



DEVOTION FOR THE WEEK

A CHANGE OF HEART...



[Read Luke 1:26-38]

²⁹ But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be.

³⁴... “How will this be, since I am a virgin?”

³⁸... “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.”

Dearest Brothers and Sisters-in-Christ,

This Sunday will be the last day of Advent. This whole season of Advent continually reminds us to prepare ourselves for the celebration of Jesus’ birth (Christmas) and for His second coming. How has your preparations been so far?

Mary was prepared by angel Gabriel for Jesus’ “first coming”. And in this recorded narrative, Mary was prepared by having a change of heart during her meeting with the angel.

Let us take a look at Mary's three main responses.

Mary's 1st response: Greatly Troubled

When the angel first greeted Mary, he said that she was the 'favored' one and the Lord was with her. The Bible tells us that Mary was greatly troubled (confused and perplexed).

Even when Mary was not able to verbalise anything at that point in time, God already knew she was having fear and He addressed it directly. The angel said, *"Do not be afraid, Mary."* Mary might have been troubled because of a fear that rose up in her heart.

Mary's 2nd response: "How?"

The angel went on to tell Mary that she would conceive and bear a son. She was to name him Jesus, and he would be called the Son of the Most High. Mary then asked, *"How will this be, since I am a virgin?"*

This is a different posture from that of Zechariah, who asked for a confirmatory sign to prove what the angel had said to him was from God (v18). Mary only asked how that could be accomplished, since it is not possible in human terms. She was asking about the process. At that time, Mary was already betrothed to Joseph so it is absolutely possible that she would eventually conceive. However, Mary understood angel Gabriel's message to be of 'immediate fulfilment', which led her to ask the question, *"How will this be?"*

Angel Gabriel explained that she would conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit, using Elizabeth's miracle baby as an example of how *"nothing will be impossible with God."* In this phrase, there are two very important Greek words lost in translation: ῥῆμα (rhema) and ἀδυνατέω (adunateo). Rhema refers to "that which is said", and here God had clearly spoken. Adunateo has a root word in 'dynamite', which has a connotation of power. A commentator suggested that this phrase can also be translated as "no word (rhema) from God will be powerless". Angel Gabriel

was affirming that the word from God has power, and will indeed be possible.

Mary's 3rd response: "Let it be to me according to your word."

Angel Gabriel said, "no word (rhema) from God will be powerless." Mary replied, "Let it be to me according to your word (rhema)."

Mary was simply saying, "I am willing, and may what God has said be done to me." There was a change in her heart. She went from being troubled, to asking 'how?', and to 'let it be done, I am willing'.

Mary allowed her heart to be changed, because she was clear of her identity in God. She declared that she was '*the servant of the Lord*'. The servant here is *doule*, which is the female version of *doulos* (*slave*). Mary knew clearly that she belonged to the LORD, and thus she was willing for the LORD's *rhema* to come upon her.

Reflections:

- Are you troubled and confused? Is it due to a subconscious fear of something/someone? Let the Holy Spirit surface it for you and give it to the Lord. **Fear not. The Lord is with you.**
- Are you wondering if the direction from God can ever be possible, because it seemed so impossible under the current circumstances? **Take heart. If He had said it, it will have power and is therefore fully possible.**
- Are you willing for God's will to be done in your life? Are you willing to be a *doule/doulos* of God, no matter how unimaginable God's word is?

Come before the Lord, meet Him face to face and let Him change your heart, so that you can say, "I am willing".

In His Love,
Ps Joann