



## CrossRoads Notes:

Turn Your Bibles to Luke 1:26-38

**Title: Christmas Faith**

**Theme: The Faith of Mary, Submission to God's Will**

**Series: The Cast of Christmas**

Luke 1:26-38

**Introduction:** *Little information is given about Mary in the Word of God. However, what is said is striking and sets before every Christian a Biblical example of true submissiveness to God's will. Submission to the Lord's will is an absolute essential before a Christian can grasp the truths surrounding the Christmas story.*

**Proposition:** *I would propose to you that there are several simple truths that the Holy Spirit of Christ would like to place deep within your mind and burn deep within your spiritual heart.*

**Interrogative Sentence:** *Just what are those truths and how can they be a blessing to the children of God?*

**Transitional Sentence:** *One truth worth grasping this Christmas season is that no matter where you live and no matter what circumstance you find yourself in, the Lord can reach into your life and make you a valuable part of the building of the kingdom of God.*

There is much that the Holy Spirit of Christ wants you to grasp in today's message. In this first division of the message He wants you to grasp the significance of Nazareth. This city is not mentioned in the Old Testament. It was the home of Joseph and Mary (Luke 2:39) and Nazareth was where the angel announced to the virgin the birth of the Messiah. (Luke 1:26-28) Nazareth is where Jesus grew to manhood (Luke 4:16) and where He began His public ministry in the synagogue. (Matthew 13:54) (The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia: Easton's Bible Dictionary)

Unfortunately, Nazareth around the time of the birth of Christ had established a rather poor reputation in morals and religion. (The New International Dictionary of the Bible) (John 1:47,46) Evidence of the citizen's spiritual condition in Nazareth is found in their treatment of Christ during His ministry. The Bible says that He returned to Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit. (Luke 4:14) The Bible says after Jesus was finished (Luke 4:16-22; Luke 4:29; Matthew 13:58)

Symbolically, the significance to all this is that Nazareth in Jesus' time represented no reputation for religion or anything significant. Jesus having His connections to Nazareth shows us symbolically that He desires to show His favor on the Gentile world. Jonah, Elijah and Elisha were prophets to the Gentiles. This shows us that God is just as able and willing to send His message to an area that is not willing to receive the message as well as to a place that is searching for God.

God's messenger, Gabriel was entrusted with a Divine message to Mary, to Zechariah, and also to the Prophet Daniel. (Daniel 9:21-23)

There is so much for Christians to grasp this Christmas season if they will die to self, cast off the business of this world, and meditate upon the lives of those physically involved in the life of Christ.

Gabriel means "man of God" and it can mean "the strength of God." (Who's Who in the Bible; The Complete Word Study Dictionary) Let the Holy Spirit place these truths deep within your heart. As part of Gabriel's message he told Daniel that he was highly esteemed, (Daniel 9:23) he told Mary that she had found favor with God (Luke 1:30 and Elizabeth said, "In these days [God] has shown His favor [to me]. (Luke 1:25)

No matter whether you are doing the work of a prophet like Daniel, offering worship in the house of God doing the Lord's work like Zechariah, or living a faithful life before God like Mary and Elizabeth, the Lord can get His message to you anytime and any place you are when you need it. While you are serving the Lord in the church or out in the work place where there seems to be no interest in the work of God, or even be a hostile attitude to the true works of Christ. God can still get His message to you and it will strengthen you to accomplish your part of the Great Commission and in everything the Lord has called you to do.

**Transitional Sentence:** *Those who have the faith of Mary can enjoy the Lord meeting them right where they are and they can enjoy the benefits of a circumcised heart.* (Romans 2:28-29)

Mary was a virgin, representing that which is pure, that heart that is sold out to the will of God and willing to die to self for the purposes of God. She represents that heart that is hungry for God.

Circumcision of the spiritual heart has always been on the heart of God. It is not only a New Testament revelation for mankind but found in Old Testament several times. (Jeremiah 4:4; 9:25-26; Deuteronomy 30:6)

Mary, who is a representation of a heart after God gave birth to a Son who walked upon this guilty sod, remained sinless, and got victory over sin and death so you and I do not have to be enslaved to sin and eternal damnation, but rather eternal life in Christ.

Many do not know and have true Christmas joy because they try to live by outward circumcision, outward showing of religious acts. They listen to the Word of God, they try to obey God's Word while punishing everyone with their attitudes and religious piety. Still, they are unable to get a joyous victory over sin, the world and the lies of the devil.

This circumcision allows them to have spiritual fellowship with the Holy Spirit of Christ. (Romans 8:10) The Holy Spirit takes the sword of the Spirit, which is the Word of God, (Ephesians 6:17) and washes the heart with the written Word. (Ephesians 5:25b) The Bible is a better cleanser than that which is advertised on the radio or television. It takes out and can keep out the soiled spots in the heart.

Illustration: Teaching Caleb, Derek, and Josiah how to properly clean a horse stall:

When Christians become born again it is like having our hearts all cleaned up, but because of the sinful nature that is in all of us, we need a constant cleaning so we can remain in a healthy condition, thus becoming champions in and for Christ. Just as a dedicated horseman does what it takes to enable a horse to achieve the goals set before it, the Holy Spirit of Christ remains in the child of God, constantly cleaning the spiritual heart with the Word of God. The child of God that has the faith of Mary becomes all the Lord desires for him to be. Their heart cry is like the Psalmist who wrote, (Psalm 119:9-11)

Just as Christ was humble enough to be born in a stinky stable, the Holy Spirit of Christ takes up residence in the stable of our hearts and contends with the smell of the flesh that daily needs to be cleansed. His purpose is to circumcise our hearts and make us like Christ, to become useful in proclaiming the truths of Christmas all year round. Christians who have the faith of Mary know this truth of being in Christ, (2 Corinthians 3:6)

The second greatest benefit of a circumcised heart is to be found competent in our service to the Son of the living God, the first and most important benefit being a pure heart in God's sight. That it may be said of us as the Bible says about Zechariah and Elizabeth, "Both of them were upright in the sight of God, observing all the Lord's commandments and regulations blamelessly.

**Transitional Sentence:** *Mary was the physical mother of Jesus Christ the Son of God who enables us to enjoy the new covenant found through the shedding of His blood on the Cross of Calvary.* Another truth worth grasping this Christmas season is that her faith enabled her to enjoy being "highly favored" with God. (Luke 1:28)

This spoken blessing into her life did not come from abroad, but from the very throne room of God and the term "highly favored" (*kecharitomene*) is an active verb meaning to have shown kindness to. Great Greek scholars tell us that the perfect passive participle of the verb (*charitoo*) is only used here in Luke 1:28 and again in Ephesians 1:6 where it is wonderfully translated in the King James Bible as "made us accepted in the beloved." Abbott-Smith defines this Greek word as "...endued with divine grace to the full..." or in other words cause us to find favor. (Analytical Lexicon of the Greek New Testament; The Complete Word Study, New Testament; The Greeks-English Dictionary: Word Meanings in the New Testament)

The idea worth grasping here is that God has extended His favor or grace to all born again Christians in Christ just as He did Mary. (Word Meanings in the New Testament; The Complete Word Study, New Testament) Mary was the bearer of the physical Son of God, He being God in the flesh - Christians have the Holy Spirit of Christ living in them. (Romans 8:9) The same chapter says if you have Christ living in you, you have eternal life.

It is imperative that we understand that it was not Mary's faith that caused God to move on her behalf, it was whom she had faith in, God. She had to believe the Word of God spoken to her was truth worth grasping. Her heart after God enabled her to receive divine revelation that was full of explanation and promise. The truth that was worth grasping for Mary was and is for us, "The Lord is with you." (Luke 1:28)

Gideon - "The Lord is with you, mighty warrior." (Judges 6:12) This is the very promise made to soldiers of Christ we read about in the Book of Matthew in the giving of the Great Commission. (Matthew 28:18-20) The word "always" (*pantos*) means continually and forever with us in our work with the Lord and in everything involved in our lives. Jesus will not leave us to do the work of God or to live out our lives down here all alone depending only on man's flesh. He is literally involved in everything that affects our human lives and souls. (The Greek-English Dictionary of the New Testament) What greater truth is worth meditating upon this Christmas season?

Christians who grasp this truth live a life like that of Mary, believing the Word of the Lord, enquiring for revelation through the written Word and walking in the favor of God.

**Transitional Sentence:** *The last truth worth grasping this Christmas season is that those who have the faith of Mary walk in submission to the Lord's will for them.* (Luke 1:38)

Being a true bondsman (*doule*) meant Mary belonged totally to the Lord and gave Him full permission to work His will in and through her life. This heart attitude enabled Mary to worship the Lord in soul and spirit. Her submissiveness enabled her to gain understanding and direction from the Lord.

Christians can choose to have understanding of God's will for them as well as Mary did. (Romans 12:1-2) Christians who get the most out of what the first Christmas opened up for the children of God grasp the truth of servanthood. Based on the truth of Mary's statement to Gabriel, "May it be to me as you have said" and that she was a surrendered servant, Christians are to live in a way that says to everyone who sees or reads about their lives that they are servants of God and Christ. (1 Peter 2:16; 1 Corinthians 7:22; Ephesians 6:6) The Apostle Paul, James, Peter and Jude describe themselves as being servants of God. (Romans 1:1; Galatians 1:10; Philippians 1:1; James 1:1; 2 Peter 1:1; Jude 1:1) Christians who have the faith of Mary have changed their allegiance. Rather than serving the flesh and the world, as before, they are becoming servants and bondsmen to God and Christ. There is no greater gift of love that Christians can express to the Lord than to become a bondsman to the Lord and His will.

**In Closing:** *Christians who have the faith of Mary will receive Holy Spirit revelation to what the Lord is calling them to do.* These revelations of God often come in times when so few people are seeking or even caring to see God do a real work. Just like the people who lived in Nazareth. Christians live a life of true faith and they seek the Lord, expecting Him to meet them right where they are.

Christians who have the faith that was found in Mary allow the Lord to circumcise their hearts. Those who have a heart after God find themselves highly favored by God, not only in receiving salvation but in proclaiming the Name of the Savior of the world to all who observe their lives. Lastly, those who have the faith that Mary had in the Lord express a life that is in full submission to the Lord's will. They express a life that says "Let it be to me as you have ordained for me to fulfill my part of the Great Commission, in proclaiming the truths of Christ.

I think of the life of Missionary Don Nelson, one of our missionaries who had received divine revelation from God to build a radio station in Alaska. At that time so few people were hearing the call to go to Alaska and many who lived there showed little interest in having a Christian radio station. In the wilderness he heard God's call and he prayed through to completion that vision. Even though so many stood against him, the Lord planted a Christian radio station that is still proclaiming the Gospel, not only in Alaska, but in Russia as well.

Don Nelson knew the Word of the Lord had spoken to him, he expected and experienced some opposition, yet he prayed through saying, "I am submitted the will of God". He was able to stay steadfast because he knew that the Lord was with him, the favor of God was upon him.

Christians are highly favored with God and they need only to be submissive to the will of God in all seasons of their lives and they will enjoy the blessing of having God with them.