

## A MOTHER OF GOD'S OWN CHOOSING

Watch video. Happy Mother's Day! I'd guess I've preached a least **25-30** lessons for Mother's Day in my years of ministry – maybe more. It is always a challenge to think of what I can share that will not only honor Moms, but inspire and encourage all of us to be mindful of God's desires for us as His children.

This won't be the first time I've focused on Mary the Mother of Jesus on Mother's Day – and I it may well not be the last. Open your Bibles to Luke 1:26ff (page 1588). **In the sixth month, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee,<sup>27</sup> to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin's name was Mary.<sup>28</sup> The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."<sup>29</sup> Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be.<sup>30</sup> But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God.<sup>31</sup> You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus.<sup>32</sup> 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,<sup>33</sup> and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever; His kingdom will never end."<sup>34</sup> "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"<sup>35</sup> The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon 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.<sup>36</sup> Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be barren is in her sixth month.<sup>37</sup> For nothing is impossible with God."<sup>38</sup> "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said." Then the angel left her.**

Motherhood for Mary came by divine appointment. She was hand-picked to be the mother of God's one and only Son. Why? What made her so special? The text reveals that not only was she a young woman full of faith in God, she was one who was willing to be used by God in whatever way He so chose – even if it meant her whole life would change.

Of course, her conception was miraculous. She was a virgin. God the Father sent His Holy Spirit to "*supernaturally impregnate*" her with His own DNA. If that boggles our minds, how hard it must've been for her to grasp the concept.

Not every woman conceives as God intended. Oh, the process is by His design - a man and a woman become one flesh and unless something prevents the natural course of things, pregnancy ensues. Psalm 127:3 indicates every baby is a gift from God for it says, **"Children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb a reward." (ESV)** – but some are received prematurely, and sadly some aren't even wanted, let alone welcomed. This was never God's desire.

Mary leaves us the example of a **mother choosing God's will** – one who was waiting for the proper time to have a child. She saved herself for her husband.

In fact, Matthew 1:25 tells us that she had “*no union with Joseph*” until after Jesus was born. Still, God’s plan was not for His child to be without a father – a godly man to help and support the family. From the beginning, it was His plan for every child to have both a mother and father. Mary understood that – and though “*Jesus*” coming as He did, when He did, was certainly not in Mary’s plans (*or Joseph’s either for that matter*), she had been acting according to God’s plan – and she was certainly in good hands.

Moms, whether you have up to this point been sensitive to God’s plan for you as a mother, I pray that you now realize how important it is that you do. **Thank God for Mothers who seek His favor** - not just for their own sake, but for the sake of their children. For you Mothers who’ve from the beginning, sought to be whom God wanted you to be for the children He’s blessed you with, we commend you. You’re highly favored by Him - and us.

Mary realized **motherhood comes with great responsibility**. Imagine being entrusted with the nurturing and raising of God’s own Son. Talk about pressure! Like most first-time mothers, Mary needed some reassurance from someone more mature and experienced. So, she went to visit her Aunt Elizabeth – who was near the end of her 2<sup>nd</sup> trimester with her 1<sup>st</sup> child – a babe who was also a miraculous gift from God.

**<sup>39</sup> At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, <sup>40</sup> where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> In a loud voice she exclaimed: "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear! <sup>43</sup> But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. <sup>45</sup> Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"**

That last statement speaks volumes. What sets Mary apart as a fitting vessel for God’s child is not her perfect life – or her great spiritual knowledge – it is her faith in God and His promises. Oh, what a blessing a Mother who trusts in the Lord is! And this prompted **Mary to burst out in a song of praise:**

**<sup>46</sup> Mary said: "My soul glorifies the Lord <sup>47</sup> and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, <sup>48</sup> for He has been mindful of the humble state of His servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, <sup>49</sup> for the Mighty One has done great things for me-- holy is His name. <sup>50</sup> His mercy extends to those who fear Him, from generation to generation..." <sup>56</sup> Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home."**

Mary is a great example of a mother who acknowledges that her child is a blessing from God and praises Him as her personal Savior. Of course, even though she didn’t fully comprehend it, her child would be a blessing to all the world.

Mothers, hopefully you recognize what a blessing your children are. But may I challenge you with a couple thoughts? Have you accepted His greater blessing of salvation through Christ? Do your children know that? Do they hear your song of praise? And what if you knew that God intended to bless others through your offspring? Mary had personal knowledge of what God was going to do through her child – but even she was unclear about just how much of a blessing He would be. I assure you that God desires to bless your children and bless others through them.

***This will require sacrifice*** - surrendering your plans for them in place of God's will for them. Not easy, but necessary. While Jesus was still a baby, God sent Mary a message by way of a man named Simeon. In Luke 2:35 he told her: **"This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too."** Being mother to the Messiah was not always going to be a bed of roses. There would be worry, sorrow, grief – heartache.

Perhaps many first-time mothers are a bit naïve. They think of the precious package from God and all the joy that comes as the gift is unwrapped and cherished over the years. But as with the discomfort of carrying life within the womb – and the pain of contractions and the delivery, having and raising a child is a process that includes fears and tears. Yet, Mary did not leave Jesus on the temple steps for someone else to deal with. She embraced her calling.

I am so thankful for mothers who do that today. Whether they realize it or not, they portray the unconditional love and sacrifice of God. We honor our Mothers who have done that.

Yet, I know not everyone has had such a mother. Some children have been discarded or dismissed or discouraged by the ones who birthed them. If that's you today – I offer the words of Jehovah God to His children from **Isaiah 66:13**: They had been through some difficult times – much of them because of their own choosing. But, the Lord says to them, **"As a mother comforts her child, so I'll comfort you."**

The God of all comfort will comfort you in your troubles, if you'll let Him. **(2<sup>nd</sup> Cor.1:3)** He is ready to hold you close and keep you warm and safe. He is willing and able to dry every tear and chase away every fear. Thank God for those mothers who have portrayed the image of God for us - but remember, as you bless and praise them, don't forget to bless and praise the One who gave you to them.