

The Sound of Surrender

Luke 1:26-38

Christians have long debated about the exact significance of Mary, but virtually all believers agrees that a) she played a remarkable role in the unfolding plan of God's redemption, and b) her faith is inspiring and worth emulating. When we understand more about Mary's unique context and the implications surrounding the angel's announcement to her in Luke 1, the more this reality jumps through the pages. How was Mary able to respond with such obedient surrender to the will of God? And what does it look like for us to cultivate that same posture in our own lives?

Thinking It Through (agree/disagree, consider/contemplate)

"I have never had clarity; what I have always had is trust. So I will pray that you trust God." Mother Teresa

"If we can't say 'thy will be done' from the bottom of our hearts, we will never know any peace. We will feel compelled to try to control people and control our environment and make things the way we believe they ought to be. Yet to control life like this is beyond our abilities, and we will just dash ourselves upon the rocks." Tim Keller

(Surrender, or detachment in the Christian tradition): "A deep, inner posture of joyful release of our life and being to God. An absolute trust. Without demands. Without conditions. Without reservation. It is neither a passive resignation, nor a fatalistic acquiescence to whatever comes. It is rather a consistent posture of actively turning our whole being to God, so that God's presence, purpose, and power can be released into our lives in all situations." Dr. Robert Mulholland

"Christian obedience should always be based on surrender to a person, not simply acceptance of an obligation. It is surrender to love, not submission to a duty." David Benner

Working It Out

1. Read Luke 1:26-38. What do you observe? What words or phrases stand out to you? How would you describe Mary in these verses?
2. Last week, we talked about faith as "confidence grounded in reality" (John Mark Comer). What does Mary's confidence appear to be grounded in?
3. The type of faith we see in Mary's example is surrender. Is this kind of faith easy or difficult for Christians to possess? For you to possess? Why or why not?
4. What are 1-2 areas of your life where you struggle most with not having control? How does that struggle manifest for you?
5. Read the David Benner quote above. Do you agree or disagree? How is our view of God related to our ability to surrender?
6. What is one area of your life where in an effort to grow in your faith you can pray each day this week, "I'm the Lord's servant. Let it be according to Your will"?

Prayer Points

- Pray for your own heart. That you would grow in your faith, by God's grace and through His Spirit.
 - Pray for God to help you and those you care about live without having to be in control, based on an abiding trust in God's presence and goodness.
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