

The Miracle Mother

Luke 1:26-29

Pastor John Miller

I want to read Luke 1:26-29 to get us started. It says, “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, ‘Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!’ But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was.”

I want to look today at a mother who was truly unique. The word “unique” is defined as “one of a kind; having no equal.” So this is a unique mother in the Bible. She was a mother, yet she was a virgin. She was human, yet her Child was divine. She was poor, yet her Child was the maker of heaven and earth. Her name was Mary, or in the Old Testament, it would have been Mariam. She was the mother of Jesus, the best-known mother in all of human history.

Starting in verse 26, “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And having come in, the angel said to her, ‘Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!’”

There are two extremes, two imbalances of Scripture, that we want to avoid. The first is to elevate Mary to a place the Bible does not. She is not Coredemptrix; she is called the mother of our Lord. You can't pray to Mary and have access to her Son. The Bible says, “There is... one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus” (1 Timothy 2:5). So we want to avoid taking a non-Biblical, unscriptural stand on Mary.

Second, many times as Protestants, we react too far the other way; we don't even recognize and acknowledge her as being “blessed...among women” and that she was the mother of Messiah or called the mother of our Lord. What a blessing it was that God chose her to be the mother of Jesus and get her due recognition and honor. So we want to avoid both these imbalances.

Why was Mary so “blessed”? Why was she the miracle mother? I will give you five reasons why she symbolizes all that is good and pure and beautiful in motherhood. Number one is her selection, verses 26-29. There was a messenger sent from heaven named Gabriel to her. “Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth.” Galilee was a region and not a town; it was much like Riverside County. Gabriel went to this nowhere village of Nazareth in a nowhere region known as Galilee.

And notice, number two, the divine choice of Mary, verse 27: “...to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary.” We must understand—we'll see repeated reference to it in our text—that Mary was a virgin. When she

was told she would have a baby, she asked, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" (Luke 1:34).

The virgin birth is absolutely foundational and essential to Christianity. If you deny the virgin birth, you deny the foundation of our faith. Then Jesus would not be divine, He could not die for our sins, there is no Redeemer and there is no Savior.

So what a miracle mother Mary was! She was "a virgin betrothed," which means she was engaged to Joseph. It was a legally-binding engagement that could only be dissolved by formal divorce. And Joseph was a poor carpenter who lived in the poor city of Nazareth and was from "the house of David," which was the royal line through which the Messiah had to come. So this was a divine choice; God chose her.

Number three, verses 28-29, she was "highly favored." That means she was graced by God. She wasn't a dispenser of grace; she was a receiver of grace. And we can be as well. She also had the Lord "with [her]"; she feared the Lord. And she was "blessed...among women"; not blessed over women. And verse 29, "But when she saw him, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was." She was troubled because she was a virgin; how could this be since she was a virgin?

The point I want to make is that she was selected by God's grace. Moms, you were selected by God, according to His grace, to be a mother. And the Bible teaches that "Children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward" (Psalm 127:3). You say, "I'm trying to believe that!" Children are a gift from God, and God has rewarded you by giving you those children. So you should be thankful and humbly grateful that God has chosen you to be a mother by His grace.

I think of Hannah, who was the mother of Samuel, one of the great prophets in the Old Testament who anointed the first king of Israel. I think of Jacobed, who was the mother of Moses. We know all about Moses, but what of his mother Jacobed? What a woman of God and a woman of faith she must have been!

Moms, make note of the fact that you were chosen by God to be a mother, and God chose those children to be your children. Salvation is by God's grace. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "By grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast." So the selection of Mary was by God, probably as a teenager in a peasant land. The Bible says, "God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise" (1 Corinthians 1:27).

Number four, Mary also was a unique mom because her Son was unique, verses 30-33. "Then 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 bring forth a Son, and shall call His name Jesus. He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.' Messiah was promised to reign on David's throne. "And He will reign over

the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.”

Up to this point in the story, Gabriel has said nothing about Jesus' mission; that Mary would be the mother of Messiah. Mary was going to have a baby, in verse 31. This speaks of His real humanity; He's going to be a son. The Bible says, “Unto us a Son is given” (Isaiah 9:6), but He would be a man. John 1:1 says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” And John 1:14 says, “And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” So there would be a Son, who is the eternal God, made of flesh and taking on humanity.

His name being Jesus speaks of His mission. The name Jesus in the Old Testament is the name Joshua, which means “God is salvation.” That's why He was called Jesus: “because He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

I want you to note some important truths about Mary's son, Jesus. He would be great, verse 32. “He will be great.” Jesus is the greatest. There is no one higher than Jesus—His Word, His works, His Person. In Colossians 1:18, Paul says, “...that in all things He may have the preeminence.” “Preeminence” is not “prominence.” Preeminence is holding the top spot; there is no one higher than Jesus.

I've often said that if you're wrong about Jesus, you're wrong about God. If you don't have Jesus, you don't have God. You can't come to God except through the Person of His Son, Jesus Christ. And Jesus is God. We'll see that all through our text. Jesus is a man, He is God, Yeshua, who saves. So He is “great,” verse 32.

We see His deity again in verse 32. Jesus “will be called the Son of the Highest,” which is El Elyon. So Jesus is El Elyon, the Son of God, the Highest. This is a statement of His deity.

His Messiahship is in verses 32-33 where it says, “The Lord God will give 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.” God made a promise to David that on his throne the Messiah would reign forevermore, and His kingdom would never end.

So Jesus is unique, He is great and He is the Son of God. He is God in human flesh. He is the Savior of the world.

Moms, you will never know how God can and will use your children. I'm praying constantly for my children and grandchildren; that God will use them for His glory. No way can you even comprehend how He can use you and your children for His glory.

I'm convinced that what God has done in and through my life is because of the prayers of a praying grandmother. My Grandmother Miller was a woman of prayer, and she prayed for her grandson—and all of her grandchildren. And my wife prays for me, our children and our grandchildren. So I'm blessed with a praying grandmother, mother and wife.

My mother prayed constantly for me. Many years ago she went to heaven to be with the Lord, but she prayed for her son—especially when he was getting a little weird and crazy. She prayed fervently for me. Thank God He answers prayers! I thank God for my mother's prayers, I thank God for my grandmother's prayers, I thank God for my wife's prayers. I thank God for your prayers. How good God is!

You never know what God can do. Be willing to say, "God, take my children. You loan them to me, and I want to give them back to You. Use them for Your service and for Your glory."

So God chose and selected a special mom to be the mother of this unique Son.

I also want to look at is Mary's submission. She submitted to what God was calling her to be and to do, verses 34-38. "Then Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I do not know a man?'" When Zachariah heard that his wife, Elizabeth, was going to be the mother of John the Baptist in her old age, he questioned if it would happen. Mary didn't question if it would happen; she questioned how it would happen. Mary was a virgin, confirming the virgin birth of Jesus Christ.

Starting in verse 35, "And the angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.'" The angel explained to Mary how it would all go down. "Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. For with God nothing will be impossible." If you're a mom, you should underline that: "For with God nothing will be impossible." "Then Mary said, 'Behold, the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.'"

So Mary was wondering how this would happen. And it's beautiful how God described it here: "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest..." which would be God the Father "...will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." So you have the Trinity: the Spirit, God the Father and God the Son.

Then the angel told Mary that her cousin, Elizabeth, conceived in her old age and was then in her sixth month of pregnancy. Elizabeth had been known to be barren. Then Mary went to visit Elizabeth. Can you imagine how they burned the midnight oil talking about their pregnancies, talking about their sons who would be born? Elizabeth would birth John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah, and Mary would birth Jesus. Jesus said of John the Baptist, "Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11). And when Mary met Elizabeth, "The babe leaped in [Elizabeth's] womb for joy!" Elizabeth said, "But why is this granted to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me?" (Luke 1:41,43). I would have loved to have been a fly on the wall listening to their conversation.

Then Gabriel said, in verse 37, "For with God nothing will be impossible."

Verse 38 is Mary's submission. "Then Mary said, 'Behold the maidservant...' which means "slave girl" "...of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from

her.” So Mary submitted to God’s purpose and plan.

I like what Charles Erdman said. He said, “The reply of Mary, in verse 38, is probably unequaled in all history as an expression of perfect faith. She believed in the Word of God. She submitted to the will of God. And she relied upon the power of God.”

The same thing should be true of you moms today. You should believe in the Word of God. Be a woman of God’s Word. Beauty is vain, favor is deceitful but Proverbs 31:30 says, “A woman who fears the Lord, she shall be praised.” It is a beauty that grows more beautiful as the years pass. So you need to be a woman of the Book. You need to be a woman committed to God’s Word.

And Mary submitted to the will of God. She said, “God, whatever You want to do. Have Your way.” Then she relied upon the power of the Spirit of God—in spite of all the suspicion she would have to endure, the shame and the suffering that it would bring—and submitted to God’s purpose and plan.

Can you imagine how difficult it would have been for her to tell Joseph, “I’m going to have a baby”?! They were engaged to be married! They hadn’t consummated their marriage yet! Yet she said, “Lord, have Your way.” Under the Law at that time, she could have been taken out of the city and stoned to death. And Joseph was so agonized over the situation that he was going to divorce her, and “was minded to put her away secretly.” God, I believe, sent the same angel, Gabriel, to him in a dream and said, “Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name Jesus, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:19-21). So then Joseph took Mary to be his wife.

What a blessing that God would give us this mother, who would without reservation, without hesitation say, “Lord, take my life and let it be consecrated to Thee,” in spite of the shame and suffering and hardships she would endure.

Moms, ask yourselves, “Will you believe God’s promises and submit to God’s providence? Will you humbly, willingly, obediently say, “Lord, I’ll go where You want me to go, I’ll do what You want me to do, I’ll be what You want me to be, I’ll say what You want me to say. I want to be used by You. I am Your handmaid. I am Your slave girl. Use me for Your glory”?

Mary’s submission was such a beautiful thing in spite of the price she had to pay in being obedient to God.

Moms, be humbly willing to be obedient and submitted to serving the Lord and doing His will in your life.

Number five, Mary was a unique, miracle mother because of her sorrow. Luke 2:34-35 says, “Then Simeon blessed them...” that is, Mary and Joseph as they came into the temple “...and said to Mary His mother, ‘Behold, this Child is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel,

and for a sign which will be spoken against (yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.”

The context in these verses is that Mary and Joseph brought the baby Jesus, at eight days old, into the temple to be circumcised and to pay the fee to have Him consecrated to God and to dedicate Him to God. There was an old man there named Simeon. God had told Simeon that he would not die until he saw the Messiah, the Savior, with his own eyes.

Simeon would be indestructible! He could walk across the street and didn't even have to look both ways. Practically gets run over by an ox cart.

“Simeon, be careful! You're going to kill yourself!”

“No; I can't die yet. I haven't seen the Messiah.” He goes up a ladder to hang Christmas lights on his house. He gets halfway up.

“Simeon, get down! You're going to kill yourself!”

“No; ain't gonna happen! I haven't seen the Messiah.”

“Simeon, quit eating bagels with that much butter on them! You're gonna die of a heart attack!”

“No; it ain't gonna happen. I haven't seen the Messiah yet.”

So Simeon went into the temple one day, and the Lord led him to Mary and Joseph and the baby. I picture Simeon just taking that little baby out of Mary's arms. She probably was a little startled at first. Then he lifted the baby Jesus up and said, “Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace.” He saw a baby and said, “For my eyes have seen Your salvation....A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel” (Luke 2:29-30,32). Then he blessed the baby and gave Jesus back to Mary, His mother. What a blessed picture that is!

But Simeon turned to Mary, verse 35, and said, “...(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed.” The word “sword” here is not a dagger but a large, full-size sword. In the Greek it is a continuing, piercing thrust of the sword. This is where we see her sorrow; the sorrow of Mary's pain as she watches her Son die on the Cross. Simeon was prophesying of the Cross of Jesus Christ and that Mary would watch her Son die on the Cross for the sins of the world.

I have no doubt that I am talking to a mother who has lost a child. God knows, God understands and God cares.

“In every pain that rends the heart,

The Man of Sorrows has a part.”

Mary knew the pain of watching her Son die. Can you imagine being a mother standing there watching your son die on a cross?! How painful that would be?! But Mary knew that God had sent her Son for that purpose: to die on the Cross for the sins of the world.

In Genesis 3:15, in the very first prophecy of the Savior after the Fall in the garden of Eden, it says that the Seed of the woman would bruise the head of the serpent, and he would bruise His heel, speaking of the Cross of Jesus Christ.

Jesus Christ died on the Cross to die for our sins, to take away our sins, to be our substitute, to be able to reconcile us back to God. We are estranged from God, and we need to be reconciled back to God. So Jesus had to suffer and die upon a cruel Cross.

How difficult that must have been for Mary to watch her Son suffer and die.

Many times as a mother, a sword pierces your own heart, as you bear the burdens of your children, and you pray for them. You agonize before God for them.

I now want to give you five, closing bullet points that say we, like Mary, have these same blessings. Number one, we are chosen by God's grace. Just as God chose Mary by His grace, God chooses us to salvation. "By grace we have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Ephesians 2:8). "He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4). This is salvation.

Number two, Mary believed the Word of God, so we too can believe God's Word, the Bible. Be a man, be a woman, be a person of the Word of God. Let your life be built on the rock of God's Word, so when the storms come and the winds blow, your house will stand.

Number three, we too can be touched like Mary by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God came upon her, and the Spirit of God can touch our lives to mold us and make us.

Number four, Mary surrendered to the will of God, and we too can surrender to the will of God. No matter how hard it might be, no matter how difficult it might be; no matter what price we have to pay, we should be obedient to God's will.

And number five, we should be indwelt by the Son of God. Mary had tabernacled in her womb the Son of God. You, as a believer in Jesus Christ, can have "Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27).

The number one thing a mother needs to do is surrender to, believe in and receive Jesus Christ as her Lord and Savior. You should be born again, have a relationship with God, have the Holy Spirit in you and have His Word. That would be the mother that God has called you to be.

Even Mary, in her song which we haven't read yet in Luke 1:46-47, sang, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior." She had to put her faith and trust in Jesus just like we do in order to be saved and forgiven of her sins.

So moms, if you haven't trusted Jesus Christ, today, being Mother's Day, is the best day you could possibly pick to put your faith in Christ. Open the Bible and read the Word of God. Yield your life to the Spirit's power. Let Him fill you and empower you, that your life will then bring glory and honor to God.