

# THE DOCTOR'S REPORT

## Mary – Following God

TEXT: Lk. 1:26-56

INTRODUCTION: I never tire of the Christmas story, and I admit that I am especially fond of the way Dr. Luke tells it. Today we are going to read a part of that story, the beginning where Gabriel comes to announce the virgin birth to the virgin Mary, and of Mary's subsequent response.

However, would you think with me today about a lot of things that are not directly related to Christmas. As the account of Zacharias was a platform for us to consider our belief in the promises of God, may the story of Mary provide us opportunity to think about what it means to follow God.

Luke 1:26-56 <sup>26</sup> Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent by God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup> to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup> And having come in, the angel said to her, "Rejoice, highly favored *one*, the Lord *is* with you; blessed *are* you among women!" <sup>29</sup> But when she saw *him*, she was troubled at his saying, and considered what manner of greeting this was. <sup>30</sup> Then the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup> And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bring forth a Son, and shall call His name JESUS. <sup>32</sup> He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. <sup>33</sup> And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup> Then Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" <sup>35</sup> And the angel answered and said to her, "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God.* <sup>36</sup> Now indeed, Elizabeth your relative has also conceived a son in her old age; and this is now the sixth month for her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup> For with God nothing will be impossible." <sup>38</sup> Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

<sup>39</sup> Now Mary arose in those days and went into the hill country with haste, to a city of Judah, <sup>40</sup> and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. <sup>41</sup> And it happened, when Elizabeth heard the greeting of Mary, that the babe leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. <sup>42</sup> Then she spoke out with a loud voice and said, "Blessed *are* you among women, and blessed *is* the fruit of your womb! <sup>43</sup> But why *is* this *granted* to me, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? <sup>44</sup> For

indeed, as soon as the voice of your greeting sounded in my ears, the babe leaped in my womb for joy. <sup>45</sup> Blessed *is* she who believed, for there will be a fulfillment of those things which were told her from the Lord.”

<sup>46</sup> And Mary said: “My soul magnifies the Lord, <sup>47</sup> And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. <sup>48</sup> For He has regarded the lowly state of His maidservant; For behold, henceforth all generations will call me blessed. <sup>49</sup> For He who is mighty has done great things for me, And holy *is* His name. <sup>50</sup> And His mercy *is* on those who fear Him From generation to generation. <sup>51</sup> He has shown strength with His arm; He has scattered *the* proud in the imagination of their hearts. <sup>52</sup> He has put down the mighty from *their* thrones, And exalted *the* lowly. <sup>53</sup> He has filled *the* hungry with good things, And *the* rich He has sent away empty. <sup>54</sup> He has helped His servant Israel, In remembrance of *His* mercy, <sup>55</sup> As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and to his seed forever.”

<sup>56</sup> And Mary remained with her about three months, and returned to her house.

## I. FOLLOWING GOD BEGINS WITH BELIEVING GOD’S WORD.

A. As Zacharias had to finally believe God’s Promise in order to follow Him, so also **Mary had to choose to believe the Word of the Lord.**

1. This was not easy.
2. She would have a baby who would be called the Son of God, One Who would rule the earth forever.
3. She would conceive this baby while still a virgin, the baby having no human father.
4. Mary acknowledged her belief when she said, “Behold, the handmaiden of the Lord.”

B. **To be saved, you must believe the gospel.**

Mark 1:14–15 <sup>14</sup> Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, <sup>15</sup> and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the gospel.”

C. **To truly follow the Lord, you must believe all of His Word.**

1. **Some Christians believe in “spot inspiration.”**

- a. They believe the Bible is inspired, but just in certain spots. And they believe they are inspired to spot the spots.
- b. I used to be one of those. You can be saved and not believe the donkey talked. In fact, you can be saved, and if you do not believe all of God’s Word, you can prove a donkey talks. I did, many times.
- c. **If you concede to the devil that any portion of the Bible is not true, you have given up the most important part of God’s Word for you.**

Because when it comes to considering that portion that is the most important for your being the follower, the disciple, that God has purposed you to be, the devil will say to you “Did God really say?” And your obedience will be lost.

2. That is why **the devil picks certain portions of the Bible to attack and to undermine**. Let me ask you two questions?
  - a. **What book of Scripture is more maligned, challenged, relegated to the category of myth and legend more than any other book of the Bible? – Genesis**
  - b. **What book of the Bible is the most foundational for all biblical doctrine, both Old and New Testament? – Genesis**
  - c. I interviewed a potential Youth Minister one time. I asked him if he believed the Bible was true. He told me, “I pretty much believe it all after you get past Genesis 11.” I wouldn’t give him 5 minutes with my teenagers, much less 5 months or 5 years. Because here is a man who cannot follow God. How can you follow God if you don’t even believe God. How are you going to know what God says if you don’t believe the Bible is His infallible, inerrant Word? I’ll tell you what you do. You end up believing the impressions of your heart and mistake them for the voice of God. And with that you end up believing anything and everything.

### **FOLLOWING GOD BEGINS WITH BELIEVING GOD’S WORD.**

## **II. THE FIRST STEP OF FOLLOWING GOD IS TRUSTING HIM.**

- A. Believing is necessary but not sufficient for salvation.
  1. Even the devil believes!

Romans 10:9–10 <sup>9</sup> that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. <sup>10</sup> For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

2. Mary trusted the Lord.
  - a. “Let it be to me according to your word.”
  - b. Later she sang, “My spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior.”
  - c. According to Mary herself, she was a sinner who needed a Savior, and she trusted in the Lord and was saved.
- B. You cannot work your way to salvation by trying to follow Christ.
  1. First, you will never succeed.
  2. Even if you did, you would not take care of the problem that separates you from God.

Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin *is* death, but the gift of God *is* eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.

3. Those who try to work their way to heaven by good deeds or church attendance are like those who came to Jesus to hear Him say

Matthew 7:22–23 <sup>22</sup> Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in Your name, cast out demons in Your name, and done many wonders in Your name?’ <sup>23</sup> And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!’

No, first, with faith in your heart, you must declare Jesus to be the Lord and Master of your life.

### **THE FIRST STEP OF FOLLOWING CHRIST IS TRUSTING HIM.**

## **III. FOLLOWING GOD MEANS WALKING IN OBEDIENCE.**

Luke 6:46 “But why do you call Me ‘Lord, Lord,’ and not do the things which I say?”

That is what Mary did, not just concerning the conception and birth of Christ, but the rest of her life. She believed God’s Word. She trusted Christ. She did what He said.

**So, what does the Lord say in His Word for us to do who have been saved and desire to follow Him?**

#### **A. Bible Study**

2 Timothy 2:15 (ESV) Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who has no need to be ashamed, rightly handling the word of truth.

#### **B. Worship**

John 4:23 But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him.

#### **C. Churchmanship**

Matthew 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.

**How do we know the local New Testament churches had membership?**

**Because when a man committed grievous, public sin, Paul said to put him out of the church.**

**When he repented, Paul said to restore him back into the church.**

**You cannot do either of those if people are just church attendees and not church members.**

#### **D. Stewardship**

1 Corinthians 4:1 Let a man so consider us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God.

#### **E. Service**

Matthew 20:26–28 <sup>26</sup> Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant. <sup>27</sup> And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your slave— <sup>28</sup> just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.”

#### **F. Witness**

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

And what do you call a person who is

- a diligent student of the Scriptures
- a Spirit led worshipper of the risen Christ
- a faithful member of a Bible believing, gospel preaching church
- a good steward of all the Lord has entrusted to him or her
- a servant of God and others
- a witness of Christ, here, there, and everywhere?

Do you call such a man or woman or teenager “perfect?” No. You call them “a follower of Christ.” You call them a “disciple of Jesus.”

And what if you are saved but are not being obedient in one of those six areas the New Testament prescribes? Do you just try to do more in one of the other areas? No. You repent, confess your sin, and begin today to obey in the area where you are lacking.

Because, **FOLLOWING THE LORD MEANS WALKING IN OBEDIENCE.**

CONCLUSION: Where are you this morning? What do you need to do?

1. Do you need to forsake to circles of the skeptics and choose to believe God and His Word?
2. Do you believe God, but you need to trust Christ as your Lord and Master?
3. Do you need to begin to walk in obedience in one or more of these areas described by the New Testament for believers who truly want to follow Christ?