

God's Promise to Mary

Luke 1:28-56

“²⁸ The angel went to her and said, “Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you.”

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, “Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² 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, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob’s descendants forever; his kingdom will never end.”

³⁴ “How will this be,” Mary asked the angel, “since I am a virgin?”

³⁵ 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^[b] the Son of God. ³⁶ 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. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail.”

³⁸ “I am the Lord’s servant,” Mary answered. “May your word to me be fulfilled.” Then the angel left her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

³⁹ At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, ⁴⁰ where she entered Zechariah’s home and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary’s greeting, the baby leaped in her womb, and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² In a loud voice she exclaimed: “Blessed are you among women and blessed is the child you will bear! ⁴³ But why am I so favored, that the mother of my Lord should come to me? ⁴⁴ As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby in my womb leaped for joy. ⁴⁵ Blessed is she who has believed that the Lord would fulfill his promises to her!”

Mary’s Song

⁴⁶ And Mary said:

“My soul glorifies the Lord

⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,

⁴⁸ for he has been mindful

of the humble state of his servant.

From now on all generations will call me blessed,

⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—

holy is his name.

- ⁵⁰ His mercy extends to those who fear him,
from generation to generation.**
- ⁵¹ He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.**
- ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones
but has lifted up the humble.**
- ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things
but has sent the rich away empty.**
- ⁵⁴ He has helped his servant Israel,
remembering to be merciful**
- ⁵⁵ to Abraham and his descendants forever,
just as he promised our ancestors.”**
- ⁵⁶ Mary stayed with Elizabeth for about three months and then returned home.”**

Good morning, Harris Creek! (Someone responds enthusiastically.) Wow! That's quite responsive. Okay, we good? Let's go, man! There's a guy in the first service that sits up here that's so responsive, and it's incredible. I just love it so much. It's great to see you this morning.

A few years ago, I'd made a pretty significant life transition. I had kind of parachuted out of a lifestyle of sport and football and decided to move to Waco, Texas, and thought that I would take my next best step in life. I thought I was going to become an entrepreneur, and so I did what every aspiring entrepreneur does. I went to Common Grounds a lot, drank a lot of coffee, and read a lot of books. I was really in my hustle game. I had million-dollar dreams and a five-dollar work ethic. I met this tall, new pastor who had come into town. I met him right there in Common Grounds. We exchanged pleasantries and kind of hit it off. Over the coming months, I ended up getting to know J.P. One day we're sitting on his back patio, and he says this to me, "Hey man, that football thing that you did was cute once. Why don't you get in a real battle and come join me in this ministry?" And that's true; that's exactly what he said to me.

That was two years ago now. I've been in vocational ministry here for a couple of years, and I will tell you that since coming on staff, it's been easily one of the hardest things that I've ever done in my life. It sounds really silly to even say that. It sounds like a gross overstatement. It's like, "Rich, have you done anything hard in your life before?" And I would tell you, "Yes, man, I've experienced a lot of hardship in my life. I've done hard things." But this thing right here is uniquely different. It challenges me in ways that I've never been exposed before. And it's not even uniquely the ministry; it's not the people. It's plainly this. It's that I want to do what I want to do. And that's a fact! Where Rich Bartel struggles is with autonomy. I've achieved things in my life without a whole lot of reservation towards other people. I'm a lone wolf. I have a really hard reflex toward submitting to authority. And just to prove it to you, so that you believe that I'm not being self-deprecating, this is J.P.'s prayer card for me. (The screen shows a hand holding an index card with the following notes hand-written on it:

R.B.
Pride – I Peter 5:5
Entitlement – Mark 10:42-45
Humility – Eph. 4:2

Faithful follow through – I Peter 5:10
Health – Please deepen our friendship

He prays this for me every single day. I want to tell you that I didn't give him that list. How he derived that list is he's been watching me on task, responding to a calling that God has put on my life, and this is what happens when I get squeezed. (Rich points to the screen) I want to tell you, when I look at that list, it's really sobering, and to a degree, it's embarrassing. But that's my M.O. That's my scouting report. When God put His calling on my life, that's the way I respond.

So, the question that I have for you today is when God kind of redirects your life in ways you could have never imagined, and when you get squeezed, how do you respond? What comes out of you?

Today we're going to look at the heart that has an unbelievable response to God's calling, and it's the heart of Mary, the teenage mother of the Messiah. What we're going to learn from Mary is three simple things. She has a heart that responds in humility, that she's submitted to God's Word, and that she responds with a heart of worship. If you have your Bibles, we're going to be in Luke 1:28-56.

If you're just joining us, last week we started a series called, "A Critical Christmas." We're just looking at the Christmas narrative, examining it. Nate did an unbelievable job last week of taking us back to Luke 1 and just starting us at the beginning of the Christmas narrative. Basically, what we learned from Nate is that God is a promise keeper. That He is who He says that He is, and that He's going to do what He says that He's going to do, in spite of God's people objecting, rejecting, being forgetful, hesitating. God follows through. And as recipients, we get to follow into the promises and the grace that God has given us. We can take God at face value, at His Word. What God pledges will be realized. That's what we can deductibly reason here.

Here's the thing with the Christmas narrative, we're going to go a little bit further into it today, but here's the hesitation. It's that we sit in a congregation of people that have heard this every year, and so, there's an over-familiarity with this story. I want to hesitate on that, I want to hang for a second, because if you get stuck thinking that this is mangers, baby, wise men, and gifts, you're going to miss something today. Because today is really about coming to grips with the simple fact that the Holy Spirit impregnated a virgin. That baby bump that was on Mary's tummy was the Creator of the Universe. And if you're sitting there, and you hear that, and you're a skeptic, and you're thinking, "Man, that sounds impossible! I have a really hard time believing that. It takes a lot of faith." I'm sitting here shaking my head, saying, "Absolutely! It does. It takes a ton of faith." But as Christians, this is what we know. We believe this to be true about the Bible, that it's absolute Truth. And what absolute Truth is, is it's true whether or not you believe it or not. That's what we believe as Christians.

So, as we sit here today, I want you to consider these things in the Scripture that sound bonkers. I've always thought this about the Bible. I believed this 20 years ago. If I can reconcile Genesis 1:1, it's really all kind of really downhill from there. Think about that. If I can reconcile the fact that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, then understanding and believing that Jesus was born, crushed, killed, for my sins, and then resurrected, then it's all really

downhill from there. The rest is a cake walk in Scripture if you think about it. So, just bear with me in this story today.

You don't have to be an athlete to understand this analogy I want to give you right quick. We've all been a part of being picked for something, right? Particularly, think of pick-up basketball. We've all been on the receiving end of either being picked or being the one picking. And we know how this process goes. So, that first batch of people that typically get picked, those are usually the best players. We know that to be true. Then there's that second group of people who get picked. They're really kind of the best-looking players of the worst players left. Okay? We know that. And then you've got that third batch of players to get picked. Some of you will have PTSD when I say this, but these people look like they won a sweepstakes to be there. They struggle walking and chewing gum. The only purpose that they're there for is to make teams even. But here's where things take a turn in those types of games. It's when those people from that third batch, that unlikely group, when they do something spectacular in the game. They hit the game-winning shot; they score a lot of points. They become legends instantly in that moment. You start giving them all these back-handed compliments. "Man, I didn't expect anything out of you! You're a sneaky-good athlete!"

And that's the Virgin Mary in this story. She's in that third group. She's highly unlikely. She doesn't deserve to be on a team. She's average as a bowl of grits. The Scripture really does a great job of telling us that she's just simply ordinary. There's nothing different about her than you and me, that she's a simple girl in desperate need of a Savior that God chose to do an extraordinary thing to.

But we can take a little bit more. There's something more about Mary that we can learn from just the Biblical context and narrative of Scripture, and it's simply this: we know that Mary was from Nazareth. Nazareth is a Podunk town. It's a hayseed town. You can't even find it on a map. In fact, if Jesus wasn't from there, you'd never hear from it. The disciple Nathanael says this about Jesus, "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" That's the kind of town it was. Heroes, unlikely people, don't come from towns like this.

We know that she was Jewish, a subjugated people group by the Roman government. Another way to say that is this: she was from a conquered people group. And in historical records, the Romans didn't keep historical accounts of people that they conquered. They had no interest in that, so you wouldn't find anything about Mary in anything other than in Scripture. We knew that she was unimportant. That she was poor, likely illiterate. We know that she was owned by her father, only to be owned by her husband. She had no rights. She had no voice. Just an ordinary girl from the Land of Familiar, with a few redeemable qualities. That's the girl that we're taking about today. A thirteen, fourteen, fifteen-year-old girl.

We're going to start in Luke 1:28. It says this, **"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.** (Only a man can say it like this, right? Just short and sweet. This is Dr. Luke talking, like, "Hey, man, don't worry love. You're going to conceive, nine months,

no epidural, going to give birth to the Savior. You got it! That's Luke right here.) **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?" (That's a great question. It's like, "Angel, did you fail biology? You understand how this thing works, right?") **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, (just when you thought things couldn't get weirder) and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. For no word from God will ever fail."** (She says, and this is powerful right here) **"I am the Lord's servant,"** Mary answered. **"May your word to me be fulfilled."** Then the angel left her." Luke 1:28-38

Now, per that index card that I showed at the beginning, you saw humility is on that list. That's something that I struggle pretty mightily with, and it's really the same reason that we really all struggle with the word humility. And even embodying this character and this virtue, it's a really difficult virtue to embody. And here's why: I think we have a really interesting and weird relationship with humility. We tend to think of it as self-deprecating, right? The self-denigration: we think of shame, condemnation, thinking of ourselves less, and that's really not what humility is. If you take that virtue and you elevate it, then there's something extremely fruitful that can come from this if we "get" it. So, here's a different definition that I've heard. It says that humility is not self-denigration, it's an honest appraisal. In other words, here's what it is: it's a very crystal-clear view of who you are and where you stand in the universe. So, it's encompassing all things. It's objectively able to look at yourself. Really, it's just great self-awareness, and Mary had this in spades. She had unbelievable self-awareness, and because of that, she had an unbelievable sense of humility. That leads me to point number one.

1. Mary Responds with Humility

Luke 1:38: **"I am the Lord's servant,"** Mary answered. **"May your word to me be fulfilled."** Then the angel left her. What you have here, is you have an absolute statement of submission, and it's incredible. And what you should know about Mary, and every Jewish girl in ancient times, is that from the time that the Messiah was essentially announced, Jewish girls that were her age were hoping that they could be the mother to the Messiah. So, she was extremely hopeful. And here it is, in the history of histories, of all the people in the world, Mary ends up chosen. Can you imagine that? I would think that it would make somebody pretty prideful. It sounds like a great opportunity for pride to just get right in the way. Just consider you as parents. The fact that our kids can walk and chew gum, we're like, "Oh my gosh! Look at Johnny!" I mean, this girl's going to have the Messiah. She could be anything she wants. She could beat her chest. But Mary says this, she chooses this response, she says, **"I am the Lord's servant."** What an honest appraisal. What an unbelievable sense of self-awareness.

And what Mary knows here is she knows God. She knows that God could have gone to Rome, He could have gone to the political center of the world. He could have gone to Athens, the cultural center of the world. He could have gone to Jerusalem, the religious center of the world. But instead, He chose to come to a Nobody from Nowhere. But, if she just thinks of herself less,

that's really not humility, because humility is not something that you can initiate. It's something that you actually respond to, and I want you to think about Mary's response. She says, **"May your word to me be fulfilled."** In other words, from the moment that Mary says, "Yes," to God's word and His disruptive circumstances in her life, extrinsic pressure that we've never experienced before just infiltrates her soul. I want you to imagine the shame of an unwed pregnancy bearing down on her. The fact that she could be stoned, that her husband could leave, the fact that she's going to be seen as crazy the minute she opens her mouth and says, "Hey, I've got the Messiah in my stomach." How about that for something to respond to? No wonder she has an unbelievable sense of humility. She needs Divine help. And here's what's super cool about Scripture: It goes a step further just to humanize Mary and make her really, really tangible lest we lift her up and elevate her to something that she's not. If we had any believer around us that went through this circumstance and just simply responded with, "I am the Lord's servant. May your word in me be fulfilled." We would be, like, "Whoa! What kind of faith is that? Man, that's audacious faith right there!" And Mary had that. But look at this verse right here. This makes Mary really tangible. She says, in Luke 1:39, **"At that time Mary got ready and hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth."**

It seems like just a throw-away verse, but I want you to consider this. I want you to see this that she receives an audible message from the Word of God from the angel, Gabriel. I don't know if you've ever heard audibly from God, but you would think that's all the confirmation that you need. And Mary responded likely like that, right? "I'm a servant of the Lord." But she's just like you and me. It says that she hurried to the next town over. She went 90 miles. The average person in antiquity traveled 25. This girl hustles to her cousin. And you know why? I can guess why she went to Elizabeth. Because who else is going to understand and empathize with a teenage girl that says, "I'm pregnant with the Messiah," than an older cousin who just went through an unusual pregnancy of her own, by God? And so, what it shows us about Mary is that she's confused, that she's in desperate need of empathy and care and concern and wisdom from somebody older than her. And so, yes, yes, Mary is extremely humble. Yes, she shows an unbelievable amount of reverence and dependence on God, but she also shows us that we can invite others into our trials. She's not trying to do this alone. And so, what we learn from Mary is that she gives us permission to be dependent.

And here's why some of us don't experience the same type of humility that Mary experiences, because we don't have really divine need in our lives. We're going to pursue our dreams. We're not going to lay those things down. We're going to mitigate our risks. We're going to hedge our bets. We're not going to deny ourselves of much. We're hardly going to pray that prayer, "Lord, Your will, not mine. Lord, I'm your servant. Let your word in me be fulfilled." And you know why we don't pray that prayer? Because we're scared. We're scared to pray that prayer. And if you're like me, it's like, "Man, I'm scared to pray for humility, because I feel like every time I do, I wake up and there's a zit on my forehead." Does anyone feel like that? It's like, man, if we really pray that prayer, "God, your will not mine," what might He actually expect of me? He might actually expect that you would deny yourself. He might actually expect that you would sell it all, go to an unreached people group and share the Gospel with people who have no access to the Gospel. He may expect that you would press 'Time Out' on your family plans and foster and adopt somebody. He might even expect that you would stay in that 'dead end' job. He might

expect you to reconcile to the fact that you're going to be just fine. And I don't mean 'fine' like 'okay', I mean 'fine' like 'average'. That you're going to be ordinary, from the Land of Familiar, normal. How does that sound? To just serve, die, and be forgotten. Are you okay with that?

The really cool thing about Mary's humility is this, and this is a great takeaway, guys, is that when we say, "Yes," to God like she does - this is the great irony - you really end up at the center of everything, and that's called "God's will." Mary denied herself, she laid it down with an unbelievable amount of humility, and she ends up having the Messiah. She had this quality prior to that, otherwise she wouldn't even have been chosen. What an amazing exchange.

There's a saying that says, "Everyone arrives somewhere, but few arrive on purpose." Here's what we know about Mary. We know that Mary arrived with great purpose on her calling, and you should ask yourself, "How? How did she do that?" Well, here's how. She had the playbook. She knew God's Word. She submitted herself to God's Word, and that leads me to point number two.

2 Mary was Submitted to God's Word

We see here in Luke Chapter 1 Verse 46, **"And Mary said: 'My soul glorifies the Lord⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,⁴⁸ for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,⁴⁹ for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name.**

Now, I hope that this impresses you about Mary. This is a thirteen or fourteen-year-old girl. She's got fifteen references to Old Testament scriptures right here in this prayer in ten verses, Verses 46 – 56. She's talking about the five books of Moses she's got in there. She's got the Psalms; she's got the Prophets. This is a girl that didn't just know God, but she had a fundamental theology. She had a belief. She had God's Word written on the tablet of her heart. Look at this, it says in Verse 46, **"And Mary said: 'My soul glorifies the Lord.'** That's an ode to Psalm 34:2, **"I will glory in the Lord; let the afflicted hear and rejoice."** Verse 47, **"and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,"** she says. That's an ode to Isaiah 45:21, **"Was it not I, the Lord? And there is no God apart from me, a righteous God and a Savior; there is none but me."** Verse 48, she says, **"for he has been mindful of the humble state of his servant. From now on all generations will call me blessed,"** She's talking about 1 Samuel 1:11 here. She's referencing Hannah's prayer, **"And she made a vow, saying, 'Lord Almighty, if you will only look on your servant's misery and remember me, and not forget your servant but give her a son, then I will give him to the Lord for all the days of his life, and no razor will ever be used on his head.'** Verse 49, **"for the Mighty One has done great things for me—holy is his name."** Psalm 126:3, **"The Lord has done great things for us, and we are filled with joy."** And then, lastly, the back half of that verse, **"holy is his name."** That's Psalm 111:9, **"He provided redemption for his people; he ordained his covenant forever—holy and awesome is his name."**

And here's a thought that I walk away with when I read about this, is I think that Mary must have paid close attention at the synagogue. This thirteen or fourteen-year-old girl, I mentioned earlier, that she's got God's Word written on the tablet of her heart. It's that she hid God's Word

in her heart that man does not eat on bread alone but every word of our God, that the overflow of the heart speaks the mouth, the Scripture says, and this is Mary.

Every now and again, I get to, and I know that you've met these people, too. You meet these really young people in the faith. They're spiritually mature, and they're quite literally young. So, you get these middle schoolers, these high schoolers, even these college kids, that just have this spiritual maturity about them that's just different. And it's inspiring if you think about it. It's like they get it! They really believe that God is powerful; they take the Scriptures literally. They believe He is who He says He is. They're not jaded to the world, they're not cynical to the things of God. But it's powerful when that happens. It's beautiful. And that's what I think of when I think of this prayer, and that's what I think of when I think of Mary, that she's special. She's kind of like this unicorn. Anybody like unicorns here? I mean truly. (Rich points to someone in the front whose hand is raised.) You like unicorns? Have you ever seen a unicorn? (Man responds, "I have not.") Me, either. That's the right answer. Good job! And you know what else I've never seen? I've never seen somebody who is fruitful, wise, discerning, trusting, deeply rooted in the faith, that doesn't have an unbelievable amount of meditation and memorizing of God's scripture in their life. That's not a coincidence. That's a unicorn.

Exodus 16 says this, I'm going to summarize something really quick. Moses takes the nation of Israel, he leads them through the Red Sea, out of slavery, and he takes them to the wilderness. And these people, we know that they murmur, they grumble, they complain. We've heard this story over and over again. They're in a dire circumstance; they're blaming Moses, and they're hungry. They're a hungry people. They tell Moses, complaining, "I'm hungry! I'm hungry!" So, Moses does what any great leader would do. He goes to God; he receives a Word from God that they're going to get bread from Heaven. He takes that information back to his people. And God, because He's a promise keeper, He delivers food. He brings them bread.

And here's why I tell that. I think too many of us have our Moses, and we have our Mary. And here's what I mean by that. We vicariously live through the lives of people who are more spiritual than us, and we take them at their word. We don't take God at His word. We don't want to do the work ourselves. We just want to complain. We want the spirituality, we want the maturity, we want the faith, we want the reverence. We want the dependence, but we don't want what it takes to get there. So, we're happy to just depend on Moses. We'll take Mary's word for it. And you know what God tells you? "Man, you go get your own bread. Go up the hill yourself. Don't take my word for it. Go get your own word." And that's what God invites us into. We have the same thing that Mary has access to. We have the same thing that J.P. has access to. We have the same thing that that favorite pastor that you have, or strong believer has access to. All we've got to do is receive that or pursue that.

But here's the thing with Mary. It's just submission to God's word, without worship, is just merely compliance. And here's the thing, submission to God's word, without worship, is just merely compliance. And God invites us into so much more than compliance, and Mary had so much more than compliance. In fact, she had a heart of worship as well. We see that in point number three.

3. Mary Responds with Worship

Luke Chapter 1 Verse 46 says this,

“And Mary said: “My soul glorifies the Lord ⁴⁷ and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior...

This part right here, of Scripture, from 46-56, is known as The Magnificat. That’s a really fancy Latin word, especially for the third word in that verse, which is glorifies or magnifies. She’s saying, “My soul magnifies the Lord.” This is her prayer. This is her worship. You can tell a lot about somebody when you just hear them pray. It’s not a statement of judgement. It happens a lot, particularly in ministry, but I love listening to other people when they pray. It’s like a window into a person’s soul. You can tell what they ascribe to God, what they believe about God, what they understand about God, the gaps, and the voids that they have in their faith. You can just hear it all. It’s like a window into their soul. What we have here, is we’re peering into Mary’s soul. We get a great picture of that right here.

(Rich reaches for a bottle of water and takes the lid off.) I’m going to show you this real quick. One of the most liberating discoveries of my life on becoming a believer 20 years ago, is just kind of understanding the fact that God, when He pursues His people, He doesn’t do it by coercion. He does it by a changing of the heart. So, He literally just changes you from the inside out. So, here we have a bottle of water in hand. It’s a very simple, fast analogy. It’s not profound. I’m going to ask you a really simple question. I’m going to shake this. (Rich shakes the bottle back and forth, spilling water on the floor.) Why did water come out of the bottle? Say it out loud. Why did water come out of the bottle? I heard because I shook it. That’s true. Because it’s full of water. Water came out of the bottle because there’s water in the bottle. And this thing really personifies us, I think. Most of us, we go through our walk, and we think, “Hey, man, try not to be shaken.” And we hear things like this in James. The book of James tells us that we will go through trials of many kinds. That we will be tested. But this thing (indicates the water bottle) personifies us. We try to walk through our Christian walk just like this (holds the bottle still). And here’s the thing. You’ve got to understand the other end of the spectrum with God. He doesn’t just want trials and tribulation in your life and testing. Do we serve a living God who is active and always moving? He’s in a redemptive plan then, now, and in the future, and we get to partake in that. And you know what? It’s a wild ride! It can be!

And when you choose to be part of that process, you’re going to get shaken. (shakes more water out of the bottle) But not just trials. You get to partake, and it’s powerful. (shakes more water out of the bottle) You deny yourself, and people come to Christ! (shakes water from the bottle) You share your faith, and people come to Christ! (shakes more water from the bottle) You go through hard things, and people come to Christ! (shakes bottle again) You bleed in front of people. So, it’s not a matter of, “If I can be shaken ...” You’re going to get shaken. It’s just a matter of what’s in the bottle. Are you going to have humility? Are you going to submit to His Word? Are you going to have a heart of worship? Or are you going to try not to be shaken? It’s going to happen.

So, in summary, we see that Mary responds with humility. We know that Mary submitted herself to God’s Word. And we know that Mary responded with a heart of worship. One of my mom’s favorite musicals is “The Sound of Music.” Anyone like “The Sound of Music,” or musicals, for that matter? Oh, my gosh! A lot of big fans right here. Me, I kind of have a hot take on musicals, and I don’t want to lose the congregation, so I’m going to stay pretty chill. Here’s what I don’t

like about musicals, to be candid with you. It's like, life can't plausibly really be like that, right? You're going through the everyday mess of life, press "pause", and then you just sing and dance? That's not the way it goes. "Man, I hate you! (Rich begins singing) The hills are alive ..." That's not the way life works. Or does it? I would have never got that God was going to interrupt my life in a coffee shop. I've got a decision to make, and for me, the next best step in that moment in time was to be obedient, was to submit, to say, "Yes." And I've experienced moments, but I've got a long way to go. And God invites you into that. I don't know where God's going to meet you. You're not going to have the Messiah. We know that. Let's reconcile that. That's good! But it doesn't matter what you do. You may think, maybe not vocational ministry, but He's invited you into something. Guess what? As a believer, when you confess with your mouth and you believe in your heart that Jesus died and rose again, and you receive that simple, gospel truth, and you choose to repent, turn from your sins. Stop being disobedient, in rebellion to God, and follow Him, simple gospel message. When that happens, you are impregnated with something. You're endowed with the gift and the power of the Holy Spirit. Now you get to partake. You've got something in you. You're now part of God's redemptive plan to change the world forever, just like Mary. You've gone from ordinary to extraordinary in a moment. That's what we get, and I hope you step into that. Let's pray.

Father God, I thank you, Lord, for a thirteen-year-old, fourteen-year-old teenage girl who had the audacity and the boldness to just submit herself to you. To live a life of obedience and maturity so that we can look at a really great example of what it looks like to just honor you with our lives. God, to lay it down. Father, I don't know that we're going to do extraordinary things in our life, Father, but we can do the fundamentals. Lord, the blocking and tackling of the faith, if we would just submit in humility to your Word and with worship. I pray that in all things, God, that we would glorify you. Help us to magnify you in this season. And I pray for a body of people that would step into your redemptive work and get after it. It's in your name that we pray. Amen.