20261101 His Plan, Our Surrender – Ps Bijoy

Luke 1:26-38

Dr. A.R. Bernard said, “Life is both a threat and a promise.” It is full of promises, but at the same time it is full of challenges. If we only focus on the challenges, we will miss God’s promises. So many people have been contaminated by the lies of this world that they can no longer see what God has promised them. They become pessimistic and live with very little hope, or none at all. We cannot deny the challenges, but we can learn to manage them while we keep our eyes on God’s promises.

Let’s see how this played out in the life of Mary, in Luke chapter 1. Luke tells us that God sent the angel Gabriel to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, and her name was Mary. I don’t think it’s a coincidence that Luke recorded her status. Facebook wasn’t invented yet, but her status was clear: engaged. She was taken. She and Joseph had plans, and they had imagined their future together. Then suddenly an angel appears and says, “Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you.” Mary was troubled, and of course she was. How many of us have been visited by an angel? What if it happens to you tonight? You would be scared too, right?

Gabriel saw her fear and said, “Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus.” And listen to how Mary answers: “How will this be, since I am a virgin?” She isn’t saying, “Hallelujah, praise the Lord.” She is confused, trying to put the puzzle pieces together. She is thinking, “I’m not married yet. What will people say? How will my fiancé react?” That was a real fear, because the law said an engaged woman found unfaithful could be stoned. Her life was at stake.

So to convince her, Gabriel told her something else that was hard to believe: her relative Elizabeth, who was old and known to be barren, was six months pregnant. Everybody knew Elizabeth could not have children, and yet it was happening. This proved that, as the angel said, “no word from God will ever fail.” And after hearing all this, Mary answered, “I am the Lord’s servant. May your word to me be fulfilled.”

That was surrender. She let go of her rights to follow God’s plan, and it was not a temporary commitment but a lifetime one. It sounds like Jesus in Gethsemane: “Not My will, but Yours be done.” Many people teach that we should surrender first and then we will see the miracle. But I think the miracle is in the surrender. Obedience in surrender is hard, and that is the true miracle. Mary said yes before she was given any detail. As one pastor said, “It’s better not to understand His ways than not to believe His love.”

Now look at Joseph in Matthew 1. He was faithful to the law, and he did not want Mary exposed to public disgrace, so he planned to divorce her quietly. He loved her, but her surrender to God’s plan frightened him.

Then an angel appeared to him in a dream and said, “Do not be afraid to take Mary home as your wife.” Joseph took her, and in doing so he protected her from accusations and from the consequences that would have come.

So what can we learn from this? Let me give you three things.

First, if it’s God’s plan, let Him do the hustle.

Look at how God led Mary and Joseph. He sent Gabriel to encourage Mary when she was afraid and confused. He told her about Elizabeth. Then He sent the angel into Joseph’s dream so he wouldn’t leave her. Can you see the hustle? God made sure they knew it was His plan. That matters, because so many people ask, “What is God’s plan for my life?” There is a fear of missing out, a worry that we might miss what God has for us. But if God has a plan for you, let Him do the hustle. He can use any person, any situation and nothing is impossible for Him. And sometimes it will just be so natural in the routine of life. So, the real question is not “What is the plan?” The real question is whether you are willing to follow it. Are you willing to let go of your own plans? Do you believe His plan is better than yours?

Second, pain and suffering are part of God’s plan.

I know it’s not popular to preach this, because it’s easier to preach blessings. But we live in a broken world, and even as believers we are not immune. Some of you are struggling right now with sickness or with relationships, and you ask, “Why, after knowing Jesus, does my life seem to have more struggle?” Look at Mary and Joseph. Jesus’ arrival made their lives harder. People asked Mary, “How come you’re already pregnant?” And they asked Joseph too, and he would answer, “It wasn’t me.” “Then who?” “The Holy Spirit.” “Whose son is that?” There were cynical people, and who wouldn’t be? Some of you know this feeling. When you received Jesus, you were cut off by your family, scolded, or shunned.

Tim Keller wrote, “Suffering is the very heart of the Christian faith.” It is not only about how Christ died to redeem us, but also about how we live to be like Him. And our suffering has purpose. Look at the chairs you’re sitting on. They were not designed to sit idle. If I could interview them and ask, “Are you finding your purpose?” they would say, “This is what I was created for.” They carry the lightest and the heaviest of you, and that is how they are fulfilled. Now look at a empty chair and If I ask it, “Is your life fulfilled?” it would say, “Something is missing.” It’s the chair that carries weight that feels fulfilled. In the same way, many of us want to bear fruit, but fruit adds weight to the branch. The more God uses you, the stronger you become to carry it. That’s why Paul says in Romans 8:18, “I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us.”

Third, surrender is the miracle

Mary could have said, “Angel Gab (riel) pleaseee choose someone else. Choose my neighbour. This is too much. I’m engaged already, what would Joseph say?” She could have rejected it, and so could Joseph. The same goes for us. But they chose a selfless life. They left their comfort zone, risked their reputation, and opened the way for Jesus to enter this world.

And look again at verse 38: “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left. He didn’t stay to explain. He never said, “Tonight you’ll feel something in your stomach, or there will be a huge rainbow and that’s the sign.” There was no detail at all. God didn’t give any detail, because if He had laid it all out, they would have given up. He was only waiting for a sign of surrender, and once Mary gave it, it was “Thank you, goodbye.” So, you don’t need to know all the details. You only need to know this, God’s grace is with you.

Remember, life is both challenges and promise, both suffering and grace. Mary and Joseph faced real challenges, but grace never left them. It carried them through and made them conquerors. And in the middle of it all, they had a peace and joy they had never felt before, because Jesus was with them, the Source of peace, joy, and life. Jesus in Mary’s womb was “Christ, the hope of glory,” and Christ in us is the hope of glory.

Therefore, I believe the miracle is in the surrender. Obedience in surrender is hard, and that is the True Miracle.