

MARY IN HER OWN WORDS

Often times when I preach, I try to share with you a story from my past, or a story from a book I have read or a movie I have seen. These illustrations are designed to make some point. However, sometimes it's helpful I think just to hear the story. This is one of those times. Today I want to tell you this story from the point of view of its main character, Mary.

Hello, my name is Mary. I'm betrothed to Joseph. We are from the region of Nazareth- from the town of Bethlehem- the town of David.

I have a secret to tell you. I'm pregnant with a very special child. This child is to be the Messiah. However, Joseph isn't the father. I know what you're thinking. I know what that sounds like. But I tell you this child has no earthly father. No, this child has been conceived by the Holy Spirit. He is the Christ, coming to free us from our sins.

I have come to stay with my cousin Elizabeth. When I saw Elizabeth, I greeted her joyfully, but I think Elizabeth was happier to see me than I was to see her, for when I greeted her, the unborn child within her leapt with joy.

As soon as that happened Elizabeth began to recite a poem. Let me explain to you how important that is. You live in a land and in a time where most people can read, so you keep your memories by writing them down. Elizabeth and I live in a land where most people can't read. One of the ways that we use to preserve our memories is poetry. The rhythm of the poem helps us to remember the words, just like music helps us to remember the lyrics of a song.

In our land, poetry is especially important for women. You see unlike your culture, talking about pregnancy or conception is considered shameful. In fact, talking about our bodies is shameful for both men and women in our culture, but it's especially so for women. But if we talk about it in a poem, our culture views that differently. It's considered a sign of our compassion and our sensitivity in that context. So, Elizabeth spoke poetically.

She said to me, "Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb. How is it that the Mother of my Lord comes to me? For behold, when the sound of your greeting came into my ears, the child in my belly leapt for joy. And blessed is the faithful one that is the fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by God."

Why I was chosen to be the mother of the Messiah, I don't know. I'm a poor woman. There's nothing really special about me. My husband, Joseph, has no lands, no riches to leave to my son. We have no power. My husband is not a noble or a Pharisee or a Priest. He's nobody special, and yet, I have been assured that my son will be the Messiah, and for this honor, I give praise to God.

I began to sing, "My soul magnifies the Lord, and my Spirit rejoices in my savior. For God has looked upon the humble station of his servant. For behold, from now all generations will

call me blessed. For the mighty one has done great things for me and holy is his name. And his mercy is from generation to generation to those who fear him.

“He has done mighty deeds with his arm, scattering the arrogant in the thoughts of his heart. He has brought down rulers from the thrones and raised up the humble.

“He has filled the hungry with good things and sent away the rich empty handed. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy. Just as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and his seed into the ages.”

I was filled with the Holy Spirit, and I sang to my heart’s content. I realized I was singing a new song- a song for all the troubled people of the world. I was singing a song about the true nature of God. I realized that wealth or power or family name or status didn’t count for much in the Kingdom of God. All of those things that I don’t have don’t matter. In the Kingdom of God all are equal, all are important, all matter, and all are free.

The Messiah is coming to show us a new way. A new way to live and a new way to love God and each other. It’s a way of peace, justice and righteousness, and that Messiah is the child I’m carrying in my womb.

So, prepare yourselves for his coming. Make him proud to call you, his children. Instead of greatness, seek humbleness. Instead of pride, seek humility. Instead of wealth, seek wisdom. Do not count yourself greater than anyone, but count yourself blessed to be a part of the Kingdom of God. That is what my child wants. I should know. After all- I’m his mother.