

## **More Than Just A Name: Mary – Luke 1:26-38**

Up to this point in our series of messages titled More Than Just a Name, the focus has been on God and Jesus and their characteristics. Characteristics which should be on continuous display through believers as examples in a lost and dying world. Today, we are going to take a mini break from our considerations about God and Jesus and look at the characteristics of an incredibly special mom; Mary, the mother of Jesus, whose name comes from an ancient Egyptian verb and means “to love” or “beloved.” Mary, the mother of Jesus is mentioned only fourteen times in the NT with her introduction occurring in Luke 1. **Read Luke 1:26-38.** While Mary is the most famous mother in the Bible, we do not find many details about her personally. Luke 3 provides her genealogy which connects Jesus to the tribe of Judah and King David. We also know because of Mark 6:3 that she had other children after the miraculous birth of Jesus. **Read Mark 6:3.**

When we take the time to consider Mary’s background, and the manner with which she managed the big assignment from God, we learn some things about her character and can use these lessons to help us grow in our relationship with God. When Gabriel appeared to her and let her in on God’s little secret, we should see that God blessed her with honor and a tremendous benefit. However, we must also understand the undue pressure associated with this blessing. Society, at the time, did not look favorably on single, pregnant women. It was not going to be easy for Mary. She knew that many people would call her all sorts of names and attempt to ridicule her as promiscuous. She knew the nature of people in the society with which she lived. Even Joseph knew the difficulty in what God had proclaimed for both he and Mary and this is why he initially planned to divorce her in private. Take note though of Mary’s boldness. Once Gabriel explained the situation to her, she made an astoundingly bold proclamation of her own. **Read Luke 1:38.**

Only someone with strong faith could hear the things she heard and trust God enough to make such a comment and embrace the miracle that was going to take place. This is a particularly important lesson for us today. When God wants to move and work in our lives, we need to embrace it, trust it, and boldly proclaim our faith in His will and purpose for our life. Mary didn’t do what most of would do or have done when God begins a work in us. She didn’t argue. She didn’t question God’s intelligence. She didn’t even worry about the consequences of the events that would be a result of her virgin pregnancy and birth. She wasn’t concerned about telling her parents about the pregnancy. She wasn’t even concerned with telling Joseph. Place yourself in her shoes for a moment and consider how you would have managed everything. The ridicule, the shame, the worry. Mary, strong and brave in the moment boldly accepted God’s plan and declared, *“let it be to me according to your word.”* If a young, teenage, unmarried girl can boldly accept God’s will for her life, then we must resolve to do so as well.

Mary also gives us a lesson on humility. In the eyes of society, Mary was a nobody, but in God’s eyes, she was special. Even more than special, Gabriel said she had, *“found favor with God.”* We must stop letting Satan tells us lies about our level of importance or significance in society. God is the one who truly sees your worth. God uses Mary’s story to condemn pride and arrogance. He cannot use anyone if they are full of themselves. Remember the words of James. He says in **James**

**4:6**, “*God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.*” Mary accepted God’s will for her life because she was a humble servant of God. She knew that her worth was found in God’s eyes.

When we are bold in our faith and humble in our servanthood it brings us to the point where we can be ready to be used by God. Do you think it was easy for Mary to be the mother of the “Savior” of the entire world? When God called her to be Jesus’ mother, she knew that it was going to be a challenge, but even at an early age, her maturity of faith allowed her to accept the work she was being called to. As Christians, Jesus calls us to do a work, A work for the Kingdom. Jesus calls us to live lives dedicated to Him and to pursue the work according to God’s will and purpose. Mary shows us what that looks like. Wouldn’t you agree? If we are going to impact the Kingdom, then it’s time to stop warming pews and start willingly sharing Jesus in a manner which aligns with God’s will and purpose.

How impressive is it that we serve a powerful God? How impressive is it that we serve a God who is alive and actively at work? How impressive is it that we serve a God who can do anything? Think about Mary’s story of motherhood. Only God could do something such as this. Through the power and presence of the Holy Spirit, Jesus the Christ, the Messiah, our Savior, was conceived. This is why Gabriel made the powerful statement in **Luke 1:37**, “*For nothing will be impossible with God.*” How impressive is it that God has something formidable to do in your life? Perhaps, He’s just waiting on you to embrace the work he has planned.

Finally, it’s important to note that I have spent a great deal of time explaining some of Mary’s impressive characteristics and suggesting that each of us should use her story to help us grow closer to her son. Make no argument, it would be a great honor to be recognized as the mother of Jesus, but any idolization or worship of Mary is unbiblical. While she found favor with God and He chose her as Jesus’ earthly mom, we need to understand that she is not a god, or like a god, or even close to being anything resembling a god. She is simply just an ordinary human, who because of her faith and willingness to obey God, was used by Him to accomplish His will and purpose. Is she special? Yes. Because she is the mother of Jesus. But that’s where it ends. All our adoration, our praise, our worship, our devotion should only and always be directed to God the Father, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit. No person, even Mary, should ever be given these honors. Acknowledge who she is because of Jesus but leave it there and move on.

I realize this message was not evangelistic in nature, but can you agree it was a message designed to make us evaluate who we are in Christ. Are you as bold in your faith as Mary was? Are you serving God and others in the manner He has commanded you to? Jesus said, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.*” (**Matthew 22:37-39**) God is not looking for the prideful. He is looking for the humble. Without humility he cannot use you. Are you tired of being used by the people around you and ready to be used by the God of all Creation? Do you believe and trust that God can do impossible things? Do you believe and trust that He may just decide to use you along the way? If you’re ready to stop pretending and start participating, then now is the time to get started.