

**Bible e-Study** Women of the New Testament #2

**The Matriarch of the Church: Mary, Jesus' mother.**

*"I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May it be to me as you have said."*

Luke 1:38

**NUGGET** - You simply can't find a more fitting verse about Mary than this one. This is not the only lesson that Mary teaches us, not by a long shot and we will touch on a few more of them when we go deeper. But what Mary teaches us here sets up all the other lessons for us. It is the touchstone that we need in order to understand everything else she says and does.

Let me give you some facts regarding Mary in the gospel accounts:

- Mary is mentioned by name in Matthew 9 times and in the 12<sup>th</sup> chapter she is referred to as 'His mother' calling for Him as He teaches.
- In Mark's gospel she is referred to in the parallel account in Matthew 12, and besides that there are only 4 verses that can be thought to reference her.
- When John's gospel speaks of her, she is not referred to by name at all. But she is referred to *significantly* only at Jesus first miracle and at His cross.
- But in Luke, she is referred to 16 times and much of what we know of Mary comes from Luke's account and that is where we got our nugget verse.

In our nugget verse today, Mary yields to the word of the Lord that comes to her through the angel Gabriel. She receives the word of God with trust, with trust(!) that what God is asking of her is His will for her. Without her we would not have the Savior we do nor would we have the example of serving the Lord that she alone has provided.

Mary teaches us here that we can only act on the word that God gives us and leave the results to God. That is what she did in the verse today. She accepted that God's *word* to her was also His *will* for her.

No we don't have the angel Gabriel visiting us in the night (Imagine **that** reality for a moment!). How easy it can seem to say, *'yes I will do God's will if only He would tell me, like He did with Mary'*. We want a road map; we want a complete story, with a beginning a middle and an end before we act on God's word.

Mary had no map or story; she had only His word as all that was needed to do this thing. She trusted in that Word and because she did, Jesus came into this world and died and rose again for our salvation.

All of this was not told her the night she uttered the words we read above. She trusted that God's will was given to her in the Words that she was told and that God was responsible for whatever resulted from that trust. That result is our redemption.

**APPLICATION** - We are not needed to duplicate the request that God made of Mary. But we can learn to follow her example of faith and leaving the results to God.

1. What do you find to be a difficult portion of scripture for you? Go to that passage and read it carefully. As you do ask yourself: Who showed faith and trust in God's word here? And, what did God do here that showed the world He is responsible for the results?
2. It's one thing for me to write the words, *have trust in God*, it's another thing to practice that. Where in your life would following Mary's example allow for God to be shown as the one you trust in for whatever results come your way?

**PRAY** - Give some time to seek God for ways to show His will through your life.

*Going Deeper together. We meet in the **Fellowship Hall** during the Education Hour for discussion and prayer with all those who're able to come. If you're not able to make it Sunday, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments or questions so that we can have the benefit of sharing them together.*

Peace in Christ, Pastor Tom Rhodes



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### **GOING DEEPER**

As we said earlier, Mary can teach us many things and we'll cover a few here.

Read [John 19:25-27](#). Take note in the midst of this world-changing event, Jesus looks after His mother. Note also that Mary's willingness to follow her Son's instructions and His disciples' willingness to follow Jesus instructions teach us all a lesson. We can be like Mary and John and take what Jesus says about caring for each other, and being cared for by each other, to heart.

Mary had to be willing to be taken care of by John. She had to put her trust in Jesus' words and wisdom and not let any pride interfere with that trust. We can learn from that example. How can we show care for one another that reflect the admonition of Jesus to John regarding care of His mother? And, what can Mary's obedience mean to us in our interactions with each other?

When He says in the [Luke 8:19-21](#) passage that His mother and brothers are those who do the word of God, He had already seen His own mother exemplify this. She did all that was needed for Him according to the law ([Luke 2:21-24](#)) that is, according to the word God as it was given through Moses, the Writings and the Prophets. She had done, acted and performed the things that needed done according to the Word of God. By her and Joseph's actions, Jesus began fulfilling the law in every detail even from His infancy.

So often we want to be about the 'big things' of God that we overlook the details. Mary and Joseph didn't do that. They followed the details of the law, not because that made them righteous, but rather it showed their commitment to the righteousness of God that was theirs by faith. So too with us. When we obey God's law we are not earning anything, we are reflecting what Christ has earned *for us*, that same righteousness that He fulfilled beginning when He was an infant in Mary's arms.

Remember the "I wanna be like Mikey" commercials for Life cereal? Getting back to what Jesus says in the [Luke 8:19-21](#) passage, we are like Mary, or rather we are to be like Mary, putting into *action* God's word to us. Just like Mary did today in the nugget when she said "May it *be done* to me according to the word of the Lord." She was ready to do the word of God that had come to her.

God's word has many things in it for us to do. We are to cherish God's word and do as it gives us instruction in the gospel. (See [Matthew 22:34-40](#) for what Jesus said to do.) But we always seem to find a way around some the details. I imagine Mary had a difficult time with all the details she faced in this ordeal of being a virgin and carrying the Child of God into this world. You think God would give her a break since she was doing such an enormous thing. But in fact it seems that there was a 'piling on' of sorts. Read [Matthew 2:7-15](#).

This sojourn into Egypt certainly was not easy. But it was one of the details that Mary and Joseph had to be obedient to. In our lives there are things that are not easy to do when it comes to obeying God. I'm not talking about salvation (we can do nothing to earn that free gift); I'm talking about following Mary's example of obedience. What do you imagine that made such obedience difficult for Mary? How might she have come to learn such obedience?

What is it that sin or Satan does to make such obedience difficult for us?

One of the more difficult things that Mary teaches us is to accept things from God's hand that we simply cannot fully understand. Read [Luke 2:41-52](#). (Notice, by the way, that Mary refers to Joseph as Jesus father! And Jesus uses that same phrase to refer to where He was and why He was there! How are we to understand this? Is Jesus being insolent, and if not, why say this at this time?)

At any rate, yes, He did go down from Jerusalem and was obedient to these earthly parents we are told. But look again at verse 50 "*But they did not understand what he was saying to them.*" Mary and Joseph, I imagine had other things happen that 'they did not understand' in the raising of this Child. But they did not give up. And that is a point for us as well. God brings many things into our lives that we simply do not understand fully or that our understanding of changes over time.

It is significant that Luke records in 2:19 and 51 that Mary treasured or pondered in her heart events surrounding Jesus that happened when He was both an infant and a boy of 12.

What are some of the things or events of God in our lives that we treasure in our hearts, and how do we express or experience that for ourselves?

I say it's significant that Luke records this idea of Mary treasuring these things in her heart because of what Jesus teaches in Luke 12:34. He says there, "*For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*" (See [Luke 12:22-34](#) for the context) Mary teaches us to set our hearts on her Son, to treasure Him above all else. Peace in Christ our true Treasure, Pastor Rhodes.