

“I’ll Second That Motion”

Luke 1:26-38

Preached by Dr. Robert F. Browning, Pastor

First Baptist Church

Frankfort, Kentucky

December 21, 2014

This morning our attention is drawn to one of the most heartwarming stories in scripture. This tender encounter between Mary and the angel Gabriel leaves me speechless each time I read it.

I marvel at Mary’s response to the invitation to be the mother of Jesus. Nothing about this conversation made sense to her.

How could she, an obscure peasant girl in Nazareth, be favored by God and selected for this overwhelming task? What would her family and friends think? How would Joseph react to this news since they were engaged and making plans for their wedding?

She had no answers to these questions, but this did not keep her from accepting this challenge. In spite of her confusion and fear, Mary embraced the mystery which surrounded her new life and unknown future.

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary told Gabriel. “May it be to me as you have said.”

Why do you think Luke included this story in his birth narrative? I believe Luke was as impressed with Mary’s commitment and courage as we are. I also think Luke wanted to use this story to inspire his readers.

If Mary could allow God to interrupt her plans and replace them with something new and fresh God was doing, so could they. Each one of Luke’s readers could offer God his or her life to be used in service just as Mary did. Every person Luke was addressing could partner with God to make the world a better place if each one would be as receptive to God’s call as Mary was. If Mary could trust God enough to embrace God’s dream for her life, so could each one of Luke’s readers.

New Testament scholar Dr. Peter Rhea Jones refers to Mary as one of the best examples of what it means to be a dedicated disciple. “While Jesus is the mirror of God,” he writes, “Mary is the reflection of a true disciple.”

Could the same be said of you? Would someone hold you up as an example of what it means to be a true disciple? What changes do you need to make in your values, priorities and lifestyle to be more like Mary? What invitation or call from God do you need to say yes to this week?

Christmas is a good time to ponder these questions. Based upon Mary’s experience and Luke’s purpose for writing this story, **Christmas is a time for listening to God’s call upon your life.** It is about catching a vision of God’s dreams for this world and discerning the role you can play in making God’s dreams come true.

Christmas is also a time to follow Mary’s lead and say yes to God’s invitations to partner with Him to make hope visible to people who are about to give up. Have you noticed in the Bible how God’s dreams are related to helping people who are struggling?

This is because God is passionate about confronting evil, righting wrong, lifting up the lowly, finding the forgotten, liberating the oppressed, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the grieving, loving the unlovely, giving courage to those who are afraid and strength to those who are weak, enabling people to achieve their potential, forgiving people who make mistakes, giving people a second chance, teaching people how to live peaceably with one another and inspiring people to build bridges of goodwill, understanding and reconciliation instead of walls of suspicion and hate. These were all the things Jesus did, and they are the same things God calls us to do.

Like a loving and responsible parent, God knows those around us who are in need of compliments, encouragement, companionship, hope, forgiveness, comfort or assistance, and God works tirelessly to bring people into their lives who will provide these gifts. Perhaps God wants you to be one of these people this week and is trying to get your attention even during this busy time of the year.

“I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary said. “May it be to me as you have said.”

This was Mary’s response to God’s call upon her life. **What is yours?**

The late Dr. John Claypool had an interesting way of explaining this passage to his parishioners. In his description of Gabriel's visit to Mary he would say, "It was as if Gabriel made a motion and Mary seconded it." Then Dr. Claypool would look at his congregation and say, "I wonder how many heavenly motions have died for lack of a second."

This week, I pray you will second every motion from God. When God interrupts your busy life and nudges you to reach out to someone who needs your help, follow Mary's lead.

Don't ignore the call. Don't offer excuses. Don't tell God you will get back with Him later.

Follow Mary's lead. Say yes to God's dream for you and follow through. Say yes and with God's help become a reflection of a true disciple.