



Do Not Be Afraid

Luke 1:26-31, 34-35 -- *In the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you." But she was much perplexed by his words and pondered what sort of greeting this might be. The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And now, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you will name him Jesus. Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" The angel said to 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 holy; he will be called Son of God.*

When our lives do not go as we have planned, it is easy to fear that which is unknown. This pandemic has caused us to live in fear because there are many unknowns. Often, God will allow things to happen in your life and in mine that seem to be hard to bear and hard to understand, yet the Lord sends them our way so that we might grow in Him and come to know Him in a better way. When these times arise, it is easy to question the Lord and His judgment. I believe and have faith that in this pandemic God has a plan. But let us think of how Mary handled God's plan.

If Mary were to be a part of God's plan, then she certainly faced the possibility of having her engagement to Joseph broken. Even if somehow Joseph would still marry her, she knew how people would talk about her ruined reputation—a less than ideal situation for a young Jewish girl to find herself. She also knew that Joseph would have the legal right to have her executed if her pregnancy became known. God called upon Mary to step out in faith and to be a part of His divine, daring plan. And, amazingly, Mary was willing to step out in faith because she knew God loved her. She knew God's plan was bigger than hers. Mary knew God wanted the best for her even though she could not see the big picture.

When God challenges you to move out in faith and be a part of a God-given dream, it is all right to ask some questions. It is okay to say, "God, that's a great dream, but how are we supposed to get there?" God answered Mary, and He will give you an answer too. Now, it is important to understand that God did not give Mary all the details; Gabriel only gave Mary enough information so she could make a willing response to God's plan. She, therefore, said "YES!" to the part of the plan that God had given her.

This Christmas season may be different in celebrating Christ's birth together with family and friends. But let us not forget God has a plan for each of us, especially during a pandemic. I encourage you to try to imagine what Joseph and Mary went through. It was not a pandemic, but their plans did not coincide with their journey. How did they handle their changed circumstances? How are we to handle our changed plans? We will celebrate the birth of our Lord and Savior Jesus like no other and believe we are all blessed in such a time as this and will not be afraid of what is ahead!

Scripture for December 2020

12-06-2020	The Way of Peace	Luke 1:67, 76; Luke 3, 7-8, 10-11
12-13-2020	Songs of Joy for Deliverance Yet to Come	Isaiah 12: 1-6
12-20-2020	Love Came Down at Christmas	1 John 4: 7-12
12-27-2020	Wait!	Psalm 148, Luke 2: 22-40

In Christ's Love,
Pastor Debbie