christians in businesses.

[12:31] You know, for such a long time, we thought, oh, if we can influence somewhere, let's influence the church. God's like, it's okay, I've got the church. Can you please take the world? Thank you. You know, it's like there's stuff for us to do.

There's rulership that he gives us and authority he gives us. And we don't have to snatch it and strut around like peacocks and shout loud about it. But we do have to, like, know what we carry and bring it.

Bring it and carry it well. And know that God is building his kingdom and his kingdom will never end and it can't be shaken. So if we start taking the kingdom of God into those places, you know what? They are going to get on their faces before Jesus. And wouldn't it be amazing if people in medicine and, you know, research and stuff were hearing from God these cures?

You know, I have family and friends, you know, their insecurity. They need to be hearing the voice of God. You know, like I love in the Bible how God shows, oh, the enemy's coming from here.

[13:26] They had a heads up. We need that. You know, we need these Christians in different areas. Anyway, I've gone really off-piste. I've gone all the way over here and I don't know where I'm going. Anyway, I'm coming back. But God wants to build his kingdom through us for the sake of this world because that's the whole point of Jesus is to save.

And so there's areas that God gives us authority over and influence over and family life is a key one. You know, it's great hearing from Homestuck, wasn't it? Anyway, and then Mary asked the question that we are probably now asking.

Okay, God wants to do that in us, but how can this be? How? And then she says, because I'm just like this. I literally, I have had no sex. You don't seem to understand.

That's normally the way this happens. But God has a solution. He says the Holy Spirit will come on you. The power of the Most High will overshadow you.

And the Holy One to be born will be called the Son of God. And you know today, there is a sense of the presence of God hovering over us, overshadowing us.

[14:31] Jay talked earlier in the worship, didn't he, about almost like a breeding and brooding hen over us with wings. Nustling us under, incubating us in a really nurturing, maternal way, bringing life.

That's the job of our Holy Spirit. God's Spirit, the Most High God. Of course he can do this. It sounds, I realize it sounds so strange.

But this is our God. And if we are to be at a conference where we're saying our verse is nothing is impossible with God, we better start believing it. We better start believing it.

And I said this earlier, but this is true. You know, whoever believes in me, this is Jesus saying this, recorded in John, as Scripture has said.

You know, whoever believes in Jesus, as Scripture has said. As the Bible has described. If you believe in him like that. If you go, oh yeah, I agree with that. Then, living water, rivers of living water will flow from within them.

[15:33] Out, right out from us. God wants to put something in you that's so powerful. Just like he put Jesus into Mary. So powerful. Brought life out. He still does that.

He still does that. And then, the angel says, even Elizabeth. And she is old. She's an old lady.

Even she's going to have a child. And she's unable to conceive. But you know what? She's in her sixth month. And some of you, your reason is like, I'm sorry. I'm just too old and frail.

God's like, I'm sorry. I'm God. And there's like me going, I'm sorry. Everyone looks like they're dying around me and getting old and decrepit.

And God's like, I'm going to put a baby in your family. And then we'll talk about it. And then, you know, this is what the angel says. No word from God will ever fail.

[16:32] And other translations say nothing is impossible with God. Nothing. Nothing is impossible with God. And no word from God will ever fail.

I'm talking myself into it. You know that, right? I've shared enough. This is what I'm talking myself into. And I'm trying to convince you. Please talk yourself into it too. Pray yourself into it too.

Sing yourself into it too. We don't sing because we know it's true at the time. We sing it to increase our faith that it will be true. That's the point. And then she says this.

She makes this decision. And this is the decision I'd love us to come to today. I'm the Lord's servant. Like, I'm not here because of me. I'm here because God plonked me here on this earth in a

particular space.

I'm somehow in this westernized world that I live in with the family I have and the neighborhood I have. With the skills I have, knowing the people I know. But we're servants of God, really.

[17:31] And so she says, may your word to me be fulfilled. Other translations say, let it be to me according to your word. Now, we could live our lives according to our words.

Might be okay. We could live our lives according to the words and opinions of others. Again, might be okay but might be a bit average. Might be even quite dreadful if we all went by the opinions of others.

But if we do this according to God's word. According to God's word. May it be to me according to God's word.

Yeah? Do you want to do that too? I do. Because I think it might be a bit rubbish without God's word. I'd rather trust in the most high God. The middle verse in the Bible says it's better to trust in God than to trust in man.

It's better to trust in God than to put your trust in princes, leaders, you know. Even them. Put our trust in God. Let our lives be completely according to God's word.

[18:34] And then I love this. And then the angel left her. Bye! Good luck! Good luck! Good luck! Good luck! And then this is a bit of a challenge I think from James.

He said get rid of all the filth and the evil in our lives. This is serious stuff. You know we get a lot of mess and nonsense in our lives. And make some such stupid decisions.

Honestly I could write a book of my most stupid decisions. But then humbly accept the word God has planted in your hearts. It has the power to save your souls.

Like this is serious. We have to take in what God says. Because it's his saving power. Imagine if she'd be like, well thank you very much for your kind offer.

But I'm kind of a teenager right now. I've got stuff to do. I fancy this guy. We're going to get hitched. God's like, um, I know but I need to send a saviour. We've got a plan. She actually said, you know, accept.

[19:38] I accept. I accept. I accept. I accept what you say. I accept that word. And you know what? Because she did, our souls are saved. Like hell is lighter.

Heaven is more populated. This is serious. Because people are screwing their lives up out there. And we carry Jesus. And everywhere we go, we walk Jesus.

And everything we touch, we touch with the hands of Jesus. We are now the body of Christ. We're inhabited by Jesus. Our eyes are his eyes. Our hands are his hands. Our feet are his.

Our mind. We have the mind of Christ. He didn't give us, like, a spirit of fear. He gave us power and love and a sound mind. Because it's his mind. It's his mind.

Your head is his head. Your mouth is his mouth. Like, we need this roar of the lion again. We're like, oh, the nice lamb of Jesus. And we're all lying on the floor like martyrs. Like, great for a season.

[20:34] But get up on your feet and roar. Because this is serious stuff. It's saving stuff. And you know what? More than ever, lives need saving.

I have never walked through so much nonsense that I have walked through when I walked through Stokescroft. And I'm completely used to it now. I'm used to someone lying on the floor, drugged out of their head, mumbling.

It's not acceptable. You need the saving power of God. I walk past people and they're cut all up their arms. It's not acceptable to hurt what God has made and thinks is precious.

It's not acceptable. You need the power of God and the word of God. And the saving of God. And you know, the verse comes from this, from today, came from this passage where, you know, he was saying it's really, really difficult when you have so much stuff to remember who God is.

It's hard for that rich person to get through the eye of a needle. So many camels. So many bags. Oh, I'm sorry, God, but I've got a lot of stuff.

[21:42] Like, we forget how powerful God is. And that's exactly why he said to those people who have loads of stuff, could fix things in other ways.

No, it's Jesus is the only saviour. God is a God of impossible. Saving power is for everybody.

But it's tricky when you think you can do it on your own and you've got lots of stuff and people can bail you out. You forget you actually need a saviour. And you know what? I want to remind you today. You need a saviour. Every day we need the mercy of God.

Every day we kind of need saving, don't we, from something in some way. It's what I was saying about my old housemate. You know, we don't just have faith. We practice our faith. We have to practice it.

You know, with this situation, Jesus was saying, it is completely impossible. But with God, all things are possible. With God, all things are possible.

[22 : 42] Even those people with loads of stuff who do not look like they need Jesus, they actually really do. And so Mary, having made this decision to say, okay, I agree, I'm going to carry what you put in me, God.

Thanks, angel, for the heads up. I'd better sort this out with my partner. This could get tricky. She gets ready. And she hurries to a town in the hill country of Judea.

She entered Zechariah's home and she greeted Elizabeth. And you know what? Sometimes when we start to think, oh, okay, I think I've got something brewing that God's put within me. I'm not quite sure.

Do you know what you need to do? You need to get yourself to a place where you know other people are happy to carry things to. Don't get yourself to the place where everyone goes, oh, no, don't do that, what Jesus told you. Remove those people in the nicest possible way.

Do not go to their house in that moment. And she greets Elizabeth. And then when Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb.

[23 : 44] Because what you carry from God is going to have a bounce-off effect in the life of someone else if you say yes. And that's what today is. Like, we've had loads of chit-chat over lunch and things.

And it's like you can see God has done something in someone else and you go, oh, that causes me. That causes a reaction in me as well. Because I want to carry that too. Or I want to, like, honor what God's put in me too.

Or I want to believe that word to be true for me and I'm going to stand with you. And that's what she did. So she went to that place. And the baby leaped. And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. And all they did was basically say, hi. Sorry, that was really high. Hi. That's all they did was greet each other.

And all we're doing today is we're sat shoulder to shoulder with our sisters in the God squad. All of us carrying different things from God. And there will be a rising of what God's put in us.

[24 : 47] There will be a leaping of the life that God's put within us because of this day. And I pray that you as well, as Elizabeth, will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Because our lives, we're not by might or by power and our own strength. It's by the power of the Spirit of God. So let's all be praying and expecting that that's what God wants to do.

And then in a loud voice, she exclaimed, blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you'll bear. None of this comparison nonsense. Like, wow, look what God's doing in you as well. That is awesome. Look what we're carrying. You're carrying that one. I'm carrying this one. What's yours going to be called? Let's go. And then there's this real humility.

But why am I so favored that the mother of my Lord should come to me? She's like, gosh, you're carrying this. You're carrying Jesus in such an amazing way. Why did you come to my house?

[25 : 51] Why did you come to this place? And then she explains, you know, as soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy.

Oh, blessed are you. Because you've believed what God would do in you. You've believed that God is going to fulfill his promises. Isn't that amazing?

And I want to encourage you, please celebrate with your sisters when they've said their yeses to Jesus in the most hard of times. In the most fearful of times.

You know what? She ended up carrying this baby right through a genocide. Like, literal mass murder. She had friends who walked out on her. She had people who sneered at her.

She had to go on her own to try and avoid being, like, all of them being murdered. But she did this. She chose this. And if she did it, we can do it, right?

[26 : 47] Because I don't think we're quite in that place of persecution. We might get there. We might need to decide today. You know, people around the world, they're losing their heads for their faith.

Because they're like, I'm going to carry Jesus in you. I'm not going to stop me. I'm not going to renounce Jesus. You know, I remember reading those amazing books. Some of you might have

remembered them. You know, like Jesus Freaks, where a little girl was shot.

Because she would not say that she'd leave her faith in Jesus. Like, where's all those kids nowadays? Like, we've got to get back up on our feet, haven't we? Get some confidence that our faith is not going to fail us.

And be prepared to say, yeah, I'm going for God. He's saving. You can do whatever you like to my body now. But I'm in Jesus' army. And let's just remind ourselves of some of these truths.

These are the kind of things we need to take hold of that are true. And so we might feel things were impossible. But God's word says, remember, like, take hold of these words. It has the power to say, so.

[27 : 49] That James verse. God says, with me, all things are possible. We might feel exhausted. God's word says, wait on me. I'll renew your strength.

We might feel unloved or an unlovable person. But God says, I've loved you with an everlasting love. We might feel we can't go on. But God says, my grace is sufficient for you.

My power is made perfect in your weakness. We might feel we don't know what to do. God would say to us today, I will direct you. We might feel we can't do something. It's overwhelming.

God says, you can do all things through Christ who gives you strength. We might feel something's not worth it. God might want to say to us today, just keep on going. We might not feel smart enough.

God says, you know what? I'll give you wisdom. It's one of my gifts. We might feel we can't forgive ourselves or we're weighed down with shame. God would say to us today through Paul in the Ephesians, you can forgive yourself.

[28 : 46] I have forgiven you. We might feel we're missing something, missing out. People call it FOMO. God says, I will supply all your needs. We might feel afraid.

And God says, I did not give you a spirit of fear, but a power and love and a sound mind. We might feel we can't handle something. God says, give it to me. I'll carry it for you. You cast all those burdens.

We might feel we don't have enough faith. God says, I'll give you faith. We might feel all on our own. God says, I'll never leave you. I will never forsake you. We might feel ugly.

And God says, you are fearfully and wonderfully made. Those are my ones I needed. I need to take a hold. You might need to find yours. Or one of those might be yours.

But we have to choose to say, may it be to me according to your word. That's his word. How are you doing on that? How are you doing on that?

[29 : 45] So let's just remember how Mary did this and what happened. You know, the greeting reached her ears and the womb, the baby in the womb leaped.

I'm bringing you a greeting. How's your innards? How's the core of you? The soul of you? And there's a blessing to those who believe that God is going to fulfill his word to you today, in this lifetime.

Not just when you pop your clogs in glory. Goodness of God in the land of the living. I'm not a prosperity person, but I've read this in the Bible. I'm changing my mind.

I'm changing my mind on it. So I'd love us to pray.

I'd love us to remember some words from God. I'd love us to agree and say, God, what do you want to put in me? What do you want me to carry?

[30 : 48] I don't want to abort it. I want to carry it well. And you know, I've seen you pregnant people. You walk really funny. Like penguins, in fact.

Like, it changes your shape. And you know what? When God puts his life in you, you should walk different. It should change your shape. It should change your routine.

It might annoy you, like it annoyed me, with my little niece. But it's life. It's new life. And it's conclusive proof that nothing is impossible with God.

Including you. And what you're to carry. And you're to do in his kingdom. And this isn't a, like, get up on your feet and do more stuff talk. This is a, what has God put in you that he wants to name today? And say, just that. Just carry it. Just walk me into that situation. Just say my words. It's actually really, his yoke's easy and burden's light.

[31 : 57] Mary, remember, didn't do anything. She just allowed it to grow. And didn't get rid of it. Actually, I'm sure labor was quite painful. But that's beside the point. You know what I mean.

And so there's an agreement that God's looking for from us today. There's like a little yes. That might be like a, yes. Might be a lamb, yes. Or it might be a lion, yes. Either one, God's going to take it. He'll take it and he'll hear it. But there there... There's a lot that he's like, I love your spirit. Alright. And this is a good world. The Yankee Mensch, it's a good art neighbourhood. What is that? So I think Bhikanda Si Na ko ch values it in person.