

Journey to Christmas with the Midwives of the Messiah

My Platform for Glorifying God

By Sharon W. Betters

TODAY'S TREASURE

In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

Luke 1:26-38 ESV

Like countless women before me, I have sat at Mary's feet in dark moments, longing to see inside her heart and hear her story of bearing the Christ child. Even more, I eagerly hunt for clues on how she survived watching her precious son crucified on a cross. What fortified her as she raised Jesus and then lost him to the cross? Perhaps one of the most poignant moments for me with Mary was about three years after the deaths of our son, Mark and his friend Kelly.

The ache in my chest refused to break. The grey skies matched my mood. Our sixteen-year-old son Mark's fatal car accident was a faint memory for most people but for the past three years, I started every morning with the headline, "Mark is gone. He's never coming back." Though good days popped up once in a while, this was not one of them. Calling a faithful friend seemed fruitless - what else could she say to help me? Yet I longed for a companion in my grief.

Our empty house and the cold grey skies tempted me to curl up and spend the day alone, nursing my longing for our son, but experience taught me that choice would not

lead to a good place. Instead, I lit a fire in our fireplace, nestled under the afghan and started reading a book by a long-distance mentor. The next few hours passed quickly as I tried to absorb the text written by my friend, Susan Hunt. A few hours later, I closed the book, filled with purpose and hope as the words, "***Your circumstances are your platform for glorifying God***" stuck in my heart. Mary, the Mother of Jesus, spoke to me through her own response to a turned upside down life, when an angel announced she would have a baby, though she "knew not a man".

Mary, a teenager who found favor in the eyes of the Lord, knew these few words would forever change her world and create chaos in her family and with her fiancé, Joseph. Yet Mary responded, "***I am the handmaiden of the Lord. May it be to me as you have said.***" Mary's surrender to God's purposes made her circumstances a platform for glorifying her God. Her response confronted me with the question: Could I see the death of my child as my platform, a way to honor my God? Could I pray as Mary did, "I am the handmaiden of the Lord. May it be to me as you have said."?

The promise of Ephesians 2:10 gave me confidence that before time began God had planned out this pathway for me and that He had good works to be completed by me:

*For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.*

Before I was born, God prepared good works for me to do and if He was calling me to this platform, then He had already equipped me for those works. The riches of Scripture exclaimed that my life was not over because of Mark's death, and your life is not over if you have experienced loss. Just as Mark's days were ordained by God before one of them came to be (Psalm 139:15-16), so were mine and so are yours. Whether the sun is shining or cloudy skies reign, God promises to direct my steps as I call on Him. My responsibility continues to be to open wide my mouth. His responsibility is to fill it: "I am the Lord your God, who brought you up out of Egypt. Open wide your mouth and I will fill it" (Psalm 81:10). *Treasures in Darkness*, Page 214, 215, used with permission.

Seeing my circumstances as my platform for glorifying God gives me a place from which to start my everyday life. I become more intentional in the way I respond to the tasks before me. Each task has purpose when I see them through the grid of God's glory. Consider how such thinking could change the way you respond to a strong-willed child, an angry husband, a wayward child, a broken relationship. How you care for your family, your home, pay your bills, interact with your neighbors, or how you celebrate Christmas. Every circumstance becomes an eternal opportunity to reflect Jesus.

As we soak up these days after Christmas, Mary offers us a gift that cannot be broken. Remember her profound statement:

I am the handmaiden of the Lord. May it be to me as you have said.
Luke 1:38

PRAYER

Father, I am Your handmaiden. May it be to me as You say and may I push my circumstances through the grid of seeing them as my platform for glorifying You. Some of us are barely whispering those words, because we know the pathway ahead is hard. Encourage us with Your special grace.