

Sunday 3rd May 2020 10 am

Mary

Online service sheet during the coronavirus.

Reading OT Holiness

Reading 1 Sam 2:1-10 (page 272)

Luke 1:26-38 (page 1026)

Luke 1:46-56 (page 1026)

Title: Mary a gentle heart

Listen to today's sermon by clicking on the link at www.knbc.org.The audio file is **20_05_03_mary.mp3** in the sermons directory

Reflective prayer what does this mean for me Lord.....

Closing Prayer:

Close -----

Welcome

Good morning, and welcome to you again this Sunday at KNBC. pray
This morning we return to looking at people Jesus met. We have already considered Peter, Matthew, Nathaniel, the Syro-Phoenician woman etc., but we have not looked at Mary, Jesus' Mother.

■ One of the questions on the school children's quiz we do is "who were the first to visit baby Jesus in the Manger" and some of the younger children say "Mary" (the answer is the shepherds), we gently remind them that at the birth Mary was already there!

So this is not really someone Jesus 'met' but a still a person who rightfully deserves our attention.

We hear too little of Mary. This is probably a reaction to the Roman Catholics who renovate her in a way she should never be.

RCs even have a phrase 'Mariology' and call Mary the mother of God. We do not put Mary above God. To adore her as such; and to pray to her as divine, or even as a mediator with God (which they see her as) is blasphemous idolatry - and degrades the One and Only fully sufficient Mediator. God does not have a mother or father, he is without beginning or end. Mary is not the mother of God she is the mother of Jesus.

As Protestants we are so fearful of elevating her unduly - we end up never mentioning her at all. So let us take a look at Mary and learn from Her.

■ In the BCM office some years ago I shouted "Paul" and three Pauls looked round - my sad humour I'm afraid, same with 'Joyce' at KNBC

You may well say the same for Mary, we here we have six Mary's in the Bible, you may well ask "will the real Mary please stand up"! There is:

1. Mary - the mother of Mark, (Ac 12:12)
2. Mary - the sister of Martha and Lazarus (John 11)
3. Mary Magdalene.
4. Mary - the wife of Cleopas, and mother of James the Less and Joses, sometimes mentioned as the 'other Mary' (Mt 27:56,61 Lu 24:10 Joh 19:25)
5. Mary - A good, useful Christian at Rome, saluted in Paul's letter, Ro 16:6.
6. Mary - the mother of Jesus (who is described as such in Acts 1:14)

Joseph

Mary is there throughout Jesus' earthly ministry –and beyond, not Joseph. It looks like he passed away between Jesus being found in the temple (aged

12) and the start of His Ministry (aged 30). There is no mention of him at the wedding at Cana or any time later. In Mark 6 we read **"Isn't this the carpenter?"** In other words, Jesus is not the carpenter's son but now the breadwinner. Mark 6:3 Also tells us that Mary and Joseph went on to have other children, **Isn't this Mary's son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren't his sisters here with us?"** James became one of the main leaders in the Jerusalem church and wrote the letter of his name.

Both Joseph and Mary were descended from King David, from Abraham the father of the Israelites, and of course Adam. Read the genealogies in the OT and they go from man to man, but in Jewish culture it was the woman whose line was verifiable, - for obvious reasons.

As we turn to Mary, Matthew's gospel is more matter of fact while Luke gives good insight into her amiable and lovely character. Here as we read about the birth of Christ we see the kind of young woman she was.

So let's start with the visit by the angel Gabriel announcing that she is to bear a special son. It is found in Luke 1.28 **The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favoured! The Lord is with you."**

What does all this mean? She is understandably greatly troubled.

Then the angel repeats and tries to reassure her 30 **"Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favour with God."**

She was chosen for a task. The OT predicts the coming of a Messiah, a Son to be born, and the angel Gabriel had said she would bear this Son, this King, one who would be no less than the Son of the Most High who will have an eternal kingdom that will never end. No matter it is a lot to take in!

What is her response? 38 **"I am the Lord's servant," ... "May it be to me as you have said."** What an expression of humble, believing, acceptance of God's perfect will, what a concurring of His divine will for her life.

✚ **Everyone called of God is chosen for a task, When Christ calls you it is for his purposes not yours, let us like Mary accept that with a ready and obedient heart. Are you called? Write down what he has called you for?**

How is it she is a 'blessed woman'? A good question to ask. When she visits Elizabeth she is spoken of as blessed or favoured among woman. Not favoured 'among gods' but 'among women', not blessed above women but among women.

And why is she blessed? **"Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!"** Lu 1:45

Her blessing is in her believing. x2 So the blessedness of Mary is not her motherhood towards Him, but her hearing and obeying Him.

Christ himself declared **blessed rather** i.e a higher blessing belongs to those **"that hear the word of God and obey it,"** Lu 11:27,28.

After visiting her relation Elizabeth she pens what is known as the *Magnificat* 46 **And Mary said: "My soul glorifies (magnifies) the Lord** she has a humility that "magnified the Lord" not self.

servants are to magnify their masters, and what a glorious master we have!

47 **and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour.** Here, just like all of us, she is a sinner in need of salvation – she has found salvation! And "rejoices" in Him

✚ **She is to carry the saviour – but it is He, the Saviour who is really the one carrying her!**

48 **for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,** (not her name - but count her blessed)

49 **for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.**

Mary drank deeply at the wells of Scripture, Here under the Spirit she utters this hymn of praise based on Hannah's hymn of praise, you read in 1Sa 2.

She humbly rejoices like Hannah at God's gift to her.

Mary is blessed - not because of her - but because of Him, **like a child boasting to his friends at school about all he has at home given by his parents.** So Christ is the source of blessing we are those blessed in Him –!

Can you say He **the Mighty One - has done great things for me!**

His mercy extends to those who fear him, from generation to generation.

He has performed mighty deeds with his arm; he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.

He has brought down rulers from their thrones but has lifted up the humble.

He has filled the hungry with good things but has sent the rich away empty.

He has helped his servant Israel, remembering to be merciful

He has, He has, again & again, a pattern for our prayers count your blessings

■ **Years ago when we saw a friend roll up with a new girlfriend sometimes we went mmh "no oil painting there" (not very kind I know) and thought "what does he see in her"??. Well, we conclude "she must have a wonderful character"**

I think, and of course this is pure conjecture that Mary was a bit like that, if I can challenge all the oil paintings ever made of her! It is likely Jesus was not handsome, or charming, or charismatic Isa 53:2 **He had no beauty or majesty to attract us to him, nothing in his appearance that we should desire him.** ..., and the Jews we read in John's gospel said "**you are not yet fifty years old**" so perhaps at 32 he looked older than he was. So maybe Mary was no oil painting despite all the images. She might have been pretty I don't know, but she had an inner beauty.

She was humble, a woman of godly character.

Mary knew God's word, knew it not in her mind but knew it in her heart and experience. The Lord spoke to her and she listened. - *Why say that?*

1. When the shepherds who were the first there BTW – and understood the wonders of this birth and proclaimed this good news - what did Mary do?

She **treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.** Lu 2:19

2. When Jesus aged 12 was debating with the teachers of the law in the temple she again didn't understanding everything...

✚ What do you do when you don't understand, do you fill in the gaps, make speedy judgments, are quick to form and speak out your opinion?

Again what did Mary do? We are told she **treasured all these things in her heart.** Lu 2:51 She pondered, she quietly asked; "Lord, what does this mean"

She was a listener - James says we should all be like that: **quick to listen slow to speak and slow to become angry.**

Some of you are you quick to speak, quick to be angry - and slow to listen, - and that with each other. James is saying that God **chose to give us birth through the word of truth,** Jas 1:18 So what do I now do with that word? Yes listen and **humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourself. Do what it says.** Ja 1:19-22

✚ If you are quick to speak and slow to listen with each other – you will also be with God.

- I've just finished Anne Frank's diaries. It is the account of two Jewish families in hiding in Amsterdam during WWII. They are finally caught by the Gestapo carted off and die in the concentration camps.

The writer Anne, is a young teenage Jewish girl - like Mary

Anne was a girl who never stops talking - unlike Mary who is a listener. Anne speaks of God but there's no desire to submit to Him. Mary does.

Anne in her book she never quotes the scriptures, Mary is full of them.

✚ Anne in this is like young girls today - Mary so different, without pride, not self-centered, she humbly hands her life over to the Lord her God.

Mary was gentle and thoughtful and listened to God's word, the words that could save her and did save her. Pride cuts you off from God. Humility > He

Mary's response to God's word is to meditate on it, Like the one blessed in psalm 1 who avoids evil **but his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.**" bear Christ-like fruit and display His beauty

That is the secret. Moses told Joshua **Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful.** Jos 1:8 Ps 48:9 **Within your temple, O God, we meditate on your unfailing love.** (Korah) Ps 77:12 David says **I will meditate on all your works and consider all your mighty deeds.**

Ps 104:34 **May my meditation be pleasing to him, as I rejoice in the LORD.**

Ps 119:15 **I meditate on your precepts and consider your ways.**

✚ Mary knew the scriptures she meditated on them, she listened, obeyed

Mary was a lady who let God's word dwell in her and it made her beautiful. Are you like that? Beautiful? Peter knows a beautiful woman when he sees one! **not .. from outward adornment, such as braided hair and the wearing of gold jewellery and fine clothes. Instead, that of your inner self, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is of great worth in God's sight. For this is the way the holy women of the past who put their hope in God used to make themselves beautiful.** 1 Peter 3:3-6

I was going to speak about gentleness one day, the Godly quality gentleness, well we have it here in Mary we see a wonderful example of a quiet and gentle Spirit.

Humility

Her humble trust in Him was her guard against all the heartaches to come, She knew it would be hard because Simeon had told her so, **a sword will pierce your own soul too."** Lu 2:35.

✚ How was she prepared? Her gentleness and humility were her strength, equipping her for what is to come.

Mary like everyone else didn't know the details of that. At the wedding in Cana we hear **"When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, 'They have no more wine.'**" She had observed her son and tried to piece the puzzle together **"Dear woman, why do you involve me?" Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come."**... but it was about to - as Jesus listened to the Father's will, he performed his 1st miracle in Cana thus revealing His Glory to his disciples. Her simple faith said of Christ **"Do whatever he tells you."** x2 Joh 2:3-5

The next time we see her is when someone said to Jesus **"Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you."**

Mary and her other sons who **didn't believe in Him** Joh 7:5 were saying *"things are getting out of hand, your enthusiasm is carrying you too far!"*

To this Jesus sends a shot across their bows to stop others listen to unbelief, and to stop us elevating Mary on the basis of her relationship with Jesus. 48. **"Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?"** and pointing to his disciples, declares, **"Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."** (Mt 12:46-50, Mr 3:21,31-35 Lu 8:20).

At the cross

Mary is there at the cross - shortly before three o'clock when Christ is about to give up His Spirit. Jesus once more recognizes His human relationship to her, which He had during His ministry put in the background, that His higher relationship might stand prominent; by now as she tearfully gazes up at her dying son he commends her to John: **"Dear woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother." From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.**" Joh 19:26-27

Jesus despite the agony of the cross obeys the 5th commandment **to honour his mother** and with no Joseph he arranges for her future provision and care.

Have you, are you doing that for your parents as the Lord say we should?

How is it showing – when so many around don't care for their parents?

Mary is there when they lay him in the tomb: **"The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and saw the tomb and how his body was laid in it."** Lu 23:55

Was she there at the resurrection? I don't know, I suspect so.

Mary appears lastly in Jerusalem where she's described as **"Mary the mother of Jesus"** Ac 1:14. There she is as one of the women who joined with others, in prayer and supplication for the Holy Spirit before Pentecost.

Finale

So to conclude God used this humble and gentle character to be the one who **will be with child and give birth to a son, ... Jesus.** The one who is **great and will be called the Son of the Most High.** That was God's good purpose for her. But all of God's people are to do the work assigned to each of us. Mary didn't grumble, or make excuses, or like Moses and Jeremiah, she doesn't say "send someone else" "let someone else do it".

I am not to bear the Son of God, as she did. No that was solely her work. But in a way we do, for through each Christian God brings his son into the world, living in you, birthed in you says Paul and for the purpose of making him known to the world. You and I are the mouth, hands, feet of the Son of the Most High God.

No doubt Mary was overawed that this amazing God who spoke the world into existence and threw the stars into space should choose to enter the world, to presence himself in the world - through her –now it's your turn, through you, people are to hear of him from your lips!

- **Think of your own situation - Are you a parent? Then God has placed you there that your children may meet Christ through you.**
- **Are you a husband or wife? Then you are to bring Christ to your spouse. Those neighbours you talk to, yes they are to find Christ through you. It is the same for that shop, workplace, surgery. Etc.**

Christ now seeks to come to them through you. Do you see what an awesome task we all as Christians have?

- ✚ **To have your sins forgiven, be freed from judgment and heading to heaven is wonderful – If that is true for you then your response is to give up: your plans, your wants, your desires, and humbly serve Him.**

All of us are, like Mary, chosen for a task. Let us respond as Mary did:

"I am the Lord's servant," "May it be to me as you have said."

Will you say that to Him now? Will you in doing so express a humble, believing acceptance of, and concurrence in, the divine will for your life. Amen

END