

THE CHARACTER AND FAITH OF MARY

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Introduction:

A. Last Sunday was Mother's Day & we spent our time looking at the lives & impact of two Bible mothers:

1. The two mothers we discussed were Hannah and Naomi – Great examples of faith and devotion!
 - a. Hannah teaches us...
 - b. Naomi teaches us...
2. I had actually planned on talking about a third mother but quickly realized time would not permit that → To try to squeeze all three into one sermon would not do their great lives justice!
3. So today, I want us to spend our time looking at the third mother – Mary the mother of Jesus.
 - a. Some regard Mary as being the greatest mother of all because she was the mother chosen by the Lord to bring Jesus, the Son of God and Savior of mankind, into this world
 - b. Mary isn't only a great model of motherhood but a great model of faith & devotion to God

B. Several in the Bible have received great commendations:

1. Like Abraham being called "the friend of God" or God saying of Job, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil?"
2. We see another commendation with regards to Mary: "Highly Favored One Of God!"
3. What does that mean & what about Mary caused her to get such words of praise from God? As we answer those questions there's great lessons particularly for mothers, but also for us all!

Lessons From The Character And Faith Shown By Mary:

A. Mary: Chosen By God To Be His Vessel Because Of Her Faith

1. I think sometimes we may feel hesitant to emphasize and praise Mary for her righteous and godly example in life and motherhood because of the unfortunate doctrinal error surrounding her:
 - a. Some believe Mary maintained her virginity throughout her life, but, the Bible says she had more children and that Jesus had brothers and sisters (**Matt 12:46-50; Gal 1:19**)
 - b. Some will worship Mary, some believe she plays a mediating role in our salvation, and some believe she is an intercessor for our prayers (**1 Tim 2:5; Rom 8:26-28**)
 - c. In recent years the Catholic church has declared Mary as the Co-Redeemer, Mediator Of All Graces, & Advocate For The People Of God" – Her role gets overestimated by men
 - d. While we know these concepts of Mary are not consistent with the Bible's teaching, we can't allow that to lessen our appreciation of her & rob her of the honor she's due!
2. The very fact that God chose Mary to be the vessel for bringing Jesus into this world speaks great praise of God's trust in Mary and her faithfulness! (**Luke 1:26-28, 30-33**)
 - a. We typically think of the lack of sexual restraint among teens as a problem unique to our generation and not a big problem in Biblical times – But twice in one verse Luke emphasizes that she was a virgin – It shows prophecy but it also shows Mary's purity!
 - b. When Gabriel begins speaking to her he doesn't call her by her name but by her position before God – O favored one! Out of all the women in the world, He chose Mary!
 - c. God is placing an utmost level of trust & confidence in her! She is going to bring the Son of God, the Savior of this world, and all the hope of mankind into this world! By choosing her God is giving her the greatest possible commendation of her faith!
3. She was a mother who constantly exhibited her trust in the Lord (**Luke 1:38, 45, 46-55**)

- a. Gabriel had finished speaking in verse 37 and now he is awaiting Mary's response – How would she respond to such a humbling and important mission from God? She responded with that, “Here am I send me” mentality... She responded with trust!
- b. For Mary, answering “YES” to God's call would certainly mean public shame as she has not yet married. It meant struggles ahead as she watched Jesus grow up in order to die!
- c. It took great trust to believe this would even take place, to trust God would care for her through it, & that He'd supply her the help to raise Jesus & see Jesus through His life!
- d. As you examine these words of Mary you see well how she trusted God & knew His word!
- 4. Mary & Joseph made spiritual things, serving God, & worship the priority of their home **(Luke 2)**
 - a. This single chapter sums up the birth of Jesus all the way till he is 12 years old – Well over half of it is dedicated to how they raised Jesus with a focus on worship & obedience!
 - b. They made it a point to do everything in their home-life according the law of the Lord! Notice how it is emphasized over & over again... This mattered to them! **(vs 22-24)**
 - c. How much of a role this played in Jesus' spiritual growth I don't think we can be sure, but it's interesting that His growth is mentioned right alongside this emphasis **(vs. 39-40)**
 - d. Remember the account where Jesus was 12 years old and got left behind at the temple where He was discussing the scriptures with the Jewish elders? Remember, it was because of Mary & Joseph's emphasis on worship that brought Him there! **(vs. 41)**
- 5. As we look at the character and faith of Mary, it's no wonder she is called “blessed” **(Luke 1:48)**

B. Mary stands as a wonderful example of faith, trust, and priorities especially for today's women and mothers, but we all can learn from her great example!

- 1. While you can get caught up in many pursuits, the greatest pursuit of all is to be in God's favor!
 - a. God didn't choose Mary due to her social status (she was relatively an unknown), or her wealth (they were poor), or her sinless nature (like all others Mary had sinned)... He chose her because she trusted God & sought to please Him in everything she did!
 - b. Some women will spend all their time, energy, and wealth chasing things that really don't matter in the grand scheme of themes! For some it's being seen as important among other women, for some it's wealth, and for some it's their physical beauty
 - c. Others will compromise their integrity & faith for the approval of friends and coworkers
 - d. Is it God's favor, being precious in His sight, you're pursuing? What matters the most to you? What gets your focus and energy? What would you give your all for? **(I Pet 3:4)**
- 2. We need more women & men like Mary who respond in trusting faithful service! **(Esther 4:14)**
 - a. No, God doesn't appear to us personally today to say, “I have chosen you to by My vessel for...” → But He does provide us with opportunities every day to serve Him & others!
 - b. Sometimes answering the call for service means putting yourself at risk for being criticized by others! It may mean stepping outside of our comfort zone to embrace a new work! It may mean giving up our own desires and pursuits to serve God or others!
 - c. For our ladies here who are striving to do right and serve the Lord in whatever ways they can... THANK YOU! You truly are a blessed person & you play a very vital role!
- 3. I believe we are all here because we are trusting God for our salvation, right? Like Mary, if we trust God for our salvation we can certainly trust Him with our tomorrow! **(Rom 8:31-32)**
- 4. As we consider the faith of Mary, we are impressed with the need to establish and strength our spiritual priorities, doing God's will, and the value we place on worship **(Matthew 6:33)**