

Pastor Daniel Waldschmidt – Luke 1:26-38 – Advent 4 – 12/20/2016

There are a lot of ways in which we are NOT like Mary. Mary was the only woman in the history of the world with the privilege of being the mother of the Lord Jesus. So in that way Mary is unique. But in a lot of other ways **We are just like Mary: 1. We are lowly. 2. We are extremely blessed. 3. We believe the impossible.**

First, we are lowly, just like Mary. Mary lives in a village called Nazareth. There is nothing special about Nazareth. Nazareth was a very mundane village. When Philip told Nathaniel, “We have found the Messiah, Jesus of Nazareth.” Nathaniel said, “Nazareth, can anything good come from there?” (John 1:45). You would expect the mother of the Messiah to live in Jerusalem the great and holy city. But no. The mother of the Messiah lives in Nazareth, an ordinary little village. And yet it says, **“God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee.” (Luke 1:26)** In this passage, the mundane and the supernatural collide. God sends an supernatural angel, to an ordinary town.

And Mary herself isn't a princess living in a castle. She's a village girl. Probably rather poor, especially by our standards. But I think that God did this on purpose. It was on purpose that He chose an ordinary town and an ordinary young lady. Because you see if Jesus had been born in a castle to a princess, you and I might be tempted to think that Jesus just came to save the really important people in the world. But every single person is extremely important to God. And he showed that by picking an ordinary town and an lowly young lady to be the mother of the Savior. You and I might think, “I'm just a pretty ordinary person.” But the message of the Christmas story is that you are of extreme importance to God. You are so important to God that he sent his only Son to save you. So the first way we are like Mary is that we are lowly. The second way we are like Mary is that we are extremely blessed.

“The angel went to Mary and said, ‘Greetings you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.’ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.’ (Luke 1:28-31) The angel calls Mary **“you who are highly favored”** and says **“you have found favor with God.” (Luke 1:28-31)** That means that God had really blessed Mary. Her son would be the Savior of the world. What a great privilege Mary had! I've never even seen Jesus face to face. Mary got to raise Jesus! She was extremely blessed.

But you and I are also are highly favored! Jesus left his throne room in heaven just because he loves you. And because of his death on the cross you have found favor with God. His death on the cross has completely erased our great debt of sin. And now our eternal home is heaven! We are extremely blessed! What did the angels say on Christmas night? **“Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace to men on whom his favor rests.” (Luke 2:14)** Like Mary, you are extremely blessed.

The third way that we are like Mary is that we believe the impossible. The angel said, **“You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.... ‘How will this be, Mary asked the angel, ‘since I am a virgin.’” (Luke 1:31)** Mary was a virgin. She had never slept with a man. It's obviously impossible for a virgin to be pregnant. But with God all things are possible. **“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.” (Luke 1:35) God by his almighty power formed the *human* nature of Jesus in the womb of Mary. That’s why in the Apostles’ Creed we say, **“I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary.”** It’s obviously a miracle for a virgin to have a baby. But an even greater miracle is who this baby is. This baby is a human. The baby will develop a little nose and little fingers and a little heart just like every other human baby in the womb of his mother. This baby has human flesh. But this baby is also the second person of the Trinity: The Son of God. The angel says, **“So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35).** That’s why Luther says in his explanation to the Apostles’ Creed: **“I believe that Jesus Christ, true God, begotten of the Father from eternity, and also true man, born of the virgin Mary is my Lord.”** This little baby inside Mary’s womb is both God and human.

That’s impossible! It’s impossible that a virgin can have a son. It’s impossible that that baby can be both God and human, but Mary believed it and we believe it too. And why is it important for this baby to be both God and human. Well, it is important for this baby to be human so that he could be born under God’s law and live the perfect life that you and I haven’t lived. And now God lets Jesus perfect human life count for us, so that when God looks at us he doesn’t see our sins he sees the perfect life of Jesus. And it’s important for him to be God so that his perfect life could count for us. You see a regular human life wouldn’t be able to count for everybody else. You see even if I lived a perfect life and died an innocent death, that wouldn’t be able to count for you. But *God’s* life, that is able to count for the sins of the whole world.

We believe some impossible things as Christians. We believe that Jesus is both God and human. We believe that his death takes away our sins. We believe that the perfect life that he lived as human counts for us. We believe that three days after Jesus died, God raised his body from the dead and that he will never die again. The angel said to Mary, **“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, and he will reign over Jacob’s house forever, his kingdom will never end.** The only way he is able to reign forever is if he lives forever. Jesus was raised from the dead he does live forever and you and I will live forever too. All these things are impossible, but it is God who has promised us these things and God is able to do the impossible. So we believe that God is able to do all the things that he has promised to us. And so we say along with Mary, **“I am the Lord’s servant. May your word to me be fulfilled.”** We trust God to actually do the things that he has promised that he is going to do for us: namely, raise us from the dead and give us eternal life.

We’re a lot like Mary in a lot of ways. We are lowly, ordinary people. But the Christmas story tells us that God pours out extraordinary blessings on ordinary people. We are like Mary in that we are extremely blessed. Jesus left heaven to die for us. Jesus loves us and we have an eternal home in heaven. We are extremely blessed. And we are like Mary in that we believe impossible things. We believe in the virgin birth and the resurrection to life never ending. And because we are a lot like Mary, we can also be thankful to God along with Mary. Amen.