

Messy People

Session 5: Mary—Surviving Life’s Messy Plot Twists

“God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a village in Galilee, to a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of King David. Gabriel appeared to her and said, ‘Greetings, favored woman! The Lord is with you!’

Confused and disturbed, Mary tried to think what the angel could mean. ‘Don’t be afraid, Mary’ the angel told her, ‘for you have found favor with God! You will conceive and give birth to a son and you will name him Jesus. He will be very great and will be called the Son of the Most High...’

Mary asked the angel, ‘But how can this happen? I am a virgin.’

The angel replied, ‘The Holy Spirit will come upon you...The baby to be born will be holy, and he will be called the Son of God...For the word of the God will never fail.’

Mary responded, ‘I am the Lord’s servant. May everything you have said about me come true.’”

Luke 1:26-38

We all experience difficulties in life – some are just inconveniences and some are serious life interruptions

When has your life taken an unexpected turn (whether good or bad), and how did you respond initially?

Has there been a time when life dealt you a *crushing* disappointment?

Read John 16:33: *“I’ve told you all this so that trusting me, you will be unshakable and assured, deeply at peace. In this godless you will continue to experience difficulties. But take heart! I’ve conquered the world.” The Message*

Notice that Jesus didn’t say ‘you might’, he said ‘you will’ experience difficulties. What hope you receive from his message to us?

Read Mary’s story of her life plot twist found in Luke 1 and Luke 2

Mary found herself confronted with a plot twist early in life – one that would alter of her life as well as the lives of anyone who comes to know her son!

Mary’s life had many difficulties and often must have seemed messy!

Look at Luke 1:28-32 Why did the angel call Mary ‘a favored woman?’

Read Matthew 2:13-14 What must this have been like for Mary to have to flee to a foreign country to protect her child?

Main Point: God is looking for people who are available, interruptible, trustworthy and courageous. When we turn our hearts fully toward God as his servants miraculous things can happen.

God uses people who are available

“And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, ‘Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?’ Then I said, ‘Here I am! Send me!’” Isaiah 6:8 ESV

What does Isaiah’s response to the Lord reveal about his heart’s desire?

How available are you to the needs of others?

“Mary said, ‘I am the Lord’s servant, and I am willing to do whatever he wants. May everything you said come true?’” Luke 1:38 TLB

Why did God choose Mary?

How available are we to God? Does it depend on the circumstances – what God is asking of us?

Heroes in the Bible, as well as present-day heroes of the faith, share the trait of being available to God: Abraham, Esther and Noah.

Jesus’ availability to people others often overlooked. Matthew 19:13-14 & Luke 17:11-14

God uses people who are interruptible

“However, as it is written: ‘What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived’ the things God has prepared for those who love him.” I Corinthians 2:9 NIV

“... your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” Matthew 6:10

Jesus taught his disciples to pray ‘your will be done.’ He didn’t say ‘my will be done.’ Replacing our will for God’s will and remaining interruptible is a part of the secret to being used in mighty ways by God.

What plans have you made for yourself that God has replaced with better ones?

How has praying for God’s will to be done blessed you? Romans 8:28

Mary’s life was interrupted and this interruption was complicated. Luke 2:1,4-7

She has the privilege of partnering with God to do something beyond anything she possibly could have dreamed of on her own.

Throughout Jesus’ ministry, he was constantly interrupted. Example: Luke 18:15-17, Luke 8:9, Mark 5:25-34 and Luke 5:17-39. Interrupted in the midst of an interruption! Luke 8:40-56

God uses people who are trustworthy

“And Mary said: ‘My soul glories the Lord and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior, for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed, for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.’” Luke 1:46-49

“Trust and obey, for there’s no other way to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.”
When has God trusted you with a task that seemed much too large for you?

What gifts --people, resources and abilities—has God entrusted to you?

Mary was entrusted with the care of Jesus in good times and bad. And she was trustworthy with the task that God had put before her.

According to this verse what kind of people is God looking for, and what does he promise to do for them? *“For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to show himself strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal to him.” II Chronicle 16:9 NKJV*

God uses people who are courageous

“The Lord himself goes before you and will be with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged.” Deuteronomy 31:8 NIV

“Courage is being scared to death but saddling up anyway.” John Wayne

Faithful people encounter messy situations. Joshua did and he was feeling afraid.
What did Moses tell him?

If we are to be used by God (in the messiness of life), we will need to be courageous.

“In the sixth month of Elizabeth’s pregnancy, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a town in Galilee, to a virgin pledged to be married to a man named Joseph, a descendant of David. The virgin’s name was Mary. The angel went to her and said, ‘Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.’”

“Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. But the angel said to her, ‘Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God.’” Luke 1:26-30 NIV

Mary was available, interruptible, trustworthy and courageous in the midst of messiness. Her role in God’s plan brought joy and sadness and yet she was faithful.

