

The title for this morning message is: **Here I Am Lord**

The angel Gabriel said to Mary: **Greetings, O favored one**

Grace and peace to you from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.
Amen.

One of the aspects of the Christmas Story that always fascinates and amazes me is the virgin birth of our Lord Jesus Christ.

It shows us the power of our God, that He can change the rules of nature doing things that have never been done before to accomplish his will.

That through the gift of the Holy Spirit God makes the impossible, possible transforming the average and the everyday, into the spectacular.

We've seen this truth in the virgin birth of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, that was a true miracle from God.

However I often wonder if our minds understand the full ramifications of this event not to the world because we know Christ came to save.

But the ramification for the virgin Mary In our society. Unfortunately teenage pregnancy and pregnancy outside of wedlock has become common place.

And where we see actors and actresses having adulterous affairs constantly with little to no consequences.

I don't know if we can truly understand or truly appreciate what the Virgin birth meant to Mary.

It wasn't just that Mary had to carry and deliver this child though that was enough in itself for that time period.

A period when the infant mortality was well over 35% and many women died during labor or even after labor due to infection.

That alone was probably enough to frighten Mary. Mary was very young in fact scholars say she was anywhere between 14 and 17.

But the virgin birth put a lot more than that at stake for the young Mary. First, if Joseph does not believe Mary.

That the baby she was carrying was conceived by the Holy Spirit, that it was indeed God's child.

Joseph could have brought Mary up on charges and at that time the punishment for a woman being found with child while engaged to another.

Ranged anywhere from being ostracized from the community to being publicly stoned.

Now, if she was ostracized that meant she would have had to turn to a life of begging for everything she needed.

Because there certainly was no welfare system or social organizations that would help her and there were no jobs for women at that time.

The only two options a woman had for employment was prostitution and begging and the first we can safely assume Mary would not have undertaken.

And not only would Mary be begging for herself but she would also be begging for her child's survival.

And of course the other option isn't any better she would have suffered a horribly painful death in front of the entire community.

Can you imagine being a 15 or 17 year old child and knowing that if your fiancé doesn't believe your story it could mean death.

And not only that, even if Joseph believes her and accepts the Baby as his own which he does, Mary and Joseph are still dirt poor.

That no I didn't cheat on you, but really this is God's son that those were your only options, begging or death.

And not only that, even if Joseph believes her and accepts the Baby as his own which he does, Mary and Joseph are still dirt poor.

Were also told in Luke chapter 2 that at the presentation of Jesus, Mary and Joseph gave turtle doves in place of a cow for the sacrifice.

At that time the Hebrew law said it would be acceptable to sacrifice turtle doves only if you could not afford the regular sacrifice of a cow.

Look, they barely had enough money to take care of themselves much less a child or better yet a child who is the son of God.

But despite all of that and all that could go wrong, Mary had true faith and her response to Gabriel was in affect "Here I am."

I love Mary's response, she just had a bomb shell dropped on her and does she complain, does she gripe, does she say there is no way this could work?

No, she simply says "Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word."

She could start to complain, she could become negative she could say, "Hey, Lord I really don't want this responsibility, could you find somebody else."

But this 15 to 16 year old child simply says, Here I am, Lord. Because she understands the awesomeness of God.

Because she understands the power that God has, she understands what St. Paul wrote in Romans.

That if God is for us, which he is, than who could be against us. Or better yet does it matter who is against us, God is bigger.

Mary understands that God does not call us to fail but if God calls us to a task he is going to give us what we need to accomplish his will in the world.

Here I am, Lord, you are calling me to a very daunting task but I know that you are right here with me.

And through your strength and through your grace you are going to see it through to the end.

This 15 to 17 year old child, somebody who we don't usually listen to too much in the church shows us what true faith is today.

Unfortunately too often we think faith means making sure we have a safety net before we step out which anybody could do, that is not really faith.

But Mary shows us true faith, knowing that if this doesn't all go right, there could be a lot of negative consequences

But she had true faith and trust in that God will make sure it all these things will come out the way He promised.

That is true faith, not waiting on a safety net, but trusting that through God we won't need a safety net.

This is truly amazing when you think about it, this 15 to 17 year old dirt poor Jewish maiden in a patriarchal society simply says "Here I am Lord."

WOW And I truly believe, that every one of us here today could take lesson from Mary in today's gospel lesson.

That everyone one of us here should be willing to learn from Mary to put complete and full trust in God.

Because after all, look how well Christmas turned out. We should learn from young Mary to be willing to follow God where ever he calls us to go.

Even if it is outside our comfort zone because he will be with us giving us what we need.

To learn from Mary that God will never leave us nor forsake us, nor will he call us to a task outside of his grace.

Too often as Christians when God calls us to do something the first thing we do is make excuses, I can't volunteer now, I am too busy.

I would like to give more, but I have all these commitments, I would like to talk about God with others, but they may not like me.

And as Christians and as congregations we have to always look to God and see the blessing that will come out of what God is calling us to do.

And as we see through the birth of the Messiah, God cannot and will not ever break his promises.

As Christians it is time we stop making excuses why we can't, and stop thinking of all the reasons it won't work.

And realize that through Christ the impossible is very possible“ Here am I, the servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word.”

Amen

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit, be with us all. Amen.