

Luke 1: 26 - 56 // Mary's Song

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[0:00] I'm aware I lost a piece of my cracker here. I will be cleaning that up. Nobody's going to clean that up but me. We will be in Luke chapter 1 verses 26 to 56. If you want to open your Bibles or tap and swipe your way there.

And I should actually first say too because I today is Marius and my 34th wedding anniversary and yeah thank you.

She was not wanting me to embarrass her so I won't tell stories the next few minutes but but all that to say is that we have to begin talking about promises today because promises are as good as the person who's making them and when God makes a promise it's yes and amen.

Parallel with Jesus.

And that's not right. The pendulum swing to the other end is that we can just say forget about her. She's just a part of the story and that just doesn't feel right either because Mary was a faithful girl.

[1:45] she knew what we call the Old Testament. She knew the scriptures. And we don't exactly know what she was doing on the day that all of this happened.

She could have been you know baking cookies. She could have been doing all kinds of things. I really have no idea. We don't know exactly what she was doing at this time. But she's about to receive a visitation by an angel with one of the most amazing proclamations.

That's a promise from the very beginning. See we got to kind of skip back a little bit before I get into reading from Luke here. When the fall of man happened and Adam and Eve equally made mistakes.

God if he were a bully which some people have called him would have thought punishment fits the crime. You're going to get punished for your sin. But instead I look at this and yes there were consequences for their actions.

Sure we'll get into that another day when we get into Genesis. But for today let's look at the fact that he said to Eve that you'll be saved through childbearing. Now I personally don't think that that is women are to be barefoot and pregnant in the kitchen.

[3:00] Okay let's just put that out there. That's not what this is saying. This is not to put women under a role and subjugate them in that way. That's not what this is about. What this is is saying the Messiah will come through a woman.

He will be born from a woman. What a promise. And when you and I make mistakes isn't it amazing just like we learned from Zechariah last week.

That God's promises are based upon who he is and not who we are or things we've done. God's promises are yes and amen. You and I bring nothing to the table except for willingness and obedience.

And this is what I see in Mary is willingness and obedience. What a beautiful beautiful young woman we get to look at today. So let's read verses 26 to 28.

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth. To a virgin betrothed.

[4:04] To a man whose name was Joseph. Of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said greetings oh favored one. The Lord is with you. We have to understand too a little bit of what it means to be betrothed.

And if you've heard this before feel free to tune out and skip back in another minute. But here's the thing. Betrothal was different than what we would consider engagement. You can be engaged to someone and you can break it off nowadays.

And it's not a social emergency. It's obviously not ideal. You should go through engagement counseling. And there's some couples where I have even done pre-engagement counseling with. Make sure you know what you're getting into. Because in the Hebraic way of thinking. To be engaged means I would marry you tomorrow. But we got some things to work out.

We got some things to deal with. Betrothal was another step. It was another way of looking at it. Where it could only be separated by a divorce. That is how serious betrothal was looked upon. [5:09] It was not something you just lightly walked into. And thought well I'm not feeling it today. Betrothal was something else. And Mary was betrothed to Joseph.

And we'll talk about him next week as we lead on. Because like I said we're in this series leading up to Christmas Eve. The birth of Christ's child. And so every week that we have right now we're touching small parts of it.

And I encourage you to read through this story afresh. Outside of Sunday morning. The virgin conception. Because it wasn't a virgin birth.

Okay. That can be a bit of a play on words. The virgin conception. The birth was a normal birth. It was not. There wasn't anything abnormal. It happened the normal way. The conception was miraculous.

Okay. Okay. So when we talk about that. In some Hebraic writings. You can look at it. And you can say well it really. Virgin meant a young woman.

[6:10] Okay. And so some people will try and explain away. Her status as a virgin. But in Greek. In the New Testament. It leaves no stone unturned.

In no uncertain terms. Mary was a virgin. Betrothed to Joseph. Mary had this singular honor. Above all women. In all history. To give birth to the Messiah. The prophesied Messiah. The one we had all been waiting for. And so I'm not comfortable with just simply dismissing her.

I think she is a woman of honor. That can be an example to all of us. But I'll get into that in a few minutes. But she's not an access to heaven. And she's not equal to Jesus.

And I don't think she would ever consider herself that. Because as we're about to read in her own song. In her own scripture that we have here. Writing about her.

[7:08] She calls Jesus her savior. My savior. Which means she needed a savior. That it's nobody that's parallel. Or equal to Jesus.

Verses 29 to 33. But she was greatly troubled at the saying. And tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her. Do not be afraid Mary.

For you have found favor with God. And behold you will conceive in your womb. And bear a son.

And you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great. And will be called the son of the most high.

And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David. And he will reign over the house of Jacob forever. And of his kingdom there will be no end. Almost immediately Gabriel takes the focus off of Mary.

You notice that? You are highly favored. But guess what? There's something much bigger.

Something much better. More profound that you're about to be a part of Mary. The kingdom that will not end.

[8:11] A son will be given. And you will name him Jesus. There's a quote from Charles Spurgeon. Which I want to read right now as well. Is it not proven that he is great?

Conquerors are great. And he is the greatest of them. Deliverers are great. And he is the greatest of them. Liberators are great. And he is the greatest of them.

Saviors are great. He is the greatest of them. I'm sure. So I could resist. You could say that Jesus is great in the perfection of his nature.

Jesus is great in the grandeur of his offices. Prophet, priest, and king. Jesus is great in what he has achieved. Jesus is great in the numbers of those he rescues.

Jesus is great in the estimation and the praise of his people. This boy to be born. He will be your son, Mary. But he will be the son of God.

[9:11] He will be the Messiah. That's prophesied in 2 Samuel chapter 7. Now, as Mary was a very biblically literate girl, she knew that Gabriel was quoting from Isaiah 7.14.

Therefore, the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son and shall call his name Emmanuel. Gabriel was there to say, Mary, this is you.

If you've ever wondered, what do I do with my life, Lord? What's going to happen? Imagine Mary for a moment.

A young girl doing her thing, going about her day, and this happens. And suddenly, the fantastic interrupts her life. It says, Mary, that prophecy, that was you.

That was you. What a beautiful moment. Verses 34 to 35.

[10:16] And Mary said to the angel, how will this be since I am a virgin? And the angel answered her, the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the child to be born will be called Holy, the Son of God.

Now, I want to say freely, there's a lot of people that think they know what this means and how this all works out. But I think they're wrong. And I'll say right now, I have no idea. What I do know is in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit could be represented with what could have known or God's presence, could be represented with what was known as the Shekinah, the glory cloud, if you want to consider it that.

There were times where he was represented that way. It's possible that somehow the Holy Spirit filled up Mary, and I have no idea the mechanics of how that all worked out.

There are some religions, there are some sects that will come and say that God made himself man, and that's how this worked. He did in Jesus, but not before, not this way, not what we're talking about.

This was something supernatural. So when I say the virgin conception, this is kind of what I mean. It was something unique and very, very impossible for man to conceive or to understand.

[11:32] Mary knew what would happen. She just didn't know how it would happen. And this is different from Zechariah. Remember, we read last week that Zechariah, when he heard that he was going to be a father in his old age, he wasn't saying, Lord, I know, I know, I believe you.

He was saying, well, how could this be? I think it was a difference in attitude. She is saying, how can this be? Because she's saying, Lord, I'm willing, but I don't understand how.

I'm a virgin. I don't get how this is going to work. That's where she has such wonderful, humble faith. She believed the promise.

She just didn't understand how it would come about. She believed what it said in Isaiah when Gabriel quoted that and said that will be a virgin birth, that his name will be Emmanuel. She believed that.

She just didn't know how. There's times where we struggle with our day-to-day, our day-to-day situations, our life complications, frictions, whatever may happen.

[12:38] And we may say, Lord, I don't understand how this is going to work out. I feel that sense of fear. Maybe I feel anxious. Lord, I believe, but help my unbelief.

And it's okay to say those things. God is big enough. And so when Mary is saying, I don't understand how this is going to happen. She just needed a willing heart.

When the Lord calls us out to do things, we aren't always going to understand how it's going to work out. But take the step anyways, knowing that he does. This is a great example of this.

Gabriel gave her such good news that she would become the mother of the promised Messiah, whom she was to name Jesus.

As Mary's son, he would be human. As God's son, son of the highest, he would be the son of God. Isaiah 9.6 says, For to us a child is born, to us a son given.

[13:43] And the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. For to us a son is born.

A son is given. It says it so clearly, and yet we can miss that if we're not careful. For us a child is born, a son born human, but a son given by God.

His birth, as I said, was fairly unremarkable. You know, if you look at what a manger was, you know, it's not the wooden, beautiful, artisanal, you know, well-stained thing.

No, it was actually something hewn from stone. I've seen it. It's uncomfortable. You'd have to pad that quite a bit to make it comfortable for a baby.

With hay, or whatever else you could find. And Jesus was born into this family. A poor family. A new way more month at the end of the money, if you catch my meaning.

[14:52] He was born into this place. In a humble way. With a humble mother. And a humble father. We read this now because we have some knowledge of it.

We can read ahead. We can skip to the end. We can see that Jesus is raised as an adult. We see raised to be an adult. We can see that there's some years that happen here. But Mary would have no idea of that.

She wouldn't. All of this must have just been absolutely mind-blowing to this poor girl. Trying to wrap her mind around this moment. And yet, in every way, she took steps of faith and said yes.

In every way. In every way. In every way. In the Hebraic way of thinking. To call someone a son of God. Is to equal them with God himself. It was significant.

Mary knew that she was going to give birth to the Messiah. God made flesh. Verses 36 to 38. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has conceived a son.

[15 : 59] And this is the sixth month with her. Who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God. And Mary said, behold, I am the servant of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.

And the angel departed from her. I actually love that little last line. Because what else could be said to that kind of humility? What else could be said to that devotion?

I wonder if he just thought in his mind, my work is done. Look at this amazing example of faith. I got to go. What a beautiful moment this is. Because in moments like this, we sometimes fail to realize what she was accepting.

It wasn't just to give birth to the Messiah. As incredible as that is. It's to sign herself up for a life of ridicule.

Of mockery. So much so that even Jesus was mocked for his parentage. Because you see, it was a very common thing back then. Okay.

[17 : 03] For girls to be in the hillside. And for Roman soldiers to do the wrong thing. Let me put it that way. Mary would have faced that kind of scrutiny.

Oh, there's that crazy young girl again. She's talking about giving birth to Messiah. We all know what happens if you're not careful in the hills. I can imagine those things ringing in Mary's ears. And she's thinking, no, you don't understand. This is real. This happened. He's going to save all of us. And I wonder how many people believed her and how many people didn't believe her. And mocked her. And tore her apart. She was signing herself up for a lifetime of that. I sometimes fail to accept that.

Or to think about it. Because those things can pierce the soul. Those little gnawing things. When people say just these biting comments or whatever. You put up a good front for a while.

[18 : 04] But they weed away at you. Eat away at you. You know, and I wonder if over the years there wasn't times where Mary just felt sad. Now I'm reading into that. Because of the words would have been so harsh.

And maybe she was even wondering, do you people not know? Do you people not understand? And I imagine if that wasn't sometimes what the disciples felt.

Do you not know we're talking about the Messiah? We're ready to give up our life for him. I wonder if Jesus, when he said they know not what they do, was thinking all the same lines.

Do you not understand? So Christmas is a very beautiful, warm time. But please understand what it means. Red is the color of Christmas.

But it's because this baby had to die. And I know that's a hard thing to say. The Messiah came to pay a price. He came to pay a price for you and me.

[19 : 14] This warm little scene around a manger was just the beginning. Just the beginning. But I think that was the smallest part of Mary's pain.

The biting words. The comments. Because you see, as much as we celebrate communion, and we think that our Savior died to pay a price, a woman had to watch her son on a cross.

And die the death of a thief. Of a criminal. I don't know about you. I don't think I could watch my kids go through that.

How do you? Unless you know exactly what they're here for. That this was what they were here for. That's a painful thought as a parent. Mary had to endure that.

And I think that was probably far, far more painful than any of the biting words or the rumors that would have followed her all of her days. Verses 39 to 41.

[20 : 17] In those days, Mary arose and went with haste into the hill country to a town in Judah. And she entered the house of Zechariah and greeted Elizabeth. And when Elizabeth, excuse me, heard the greeting of Mary, the baby leaped in her womb.

And Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. Mary knew that there wasn't many people, weren't many people that would truly understand what she was going through. So she went to someone who was family, who knew that with God, all things are possible.

We had just read about this last week. Elizabeth would have been brimming with this idea and reality that with God, nothing is impossible. Mary knew this is somebody she needs to go to.

Because something impossible just happened to her too. Amazing. And as soon as they see each other, the baby leapt. I mean, I have tried for many years to understand this.

But it's a pretty strong case when we talk about abortion. Because something that we have to consider is when it says the sixth month here, this isn't Mary's sixth month of pregnancy.

[21:31] This is Elizabeth's sixth month. Mary probably wasn't even showing. And John's, the baby John, in his mother's womb, reacted, reacted to what would have been a little more than, like a fetus of a little bit bigger than what you may think a few weeks, around a few weeks, something like that.

I mean, that is an incredible statement. When we really unpack all of that. The Messiah was a fetus. And incredible.

And it's just an interesting statement when you consider this world trying to destroy our babies. If John was getting this excited around Jesus, imagine what it's like when you and I go home and we see him face to face.

Imagine that moment. I've tried. And I've said before that I cannot wait to breathe the same air as Jesus.

I cannot wait. But for now, we have work to do. But just know that one day we'll be called home.

And we'll be in his presence.

[22:48] And imagine what that will be like. If a baby can react in a womb, imagine what it will be like for your eyes to look upon your Savior. Finally.

Face to face. Verses 42 to 45. And she exclaimed with a loud cry, Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of the womb. And why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?

For behold, when the sound of your greeting came to my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what was spoken to her from the Lord.

In some way, we barely understand. And I mean barely understand. Humanity was added to God. Nothing was taken away. This is the incarnation.

Nothing was removed from God. Jesus was fully man and fully God. This is what the incarnation is. It was not subtraction.

[23:53] Jesus would grow up to understand every aspect of our human nature. We have a high priest who knows what we go through, who knows the struggles that we have. He's lived in this planet, on this planet.

He's lived in this world with us. And with that, when we pray, consider that. We're praying to our Lord, our Father in heaven. We're praying to Jesus in his name.

And he understands exactly what you and I are going through. What an incredible high priest we have. Wow. Elizabeth knew Mary's faith played an active role in receiving this promise because when God gives us a promise, we hold on to it in faith.

Mary held on to this promise in faith. And the comments, the abuse, the negativity would bounce off of her, I'm sure.

And there were moments, like I said, where she might have just thought, wow, this is a lot. And that would be normal of her to do so because she was normal, like you and me. But she was faithful.

[25:04] We have some promises. I'm going to be closing shortly thereafter. We have some promises that we've been given. There are lots of promises in the Bible, but I want to focus on five here.

And they are in your bulletin if you want to take this home. Dawson Trotman of the Navigators put this together actually in a pretty cool little book if you're interested, but we can talk about that later. There's the assurance of salvation. This is 1 John 5, 11 and 12. And this is the testimony that God gave us eternal life. And this life is in his son. Whoever has the son has life.

And whoever does not have the son of God does not have life. There's a dividing line there. Do you have the son? Do you have the son in your heart? Do you know him?

You know, I was a part of a Bible study, as it were, and we were all pastors in the wing, I guess you could say it. Six of us went on to plant churches.

[26:05] The other six stayed in their home churches and became assistant pastors and worked with the senior pastor there. And so it was a fairly particular group of people that you'd think were, you know, knew about their calling.

And yet it was interesting because the guy who led it was also the guy who sent me out. And he and I were having coffee one day and he said, you know, I want to ask you a question. Have you ever, have you ever doubted your faith?

I said, no. And I haven't. But he said, do you want to know how many people in that Bible study you and I are part of have doubted their faith? And I said, well, I imagine none of them.

He said, 10. He asked the same question to everybody else. And he and I were the only ones that actually hadn't had a moment of doubting your faith. Now I've doubted many other things.

But my salvation, I have not doubted. But there was 10 guys that went on to plant churches or help in their home churches that faced those doubts at some point. That's a normal thing to face.

[27:05] And yet here we have this promise. And this is the testimony that God gave us eternal life. And this life is in his son.

It is in no other name. It is in no other place. You will find salvation nowhere else but in Jesus.

Whoever has the son has life. Whoever does not have the son of God does not have life.

Then there's also the assurance of answered prayer. John 16, 14. Until now you have asked for nothing in my name. Ask and you will receive that your joy may be full. Be specific.

Be clear. Ask the Lord. Trust that he has an answer. And it may be no. We can't just say, well, you know, I really want a Bugatti.

I really want a nice car. And Lord, I'm just going to ask this in faith. No, no, no, no, no. It has to align with his will and his purpose for your life. And you may think, well, how is it possible that I'm going to know that?

[28:03] You don't. But you can keep one day at a time saying, Lord, show me the way. Show me your path. Help me to be more like you. And Father, this thing is right in my way right now.

And I really, really, really want to lift it up to you in prayer. And in Jesus' name, I know that you have a solution. And I'm going to thank you for that. Even though that thankfulness may be for a denial.

We have to be thankful in all circumstances. And that can be hard. But if we do not ask for things in Jesus' name, are we asking in our name?

See, if I'm asking for a nice, hot race car, that's in my name. Okay? But if I'm asking for a single mother to be taken care of, to be sheltered and protected from an abusive husband, that's not in my name.

And in Jesus' name, I hope she's supplied for her. You see the difference? There's the assurance of victory. 1 Corinthians 10, 13.

[29:08] No temptation is overtaking you that is not common to man. And God is faithful. And he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability. But with the temptation, he will also provide the way of escape that you may be able to endure it.

One of the things that we face when we're tempted is we think automatically, I'm the only person in the universe going through this particular issue. You're not. You're not alone.

There are others who have gone through this. There are others who will go through this. You are not alone. And you don't need to face it alone. And when we are tempted, we have this assurance, this promise, that God will provide a way out.

Now, I don't want any testimonies here this morning. That's not where I'm going with this. But I will just say, I'm sure a few of us could share a moment where God gave us a door that would lead us out of our moment of temptation.

And the choice was, do you take that door or not? Temptation itself is not a sin. What we do with it can become sin. Okay?

[30:16] And right here, it says that God provides a way out. If you've been alone and you've been tempted with something, maybe you had a thought, I should call somebody.

Maybe I should get up and leave. Maybe I should go for a run. Maybe I should go do something.

Maybe I should do something else right now. That is your door open to get out of it.

To stand out and stand up. But there's also the assurance of forgiveness. 1 John 1.9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

God's forgiveness is sure if we confess our sins. He forgives us before, I'm sure of it. I mean, his grace is just unmatched, like matchless.

I can't even begin to understand his grace in my life, but I can guarantee his grace is so much bigger than we can think about. But there is something very important about saying, Lord, I blew it in this specific way.

[31:19] Father, I'm confessing this and this and this, and I need your help to restore the joy in my heart, the happiness in my mind, and the peace in my soul because I have messed it up.

There's something very important about us taking those things to the Lord and confessing them to him. Maybe he will even call you to tell someone else and out of accountability, they pray with you and they help you through it because we're not alone.

But confession is important and you need to do it with the Lord. Not with me, not with, you know, you can talk to me, you can talk to anybody you want. The point I'm trying to make is if you confess, he forgives.

Nobody's going to pronounce that for you. They shouldn't. The assurance of guidance, Proverbs 3, 5, and 6, trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean on your own understanding.

In all your ways, acknowledge him and he will make straight your paths. I really wish that I could interpret the word all to mean something else, but it doesn't.

[32:27] It is all. In all ways, trust the Lord with your heart. Do not lean on your own understanding. In our own minds, we can think, we can deduce, we can logic things up all we want, but if we lean on him and trust him for what we're going through, Father, should I move there?

Should I do this? Should I say this? Should I take that job? Should I leave that job? Trust in him for those answers and he will make your path straight. If you're like me, life has been sometimes a crooked path.

You've been moved around, you've done different things, you've done all this kind of stuff because you thought God needed your help. It's a foolish thing. Let me save you some time. Don't bother. Get good at the wait.

Get good at seeking his guidance and trust that he has a plan for your life. So before I close, I want to read Mary's song. Verses 46 to 56.

And Mary said, my soul magnifies the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior. For he has looked on the humble estate of his servant. For behold, from now on all generations will call me blessed.

[33:41] For he who is mighty has done great things for me and holy is his name. And his mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm.

He has scattered the proud and the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the mighty from their thrones and exalted those of humble estate. He has filled the hungry with good things and the rich he has sent away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel in remembrance of his mercy as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his offspring forever. And Mary remained with her about three months and returned to her home.

Mary rejoiced in her Savior. She knew she needed a Savior. She knew she was not equal with the Messiah.

She knew that. This is a song of praise and worship. She shared right from the heart. Right from the heart. A spirit-filled life should be moved to praise.

[34:44] Think about that. Think upon when we close in worship here. Think of all the things that the Lord has done for you. Think of all the ways that he's saved us. Little ways and big ways.

And let that move you to worship. However you experience worship in your heart, let it move you there.

Let it move you just as it did Mary. Back in the day, the average person felt helpless. They felt oppressed by their government.

They felt like there was just far too much difficulty in their day-to-day. Before, and I'd mentioned this a couple of weeks back, there had been 400 years of silence from the prophets.

Some people had felt that God was silent and they were wondering, Lord, where are you? Well, here, in the cry of a tiny babe, as we're about to experience with our walk through this season, he answers.

[35:48] And he answers in a way that when we take communion together, it's a celebration of gratitude. And that doesn't have to stop there because we can do that as we worship.

Thank you, Lord, for all that you've done for us. They were often hungry, depressed, discouraged. There was no way of them to fight the system or the powers that be.

They were stuck. And here, Jesus represented a salvation in many, many ways. Many ways. And Mary saw the Lord turning everything right side up.

The weak dethrone the strong, the humble scatter the proud, the hungry are filled. The grace of God's works is contrary to anything the world will give us.

And Mary saw this and she sang this from her heart. This Christmas story is, yeah, it's about a baby being born and it's pretty cool, but it's so much more than that because it's the freedom for humanity.

[36 : 49] If you want things to change, if you want this world to be right side up because everything feels upside down sometimes, get closer to Jesus.

Trust not in your own understanding to fix things. Lean on him. Know that he's Messiah. He was born with purpose and he is our Savior as he was Mary's Savior.

Let's pray. Let's pray.