

## LESSON 10

# Mary: Faith to Surrender

Luke 1

*“See, I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary. “May it happen to me as you have said.” Then the angel left her.*

(Acts 26:19)

**Class Overview:** Mary’s story begins with a message that seemed impossible. A young woman from an ordinary village was chosen to bear the Son of God. Her world, her plans, and her reputation would all be turned upside down. Yet her response was simple and complete: *“May it happen to me as you have said.”* This lesson teaches that genuine faith is not about understanding everything God is doing but about surrendering everything to His will. Like Mary, we learn that trust often means saying “yes” before we see how God’s plan will unfold.

**Class Objectives:** By the end of this class, you should be able to—

1. Understand the historical and personal setting of Mary’s calling.
2. Recognize how faith and surrender work together in obedience to God.
3. Identify the fears Mary faced and how her trust overcame them.
4. See how Mary’s example teaches that God uses humble, willing hearts for His greatest purposes.
5. Commit to surrendering your plans, timing, and will to the Lord’s purpose in faith.

## Introduction

WHEN THE ANGEL GABRIEL APPEARED TO MARY, she was a young woman living in Nazareth, an ordinary town with little reputation. Her life seemed simple and predictable. She was engaged to Joseph, a carpenter, and preparing for marriage. Then everything changed. Gabriel greeted her with words that would change history: *"Rejoice, favored woman! The Lord is with you."*

Mary was deeply troubled, not because she doubted God, but because she didn't understand how such words could apply to her. She was humble and unassuming. Yet, God chose her for one of the most extraordinary roles in His plan: to bring His Son into the world. The message that followed seemed impossible: she would conceive and bear a son, even though she was a virgin. This son would be called Jesus, the Son of the Most High, and His kingdom would never end.

Mary's response reveals the true essence of faith. She asked only one honest question: *"How can this be?"* not out of disbelief but out of humility. When the angel explained that the Holy Spirit would bring about this miracle, Mary did not resist, bargain, or delay. She fully surrendered to God's will: *"I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said."* That moment defined her faith, not because she understood everything, but because she trusted the One who did.

Mary's example shows that faith often starts where understanding stops. God doesn't always reveal His plans, but He always calls us to trust Him. Her story illustrates that surrendering to God's will isn't weakness; it's worship.

### *Historical Background*

The events of Luke 1 occur during the reign of Herod the Great, in the early years of the first century B.C. Israel was under Roman rule, and many Jews longed for salvation and the arrival of the Messiah. Mary lived in Nazareth, a small, overlooked village in Galilee, far from the centers of political and religious power. By all human standards, she was insignificant: young, poor, and from a humble town. Still, God's plan often begins in unexpected places and with unlikely people.

The angel Gabriel's visit to Mary occurred six months after his message to Zechariah about the birth of John the Baptist. Both miracles signaled the fulfillment of God's promises: the coming of the Messiah and the redemption of His people. Mary was probably a teenager engaged to Joseph, which in Jewish custom meant a legal betrothal. Breaking such a commitment required a formal divorce. The news that she would conceive before marriage posed significant personal risks: misunderstanding, social shame, and possibly even death under Jewish law.

Despite these dangers, Mary responded with faith. The angel assured her that this child would be conceived by the Holy Spirit, making Him holy, the Son of God. Gabriel's final words offered reassurance: "*Nothing will be impossible with God.*" Those words anchored Mary's heart in faith. What seemed beyond reason was entirely possible with God's power.

Mary's story reflects the way God often acts. He chooses the humble over the proud, the willing over the strong. Her life demonstrates that surrender is not giving up, it is trusting in God's perfect plan. The child born through her would bring salvation to everyone, fulfilling the promise of Isaiah: "*The virgin will conceive, have a son, and name him Immanuel*" (Isaiah 7:14). Mary's straightforward yet deep faith reminds every Christian that when God calls, our best response is trust.

## **God's Call Often Comes in Unexpected Ways**

When the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary, his message completely changed her life. "*Rejoice, favored woman! The Lord is with you.*" (Luke 1:28). Those words must have startled her. She was young, poor, and living in an obscure town. Nothing about her situation suggested importance or privilege. Yet heaven saw what earth overlooked. God chose Mary not because of her status, but because of her heart.

Scripture states that Mary was "deeply troubled" by Gabriel's greeting (v. 29). This reaction is understandable because God's call often comes suddenly, without warning or explanation. It disrupts normal life and invites us into something greater than ourselves. Mary wasn't seeking

a mission; she was getting ready for marriage. But God had something eternal in mind.

The angel's words reveal the essence of divine calling: "*You have found favor with God.*" That word "favor" doesn't mean ease: it means grace. God's favor doesn't promise comfort; it often brings challenge. Mary would soon face misunderstanding, suspicion, and fear. Yet in all of it, God's presence would be her strength: "*The Lord is with you.*" That promise mattered more than any explanation.

Gabriel's announcement also teaches us something about God's timing. His plans rarely match our expectations. Mary was chosen at a moment that seemed impossible. She wasn't married, she had no power, and she couldn't understand how she would conceive. Yet God specializes in doing the impossible through those who trust Him.

Mary's humble question, "*How can this be, since I have not had sexual relations with a man?*" (v. 34), demonstrates both faith and honesty. She didn't doubt God's power; she only sought understanding of His method. Her question wasn't opposition: it was reverence. Gabriel's response directed her to the source of all divine work: "*The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you.*" (v. 35). What God commands, He enables.

Every Christian encounters moments like Mary's, when God's call goes against logic or convenience. It might come through a change in plans, a burden to serve, or a step of faith that feels beyond your strength. The question isn't whether we understand, but whether we trust. God's interruptions are invitations to grow in faith.

Divine calling always starts with grace, not merit. God chooses those who are willing, not necessarily the most qualified. When His purpose unfolds in unexpected ways, we can take comfort in the same promise Gabriel gave Mary: "*The Lord is with you.*" His presence assures us that we are never alone in what He calls us to do.

## Faith Surrenders Before It Understands

After hearing Gabriel's explanation, Mary still couldn't see how everything would turn out. She didn't know how Joseph would react, how her family or community would respond, or what her future would look like. Still, her answer came quickly and without hesitation: "*See, I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said.*" (Luke 1:38).

That single sentence captures the core of faith: surrender before understanding. Mary didn't ask for details or guarantees. She didn't negotiate or delay. She simply committed herself to God's will. Her statement, "*I am the Lord's servant,*" shows total submission. She understood that her life was not her own and that obedience was more important than comfort or reputation.

True faith doesn't wait for a full explanation; it depends on God's character. Mary believed that if God called her, He would also support her. Her response reflects what every believer must learn: obedience comes before understanding. We don't need to see the entire plan when we know the One who holds it.

Mary's surrender was difficult. Her "yes" came at a price. She faced misunderstanding, rejection, and even danger. Under Jewish law, an unwed pregnancy could cause shame or death. Still, Mary's faith looked beyond fear to God's faithfulness. She trusted His power to fulfill His promises.

Gabriel's assurance, "*Nothing will be impossible with God*" (v. 37), was a declaration of divine truth. Every act of faith depends on that certainty. God's plans often challenge our understanding, requiring our trust to grow in step with His promise. Faith begins where human reason ends.

Mary's example challenges our modern desire for control. We often want to know every step before we obey, seeking certainty before committing. But God calls His people to trust Him enough to step forward in faith. Like Abraham leaving his homeland or Peter stepping out of the boat, Mary believed before she could see.

Her surrender also shows that faith is deeply personal. Gabriel brought a message for the whole world, the coming of the Messiah, but Mary's response was personal and immediate. She didn't try to understand everything about God's bigger plan; she focused on her part in it. That is what surrender looks like: saying "yes" to what God has put before us today, trusting Him with what comes next.

God isn't asking us to figure out His will; He's asking us to follow it. True surrender says, "Lord, I don't see how, but I trust You." And when we respond like Mary, we discover that obedience opens the door to great things.

## **God Honors a Heart That Trusts Him Completely**

After Mary's surrender, everything changed, but not in ways the world would call easy. She still had to tell Joseph. She still faced the whispers of neighbors. She still lived with uncertainty about what the future would bring. Yet through it all, she was sustained by faith in the God who had chosen her. The angel's words, "*The Lord is with you*," proved true at every step.

When Mary visited Elizabeth, her faith overflowed in worship. Her song in Luke 1:46–55, often called *The Magnificat*, shows a heart that completely trusted God's plan. She praised Him not for making life easy but for keeping His promises. "*My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior*." Her joy didn't come from her circumstances but from her confidence in God's faithfulness.

Mary's trust allowed her to see herself as part of something much larger than her own story. She said, "*He has looked with favor on the humble condition of His servant*." She understood that God's work through her would bless many future generations. What started as a personal surrender became a worldwide blessing.

This is how God works: He honors those who trust Him humbly. Mary didn't seek recognition or greatness; she aimed to serve. Because she trusted completely, God acted powerfully. Her faith became the entrance through which the Savior entered the world.

Mary's life teaches us that trust doesn't remove hardship; it transforms it. God didn't spare her from pain. She saw her Son face rejection, suffering, and the cross. Yet she never lost faith in the God who called her. Her story shows that faith isn't about controlling outcomes but about trusting in God's goodness, no matter what happens.

For each of us, Mary's example provides both challenge and comfort. God still searches for hearts willing to say, "*I am the Lord's servant.*" He rejoices in doing great things through those who trust Him fully. Surrender isn't weakness; it's confidence that God's way is best.

When we trust Him like Mary did, we find that obedience opens the door to joy, peace, and purpose that the world can't provide. God respects a surrendered heart. He takes everyday lives and fills them with extraordinary grace. The question is never whether God can do it; it's whether we are willing to trust Him.

## Lesson Summary and Reflection

Mary's story exemplifies clear trust and surrender in Scripture. When God interrupted her plans with a calling she couldn't fully understand, she responded with faith instead of fear. Her quiet words, "*I am the Lord's servant. May it happen to me as you have said,*" show what true belief looks like: humble submission to God's will, regardless of the cost.

First, *God's call often comes unexpectedly.* Mary wasn't seeking greatness or recognition. She was living faithfully when God chose her for a special task. The angel's announcement reminded her, and reminds us, that God enjoys using ordinary people to fulfill His eternal plans. His plans may surprise us, but His presence gives us confidence to follow.

Second, *faith yields before it fully understands.* Mary didn't need every detail before saying yes. She trusted that God's power would fulfill His promise. Genuine faith doesn't wait until everything makes sense; it believes that the God who calls is the God who enables. Surrender means letting go of control and resting in God's wisdom, even when the road ahead isn't clear.

Third, *God appreciates a heart that fully trusts Him*. Mary's obedience caused hardship, but it also resulted in blessing. Her willingness to believe opened the way for the Savior's arrival. Her life shows that trusting in God's plan brings joy that no circumstances can take away. When she praised God, her focus was on His mercy and power, not her own strength.

Mary's faith isn't just a story from long ago, it's a model for every Christian. God still calls His people to trust Him with the unknown. He still uses the humble and faithful to accomplish His greatest work. The lesson of Mary's life is simple: surrender is the highest form of faith. When we say, "Lord, may it be to me according to Your word," we place ourselves where God can do His best work.

### **Key Truths**

- God's call often comes to ordinary people in ordinary places.
- Faith says "yes" before it sees how God will work.
- Trusting God may bring difficulty, but it always brings purpose.
- Surrender is not weakness—it is confidence in God's goodness.
- God honors the humble and fills their lives with His grace.

## **Conclusion**

Mary's life serves as a timeless reminder that God's plans surpass our understanding. Her faith didn't eliminate uncertainty; instead, it turned it into worship. The same God who called Mary also calls us to trust Him with our future, fears, and lives.

When we surrender as she did, we find peace knowing that God is in control. We may not see how His promises will unfold, but we can trust in His faithfulness. Like Mary, our simple "yes" can become the beginning of something eternal. God still seeks hearts that will say, "*I am the Lord's servant.*" That's where true faith starts, and where God's work continues.

## Memory Verse and Weekly Challenge

*“See, I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary.*

*“May it happen to me as you have said.”*

**Luke 1:38 (CSB)**

Mary’s words are simple yet profound—an expression of total trust in God’s wisdom and will. Her faith invites every believer to respond to God’s call with the same humility and confidence.

### Weekly Challenge

#### 1. Pray a Prayer of Surrender.

Each day this week, begin your prayer with Mary’s words: *“I am the Lord’s servant. May it happen to me as You will.”* Ask God to help you accept His will with peace and trust.

#### 2. Release Control.

Identify one area where you are struggling to trust God—your plans, timing, or future. This week, intentionally release it to Him through prayer and obedience.

#### 3. Practice Grateful Obedience.

Like Mary, give thanks for what God is doing, even when you don’t see the outcome yet. Gratitude strengthens faith.

#### 4. Encourage Humble Faith in Others.

Share Mary’s story with someone who is anxious or uncertain. Remind them that God’s favor is often found in simple faith and quiet obedience.

#### 5. Worship in Faith.

Read Luke 1:46–55 (Mary’s song) aloud one day this week as an act of worship. Let her joy and trust inspire your own praise to God.

## For Discussion

1. How do you usually respond when God's plans interrupt your own?

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2. What can Mary's humble acceptance of God's will teach you about surrender?

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3. Why is it difficult to obey before you understand? What helps you take that step of faith?

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4. In what ways have you seen God honor trust and obedience in your life or the lives of others?

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5. What would it look like for you to say, "*I am the Lord's servant,*" in a specific area of your life this week?

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