

Luke 1:26-38, Matthew 1:18-25

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[0 : 00] And we read the Word of God, first of all found in Luke chapter 1, starting in verse 26 and reading down to verse 38. And then we will move over to Matthew chapter 1, starting in verse 18 and going down to verse 25.

The Word of God says, Now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph of the descendants of David, and the virgin's name was Mary.

And coming in, he said to her, Greetings, favored one, the Lord is with you. But she was very perplexed at this statement and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. And 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 bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High, and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.

Mary said to the angel, How can this be, since I am a virgin? And the angel answered and said to her, The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you, and for that reason the Holy Child shall be called the Son of God.

[1 : 08] And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age, and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month, for nothing will be impossible with God.

And Mary said, Now go with me to Matthew chapter 1. Matthew chapter 1, starting in verse 18 says, Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows.

When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found to be with child by the Holy Spirit. And Joseph, her husband, being a righteous man and not wanting to disgrace her, planned to send her away secretly.

But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit.

She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, and he will save his people from their sins. Now all this took place to fulfill what was spoken by the Lord through the prophet, Behold, the virgin shall be with child and shall bear a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which translated means God with us.

[2 : 15] And Joseph awoke from his sleep and did as the angel of the Lord commanded him and took Mary as his wife, but kept her a virgin until she gave birth to a son, and he called his name Jesus. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day.

God, we are so thankful that we have the opportunity together, together to read your word. Lord, we thank you for this season. We thank you for the songs of the season that remind us of your coming. Lord, we thank you for the portion of scripture which we have read, Lord, that highlight your activity in that season. Lord, we pray now as we have read it, Lord, that our hearts and minds would be open to understand it.

And Lord, that you would speak to each one of us for your glory and yours alone, and we ask it all in Jesus' name. Amen. You may be seated. We are looking at this morning at the herald of the angels and how this herald or this proclamation, this very public proclamation, if you will, it's not that they were standing the most public, we will read about next week, and that is the herald to the shepherds.

But this proclamation, which was public to those whom it was revealed, the first one was to Mary, and it was the angel Gabriel, the same angel that had stood next to the altar of incense and announced the coming of John the Baptist to Zacharias.

[3 : 29] And we don't know the name of the angel who appeared in a dream to Joseph, but this was public to those whom the Lord was revealing it to. And this was to be a herald of assurance that was offering comfort in the midst of a turbulent time.

It was the angel who came to announce comfort because of his presence, because of what was about to take place, and the angel was coming to proclaim this comfort to those whom God was about to use in a powerful way.

And I want us to see just a number of things of this comfort of assurance and how this assurance is provided to them through that which the angel announced. First of all, we see the assurance of his, that is God's perfect timing.

We see the assurance of his perfect timing. I love how when Paul writes of the coming of Christ, the first coming of Christ, that Paul says that in the fullness of time, God sent forth his Son.

In the fullness of time. That really is a highlight of the perfect timing of God. Now, we don't have time to go through all the historical realities, but we understand that God sent Christ at the perfect time in history to affect all mankind, right?

[4 : 43] God sent him at the pinnacle of time, and you see a number of things historically and geographically that were happening to make not only the coming of Christ at its perfect time, there were things that were happening politically, there were things that were happening in society, there were things even with the expansion of the Roman Empire, since they were building the infrastructure of the road system, which was really going to be beneficial for the spread of the gospel, because many of the roads which Rome built were the same roads which Paul used to go on his church planning endeavors, right?

So we see the missionaries traveling through this. We see that in this time, and if you study history and you see exactly the right time in which Christ came, and God was doing things in the fullness of time at the right time, we need to understand this as the people of God, that God operates in perfect timing.

It does not operate in our timing, and it does not operate in man's timing, but he does operate in perfect timing. We see it revealed to us here, the perfect timing that is found, the assurance that comes from the realization.

Because, see, each of us tend to stress ourselves out or worry ourselves over things that have not happened or things that may be happening or things that could happen, and I'm not just talking about because of the things that are running rampant in our society today.

I'm just talking about in our life in general, because it seems to us that things are out of our hands. We would love to be in control of all things, and the reality is that we are really in control of nothing, and we would love to make things happen, and we would love to plan things happen.

[6 : 22] The Bible says that man plans his way, but the Lord orders his steps, right? There are a lot of times where I have planned my way, but God directed my path, and thank you for reminding me there was a flower in front of me.

I just about kicked it off, right? I'm so thankful my toe touched that. This is a bad problem about a pastor who moves. But we understand that God operates in perfect timing, and there is a great sense of comfort that comes from that because it removes from us this false sense of having to, having to order things.

I'm not saying that we should not be people of preparation. I'm not saying that we should not be people who at least make plans. I believe churches ought to be those who make plans short-term and long-term.

But I also believe in the book of James where it says that we can make all the plans we want, but God is the one who's in control of how things happen, right? We cannot say today and tomorrow we would do this when we do not know what today holds.

We do not know the reality of that. But what we see in this announcement of angels is that God operates in perfect timing because it says, now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary.

[7 : 30] Now the sixth month was pretty important. You say, why was the sixth month important? Because if you read Luke chapter 1 and you go back just a couple of verses, you'll see that Zacharias had went home, and after he had fulfilled the order of his priestly service, Zacharias went home, and Zacharias and Elizabeth went home, and something magnificent happened.

Elizabeth became pregnant. But do you also see in that text that Elizabeth hid herself for how many months? Five. For five months, Elizabeth put herself in seclusion.

I really don't know the answer to that other than God was doing some amazing things, right? I don't know if maybe she was so astounded by the reality that she was pregnant, or maybe she created a little bit of shame because in her advanced age.

By the way, man, let's just stop right here. I know that I told you you can never say your wife is old because Zacharias says she was advancing. But the angel calls her old. So, ladies, sorry, you're not out of it.

The angel said, Elizabeth, in her old age. So God has a right to call you things that we can't. So we back up, men, and we say she was advanced, right? But in God's timetable, she was well beyond the years of childbearing.

[8 : 34] And we don't know if maybe there was a sense of shame or a sense of fear or a sense of uncertainty. But we do know for five months, she put herself in seclusion. But on the sixth month, when she finally made this revelation to everyone around her, in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary.

Now, this is important because God was revealing something to Mary and was giving Mary a viable source of reassurance, right? He was giving to Mary someone she could go to and see if what God was telling her was right.

Do you know why your story is so powerful? Do you know why your testimony is so amazing? It's because there are people around you that God is talking to, and God is putting those people around you so that they can ask you about the things God is doing in your life, and it gives them a sense of assurance.

God has put you around people in perfect timing to give others confidence that what God is telling them is true. Your story matters because what God is doing in your life will give someone else the confidence and the boldness to believe what he is doing in their life.

It will be the platform that they use. The reason I love reading Christian biographies or even Christian history is because you see how God moved with people in history. And if God was using man in that way then and God is using man in this way now, then what I have found in every one of the biographies and every one of the historical accounts that I read, God uses people who aren't perfect, right?

[10 : 00] And every one of these people, I say, man, they have some major, major faults. If you ever read a Christian biography and the man sounds so good or the woman sounds too good to be true, put it down.

Because as A.W. Tozer said, you're reading a Christian biography that has been eschewed by the author who is venerating the individual more than worshipping the Lord. You say, what does that mean? They're putting the man on the pedestal instead of putting the Lord in his place.

There is no person throughout history other than Jesus Christ who must be put on a pedestal. And what a true biography does is it reveals man and his flaws and it reveals man and his mishaps and it shows how God used this messed up individual for their glory.

And Mary here was getting a word from the Lord in the sixth month and said, oh, by the way, go see what I'm doing in Elizabeth's life. It was perfect timing.

And not only was it perfect timing in the life of Mary, it's perfect timing in the thought process of Joseph. We might as well address it because this is the text in which we will address it and not any other text.

[11 : 03] There are some, and this is why you have to be careful, there are some Bible scholars and even Bible translators who cast doubt upon the virgin birth of Christ.

You know, I have told you that in our faith, in our theology, theology is your study of faith or the study of God and what you believe about God.

There are what we call big rocks and little rocks, right? There are big rocks that are sure and we have to all be in agreement upon those. And we put the big rocks in our jar first, put that big rock in there.

These are the major doctrines of Christ and we put those and then we fill it up with the little rocks. And the little rocks, we can vary on it and still have fellowship with. Eschatology or the study of the end times, we don't all have to see eye to eye.

We don't all have to see eye to eye with the rapture of the church or the coming of Christ, the pre-tribulation rapture. We don't have to see eye to eye in that. I mean, I have my interpretation. But

we can fellowship with that.

[12:02] But there are major doctrines which we would be prone to break fellowship over. And one of those major doctrines is the virgin birth of Christ. That's a big rock issue.

That's something that is major. Because the promise found in Genesis 3.15 is that it would be the seed of a... Oh, we're silent in the church.

It was the seed of a woman who would crush the head of the serpents. The reality is, and we're not going to go into too much detail in here, but every one of us are the seed of a man that was united to the egg of a woman, right?

And we are in that process. But the promise, the very specific promise, is that it would not be the seed of a man because the fall of man was put on the shoulders of who?

Adam, right? So we have the first Adam and the second Adam. We find this in the writings of Paul, the first Adam and the second Adam. And the first Adam was created by God, and the second Adam was God.

[13:01] And the reason the virgin birth is important is because if Jesus Christ was not born of a virgin, then he would have been the seed of man and therefore born the seed of sin and would have been an individual atoning for his own sin.

Now, we're addressing this. I know this is getting very deep, but that's okay. We've got our big boy pants on, and we're okay to swim in deep water every now and then because there are some very even strong commentators who would cast doubt upon this.

As a matter of fact, if you would go to try to reach out to a Jewish individual, someone who is practicing Judaism today, you would not use the New Testament to share Christ with them. And the reason you would not use the New Testament is because from Matthew to Revelation, they don't even pay attention to because they see it as being false.

So if you're going to share the gospel with a Jewish individual, you would want to use Genesis through Malachi, right? You'd want to use the Old Testament. This is the scripture which they hold true. The good news is that you can use the Old Testament to share Jesus Christ just as much as you can use the New Testament to share Jesus Christ.

But if you were to go to Isaiah 7, 14 and point to the virgin birth of Christ, that Jewish individual would tell you, flip your pages over and see the fulfillment of that in the very next chapter, and you would.

[14:12] And you would probably stand there and go, Oh, no. Because Isaiah was giving a two-fold prophecy, and the prophecy was to have a first fulfillment because it was to be assigned to a king, and then it was to have a fuller fulfillment because it is fulfilled in Matthew chapter 1.

But that Jewish individual would also tell you that the word virgin in Isaiah is a word that would mean a young woman. It doesn't necessarily mean a young woman who has never had relations with a man.

It just means a young woman. And it could be a young bride. So there are some Bible scholars who will tell you that's exactly what it means. Now, just to give you the assurance, the word used in the New Testament is never used to refer to a young woman.

It is always used to speak of a virgin who does not know a man. And we see both Mary and Joseph in separate accounts testifying to the reality that she is a virgin indeed.

Major rock issue. Just want to make sure you're holding on to this major rock issue, right? Because Mary said, How can this be? If there was a way it could be, she would know, right? But she says, How can this be?

[15:24] And then Joseph realizes something's wrong because he knows it's not him. And we're looking at God's perfect timing. So Joseph, let's get back on track now. Joseph, while considering this, was a righteous man because to be engaged, and I'm giving you a lot of historical background, but you need to understand God's perfect timing.

You can be engaged for a year or more, but to be engaged in the Jewish culture at this time, you were just as much married. You had not really made your marriage public.

You had not necessarily consecrated your marriage. You had not really set it on its course. You had not come together for that great wedding celebration. But you were betrothed, and you were engaged. As a matter of fact, to break the engagement, you had to get a divorce.

You had to get a certificate of divorce. And to break the engagement, it was a very legal matter. So to be betrothed was to, in our society, just as much be married. And that's why when we go to

Matthew, it says that they were married.

It was his wife. And it was an extended period in which the man would go and prepare his house in order for the day to go get his bride to bring her back to his house. Those things matter because we see this type, right, that Jesus Christ is preparing his house, and someday he's going to come get his bride and take her back to his house.

[16:39] All these things matter. So we see this is what Joseph's doing. All of a sudden, Joseph realizes, wait a minute, Mary's pregnant. You know, those things tend to show themselves. And he was considering what to do.

And Joseph was a righteous man. And we know that Joseph was a righteous man because the penalty for this was stoning, by the way. If you were found to be unfaithful during this betrothal period, you were to be stoned.

But the only one who could ever bring that accusation against you was your husband-to-be. And he had to cast the first stone. So if he never brought a charge, it didn't matter what everybody else thought about you.

If he never brought a charge, that charge was never brought up. So Joseph, being a righteous man, decided that he was going to just let her go in peace and put her out secretly. So this is what he's thinking about. And at that very moment, when he went to bed that night, an angel appeared to him in the dream.

Friend, listen to me. God is perfect in his timing. You say, well, that was a lot to be said to prove a point. Right.

[17:36] But when you open up your Bibles and you read the Word of God and God begins to speak to you, God is perfect in his timing. And there is assurance in knowing.

God, you're speaking to me today. I've been following the same reading plan, Bible reading plan, probably seven or eight years now. I've lost track. Every January 1, I read the same four chapters. Every August 1, I read the same four chapters as I have done the last seven or eight years. But it's amazing how in that perfect timing, God speaks through things we have read so often.

What we see is we have the assurance of his perfect timing. He will show up when it is the right time. Secondly, we see the assurance of being personally known.

The assurance of being personally known. It says, now in the sixth month, the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph of the descendants of David.

[18:47] And the virgin's name was Mary. That's pretty personal, right? Knows a lot about Mary. I really kind of last Sunday night I wanted to and we didn't get to it. And then this Sunday night I was planning on doing it, but we're not going to get to it. So probably Wednesday night is when we're going to do it.

I'm going to step out of the book of Psalms for a while because I want you to see this. I want you to see the genealogies of Christ as recorded for us in Matthew and then also recorded for us in Luke because they are pretty cool. So we're going to take time just to look at the, pardon me for saying this, the messed up family of Jesus Christ.

Okay, it's full of all kinds of really cool stories and really how God redeems that. But what we see here is that God knows who he's dealing with. He sends Gabriel.

Gabriel, being the archangel, is bidding and doing exactly what God wants him to do. He sends him to a city in Galilee. Now, Galilee would have been the northern section of the Israeli land.

There's this portion of land that separates the holy sites of Jerusalem and Judah being the southern portion of the kingdom. And then there's Galilee, which is the northern portion of the kingdom, if you're looking at a map.

[19:52] And that is Samaria. Samaria is right there in the middle. So Samaria would have been when the northern kingdom fell and the king came in and Tiglath-Pilser, I believe was his name, and brought in all these foreign people and just kind of intermingled.

And there was this mixed multitude of people. And the Jewish people of that day is pretty crazy. They would actually, as they were leaving Judah, would cross the Jordan River and would walk across into the Decapolis region, being the ten cities, and go all the way out of their way and then come back across the Jordan River when they got into Galilee because they didn't even want to set foot in Samaria because it was so unclean.

So to say that Mary was from the wrong portion of the country is really kind of putting it lightly. She was in Galilee, which was kind of not as venerated as the Judah region.

But not only was she there in Galilee, she was also in the city of Nazareth. And it is well known that the Jewish people had no respect for anyone in Nazareth. As a matter of fact, we find Nathaniel saying, can anything good come out of Nazareth?

They had really disdain for the people of Nazareth. But this is where Gabriel goes. And then Gabriel goes to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Mary. Now, more than likely, Mary was a teenager.

[21 : 06] Okay, probably pretty young. Betrothal happened pretty young, so she's probably a teenager. So now you've got a teenager in the northern section of Israel, which is kind of not as really religious, not really as faithful, in the city that nobody wants anything to do with, that is Nazareth.

And she is probably in all likelihood very poor. Her and Joseph both are very poor. And the reason we know they're very poor is because what they offer on the eighth day in the temple, they offer what is considered the sacrifice that is acceptable for those of the lowest economic of society. Right? But we see this angel coming in, and he calls her by name, Greetings, Favored One. And coming in, he says, Greetings, Favored One. The Lord is with you. And what I want you to understand here is that God knows who he's dealing with.

We are known personally. And there is assurance in that. And Mary is shocked by this because she is probably the last person who would ever think of seeing an angel come in.

She is shocked. She never saw the salutation coming. And he calls her by name and says, Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. When Joseph has his dream, the angel says, Do not be afraid, Joseph, calling them by name, because he knows who he is dealing with.

[22 : 24] God uses people to do his work, but he doesn't use people in mass. He uses people as individuals, and he always knows who he's dealing with. Right? He knew that Mary and Joseph were from Nazareth and Galilee, and he knew that nobody else in that region, but he had also already said, Out of Nazareth, I will call my son.

He had already said that, right? And all these things that he had already foretold, God knew who they were. And we have assurance here because, friend, listen to me. When God calls you to use you, he knows you.

He knows your faults. He knows your mess-ups. He knows your mishaps. He knows your failures. He knows your weaknesses. He knows your strengths. He knows your gifts. And he knows your heritage.

He knows everything about you. You know what blows me away? Not that anybody would ever come and ask me a question and expect me to have an answer for it, because I know me.

You know what blows me away? You only know me. Some of you only know me in a very limited capability, so you just anticipate that I will have answers to questions that you don't have, and the Lord has been so gracious.

[23 : 33] But what really blows me away is God knows me and has still called me to use me for anything. I mean, for him to call me to himself to sweep the floors.

I've told people, and I don't mean this lightly, I will be a contempt with a broom closet in heaven and push a broom across the golden streets and rejoice because he chose me to be there.

I don't have to have a mansion by the crystal sea. It blows me away that he would know me and call me. But what we find is that all of these that God calls to use in a powerful way, he knows them personally.

When he called you by name and he chose you to himself, and you felt that spirit knocking on your heart, and I don't know what your salvation experience was like, but I pray and trust that it was through the power of the word of God, and we'll get to that in just a moment, and you heard God calling you to himself, wooing you and showing you how much he loves you and showing you how much he cares for you, and you fell in love with him because he already loved you, do not ever lose the sense of wonder that while you were yet a sinner, Christ died for you, and while you were in your sins, and while I was in my sins, he came to me.

I was in the Nazareth of the world being the least likely a person, and yet he, knowing me personally, still chose to come to me, and that blows my mind.

[25 : 08] We are personally known. If you ever want to live with a comfort of assurance, understand this. If you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, rest on this assurance.

He knew who you were when he called you. He knew all your mistakes. He knew all of your failures when he called you, and he still called you.

Isn't that amazing? We see this assurance that comes from being personally known. Third, we see the assurance that comes from the presence of the Spirit. The assurance that comes from the presence of the Spirit.

Now, there's a question here that Mary asks that many of us, if we pay attention, and we've just read the first part of Luke chapter 1, we'll send them to scratch our head, because Zacharias is in the temple, and the angel tells Zacharias that his wife Elizabeth is going to be pregnant, and that he's going to have a baby boy, and Zacharias says, How can this be?

I'm old, and my wife has advanced in years. And Gabriel says, Dare you question me? Now, I'm paraphrasing a little bit. He says, Are you going to question me? I'm Gabriel, who stands in the presence of the Lord. You're going to be silent until these things come about, right?

[26 : 19] So, Zacharias is kind of chastised. He's rebuked, because he didn't believe the Word of God. Now, let's put it in context. Zacharias is a priest who is in the temple, standing next to the altar of incense, which was to be a representation of heard prayers, and he is being told by the God he is praying to through an angel that his prayers have been heard, and he doubts.

Okay, that's his context. To he who much has been entrusted, much will be expected, right? Mary is hanging out in her house in Nazareth, where she doesn't expect anything, and the angel comes in and says, You're favored, and you're going to have a child, and she says, How can this be?

And yet, she is given assurance, and she's not rebuked. And he said, Well, how come Gabriel doesn't chastise her the way he chastised Zacharias? Well, the first question there, or the first answer there is, is because Zacharias should have known and didn't know, right?

He was going through the motions while not believing. The second answer is that the question that Mary asked is totally different than the question Zacharias asked. In the original language, Zacharias is saying, There's no way this is going to happen, and I don't see how this is ever going to happen, but when Mary, she is asking with an expectation that it will happen, but not knowing how it's going to happen.

By faith, I see these things are going to come about, but Lord, do you mind showing me how it's going to come about? Just so you know, it is never wrong to ask of the Lord a question. It is always wrong to doubt that he's going to do what he says he's going to do.

[27 : 42] Job questioned him a lot. We see questions in Scripture all the time. So don't be afraid. There's no question you can ever ask that it's ever going to be too big for God, but the sin comes when we say there's no way God can ever do that.

See how different that is than saying, God, you're about to do it, but I have no idea how you're going to do it. That's a big difference. Mary's sitting here going, okay, I don't know how.

And the angel says, you will be overshadowed by the power and the presence of the Holy Spirit, right? The Holy Spirit will overcome you, and you'll be overshadowed by the power of God. Joseph here in his dream, when Joseph has his dream, says, do not be afraid to take Mary, because she is of child by the Holy Spirit.

So we understand here, Mary's question was answered with the presence of the Holy Spirit, and Joseph's fears were met with the presence of the Holy Spirit. Mary, don't be afraid.

Anything that you think is impossible is absolutely possible, because the Holy Spirit is going to be the one who does it. Joseph, don't worry about it. Proceed in confidence, because it is of the Holy Spirit, because friend, listen, when the Holy Spirit is in it, and he is present there through it, then we have assurance to move forward.

[28 : 54] It is the presence of the Holy Spirit, which gives a calm and confidence assurance to God's people, knowing that it is he who is operating and not them.

Fourth and finally, and we'll wrap this up. Assurance not only came through God's perfect timing, not only comes through being personally known, not only comes through the presence of the Spirit, but fourth and finally, and this is something that we need to really grab a hold of, assurance is seen through a pattern of obedience.

Assurance is seen through a pattern of obedience. Mary is told the unbelievable. She's a virgin, yet she's about to become pregnant, and the way she becomes pregnant is the Holy Spirit is going to overcome her.

She's going to be overshadowed with the power of the Most High. The child in her is going to be a male child, and it's going to be the Son of God. It's going to be Emmanuel. Being a Jewish

individual, she would have understood all these prophecies.

Joseph, being righteous and probably quite a bit older, would have really understood all these prophecies when he saw these things being fulfilled, and the angel tells him it'll be a fulfillment of Isaiah 7, 14, what was spoken through the prophets.

[30 : 06] But what we see is that knowing it intellectually and living it out physically is two totally different things, because then all of a sudden Mary does this thing, even with her doubts. Mary says in verse 38, Behold the bond slave of the Lord.

May it be done to me according to your word. It literally says, Here I am. I am your slave. Now think about this just for a moment. It sounds easy to us, but think about a young teenage girl who is engaged to be married to another man who knows that she is a virgin, and she's about to become pregnant.

She's going to be ridiculed. She's going to be mocked. She's going to be a really outcast of society. So many people are going to point. So many people are going to question, and if she tells them what the angel said, they're not going to believe her. They're going to really just make fun of her, and there's really going to be all this shadow, and her obedience is, Do whatever it is you say you're going to do, no matter what it is it will bring to me.

We read a little bit later when they take the baby Jesus into the temple that it says that Simeon is there, and he gives this prophecy that Mary's heart will be pierced. Right?

The pain. Think about this. Mary, who is here hearing this revelation, is also going to be the one standing at the foot of the cross, the heart being pierced. The psalm, Mary, did you know the reality is that, yes, very early in life, I believe Mary knew because God had put people in her path to prophesy to her, one being the angel, and then second one being Simeon in the temple, that these things were going to come about, that her heart would be pierced because his life would be given.

[31 : 36] And yet, she said, whatever it is you want to do, Lord, here am I, I'm your servant. See, it sounds easy to us. We need to put Mary in her proper place.

She is the one being chosen by God to be the mother of the Son of God, but she is also one who surrendered herself and called herself the slave of God and said, use me as you see fit, no matter what it means for me.

I wonder if our pattern of obedience would look like that. Let's move over to the account of Joseph and Joseph has this dream and it says that Joseph woke up for his dream and he did exactly as the angel told him.

And he took Mary to be his wife and he kept her a virgin until she had given birth to her firstborn son and he named him Jesus. See, those things that we are assured of are those things we obey.

Because if we are not walking in obedience, then we really do not believe what it is we claim we believe. Assurance always leads to obedience.

[32 : 41] I mean, if we were certain, if we really, really knew this is what God was telling me to do, we would be foolish not to walk in obedience.

What happens is that we lack the comfort of assurance. But friend, you say, well, if Gabriel would come and stand before me or if an angel would appear to me in a dream, we have something much, much better than Gabriel or an angel in a dream.

We have what the book of Hebrews says, the fullness of the word of God. In all of its completion, when we're not looking at bits and pieces, we have God speaking to us his full revelation.

Verse 37, I'm going to back up to verse 37 in Luke chapter 1 because it says this, for nothing will be impossible with God. Warren Wiersbe points out, and I'm thankful that he did, that the 1901, I'm reading from the New American Standard Bible, but the 1901 American Standard Bible translates this back to its original language, and it reads this way, for no word of God shall lack power.

Whatever God says is going to happen, will happen. For no word of God, no revelation that he has given, no word that he has sent to be heralded by the angels, will ever, ever lack his power to bring it to completion.

[34 : 17] But here's the question. This is kind of where we move from the Christmas story to our story, right? What word has he given us? And what pattern of obedience is he asking us, as individuals, and as a corporate body, to walk in?

You know how we will know if we really believe it with a confident assurance? Assurance, is we'll take from nodding our head and going yes, yes, to moving our feet and going, let's do, let's do, let's do.

That assurance will be met with a pattern of obedience. Let's pray. Lord, we thank you so much for this day. God's so thankful for the opportunity we have of gathering together, of worshiping, of reading your word, declaring your word.

Lord, now as we choose to respond to your word, we pray you move in our hearts. We pray, Lord, you would transform our minds. Lord, in the end, we want to give you all the glory and honor and we ask it all in Christ's name.

Amen. Amen.

[36 : 06] Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.

Amen. Amen.