



# THE PURSUIT OF JESUS

## Can God Use Me For Big Things?

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January 16, 2022

The Crossing Church  
Las Vegas, Nevada

### OPENING

This week we are continuing our Quest 52 series in our year-long Pursuit of Jesus. During this next year, we will study the **Person of Jesus or who He is; the Power of Jesus or what He can do; the Preaching of Jesus or what He teaches; and the Passion of Jesus or the significance of His sacrifice**. This week we are looking at a very ordinary person who was called by God for a higher purpose – a person much like each of us.

### SCRIPTURE<sup>1</sup>

**Luke 1:26-38** 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*. You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him *Jesus*. He will be *great* and will be called the *Son of the Most High*. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will *reign* over Jacob's descendants *forever*; his kingdom will *never end*." "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. *No word from God will ever fail.*" "I am the *Lord's servant*," Mary answered. "*May it be to me* as you have said." Then the angel left her.

**Luke 7:22b** "Go back and report to John what you have *seen* and *heard*: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor.

### OBSERVATION

There was a teen-age virgin girl living in the little town of Nazareth to whom an angel said, "Guess what, Mary? You are going to be the mother of God's Son, the promised Messiah!" We can imagine her reaction to that announcement, can't we? "You're kidding, right!" or "You must be speaking to the wrong person!" She surely must have felt inadequate. All of a sudden, her life's dreams were dashed as she realized that any pregnancy, even a divine one, would ruin her reputation and her fiancé, Joseph, would cancel their marriage and no one else would ever marry her. She would be shunned or even stoned to death. And yet, this sweet child with no special skills demonstrates how God can use ordinary person to do BIG THINGS for Him if only we will be

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all scripture referenced here is NIV

obedient. We don't know very much about Mary because her biography is really short. We know nothing about her before Jesus or how she raised Him or when or where she died. She rarely speaks in the Gospels and is once only mentioned in Acts of the Apostles. Mary was engaged to an insignificant man, lived in an insignificant town and had few professional skills, yet she was called "highly favored," by God. She didn't earn this praise through her works but because she was greatly loved and chosen by God.

**QUESTION: Under what circumstances do you feel inadequate?**

**QUESTION: Which people cause you to feel inadequate? How do you respond to them?**

#### **APPLICATION**

As Mary's life unfolded before her, she found out that a word from God will never fail. Some of us need to hear that very clearly because the truth is we are trying to hold on to faith and hoping that God will speak to us today. We need to learn that God is ALWAYS speaking to us – and in those conversations He is saying that He can be trusted in all circumstances and our inadequacies are His greatest opportunities.

**QUESTION: In what ways does God speak to you?**

We all want God to use us to do big things for Him, but our mistake is we want to be the hero when He uses our talents, strengths and our accomplishments. But He says, "I am going to leverage your weaknesses, inadequacies, inabilities, failures, and your lack of opportunities! I am going to use your life for My glory on the stage of your inadequacy so everyone will know that it is **ME** and not **YOU!**"

**QUESTION: When have you taken credit for something God has done in your life? When have you praised Him for answering your prayers?**

Isn't it true that when we meet someone who has gone through suffering and is now on the other side of that loss or tragedy, that their faith in God is stronger now than it was before.

**QUESTION: When have you gone through suffering and found that your faith was stronger because of that experience?**

**QUESTION: How is God moving in your current situation?**

We can learn two things from Mary's life: **1) There is a reason to believe.** Her reason was the miracle of her relative Elizabeth's pregnancy at an old age. Most of us base our faith on our circumstances. When life is good that means God is near. But when things are not so good, we ask, "Where is God? Why did He let this happen?" So, when life is not good – God is not near. Difficulties expose the authenticity of our confidence in Him. We need to focus on God's faithfulness beyond our current circumstances – to reflect on what He has brought us through. How did He save us, answer our prayers, fix our finances and heal us? His timing was perfect then, right? **2) We have relationships to sustain us.** Mary's faith was bolstered by Elizabeth's faith and she was sustained by her mentoring. Having relationships with other believers is critical because the faith in God we see in their lives helps us to see His faithfulness in ours.

**QUESTION: Who are the believers in your life who help you sustain your faith?**

**QUESTION: What is your involvement in fellowship beyond church services? What other areas of service are available to you?**

Mary's answer to God's calling was, "May it be to me as you have said." This child who found favor in God's Kingdom had little to offer but obedience. We need to consider what it will take to bring us to her level of obedience when He calls us. God used Martin Luther King, Jr. to do higher things for Him. There is an important lesson here: the impact of our lives is determined not by our history or abilities but by God's call.

**QUESTION: Name a Biblical character who sacrificed everything for Jesus.**

**QUESTION: What is your answer to God when He calls you to do something for Him?**

**QUESTION: How are you doing with the Quest 52 study this week? What insights are surprising you?**

**PRAYER** Heavenly Father, we are exhausted from trying to hide our inadequacies. Sometimes we let our current circumstances cause us to question Your love for us. But when we reflect on all of the ways You have blessed

and healed and protected us throughout our lives, we can only fall to our knees in gratitude and say, "May it be to me as You have said. Use me, Lord." In Jesus' name. Amen.

## QUESTIONS

**QUESTION: Under what circumstances do you feel inadequate?**

**QUESTION: Which people cause you to feel inadequate? How do you respond to them?**

**QUESTION: In what ways does God speak to you?**

**QUESTION: When have you taken credit for something God has done in your life? When have you praised Him for answering your prayers?**

**QUESTION: When have you gone through suffering and found that your faith was stronger because of that experience?**

**QUESTION: How is God moving in your current situation?**

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