

“How Can This Be...the Word Made Flesh”

Luke 1:26-38

“How can this be?...”

Have you ever said those words to God or a messenger of God.

“How can this be happening to me?”

“How can this happen to someone I love.”

“He’s so young, she’s so nice, how can this be?”

We seem to reserve that phrase for times that are tough

Times that challenging beyond our abilities, times when we

can’t say that God never give us more than we can handle...

because sometimes we do get more than we can handle.

Sometimes the task set before us, the challenge we are faced with

Seems to us to be ...IMPOSSIBLE.

That was the situation Mary found herself in.

She was in a situation that was both physically,

And emotionally and socially...IMPOSSIBLE.

Physically she was betrothed, she was engaged but not married.

She had not yet slept with her husband-to-be Joseph and yet

The Angle Gabriel was telling her that she would conceive

And bear a son. It was a physical impossibility.

And on top of that she was a young girl, just betrothed to Joseph,
They were just building up a relationship of trust
as they prepared to be husband and wife
and to tell Joseph that she was pregnant
would be emotionally devastating
and besides that the law and the culture would then demand
that Mary be stoned as an adulterer.

In Hebrew, Mary's name means "bitterness"

And certainly the prospects before her

Seemed at best "bitter"

And at worst "impossible."

Now Gabriel's name literally means "God is my hero" and

his response was "*Nothing will be impossible with God*".

Literally the Greek says: "*no word, no event, no matter-*

Will be impossible with God."

One might think that that statement overly optimistic

If it were delivered by an angel we might see in a Christmas play

But when I image the Angel Gabriel I image him more like

A Russ Greenhaugen, stong and compassionate.

Why else does the Angel Gabriel have to start each encounter

with the disclaimer “Do not be afraid”.

The Angel Gabriel is an imposing, powerful figure and yet

His name is his mantra “God is my hero.”

Everything that he does is God driven, God inspired,

God planned, God breathed so that for him

When God is the hero- nothing is impossible.

And friends that is Good news indeed for us.

I would guess that everything is not perfect for you this Christmas.

I would guess there are some barriers in front of you-

They might be health mountains to climb,

financial valleys to get out of,

Relationship deserts to cross,

Or legal barriers to negotiate.

I would guess that you, like Mary, are not always sure

How everything will work out. And yet God could use Mary

to be part of his redemptive plan for the world.

And God can use you and me in this Christmas season

To be part of God plan. We can be part of the impossible dream

That God can make happen because “God is also our hero”

And we can experience what Mary experienced in her life.

The name Mary, instead of meaning “Bitterness”

Has grown to mean “Beloved”. She was beloved of God.

And you and I are beloved of God.

That’s why God sent his Son, “because he so loved the world”.

God didn’t so love the world that he sent money.

He didn’t so love the world that he sent a card, a message.

He didn’t so love the world that gave up on us.

He so loved the world that he became us.

God was incarnate in Jesus Christ,

he became flesh and dwelt among us.

He took off all that it is to be God,

“and emptied himself, taking the form of a slave,

being born in human likeness.

And being found in human form, he humbled himself

And became obedient to the point to of death-

Even death on the cross.” (Phil. 2:7,8)

And so Christmas is a time to celebrate but not to celebrate the stuff we can do but rather to celebrate the impossible- the Word becoming flesh and dwelling among us

In the person born a child in Bethlehem, Jesus.

The name Jesus literally means “God has saved.”

The moment God took on human flesh,

The moment the word was not just seen in creation,

Or proclaimed by the prophets or

Written down by the Gospel writers

But had become flesh in the person of Jesus,

was the moment that the world was changed,

the world was saved. How can this be?

Well it is as simple as the story the children tell in our pageant

Of a little baby born to Mary and Joseph and laid in a manger,

Announced by angels and visited by shepherds and Magi.

And the children are the best people to tell the story because

Children still believe in the impossible.

They still believe in heroes and God is their hero.

They are our Gabriels in the Christmas season.

Is God your hero?

Do you believe that all things are possible in God?

I am here today to tell you that what the little kids say is true.

The Word did become flesh but it didn't end with

Gabriel, Mary and Jesus- it continues with us.

God is still calling us through Gabriel to partner with God

To make impossible dreams happen.

God's Spirit is upon our flesh, calling us to proclaim the Gospel,

Feed hungry people, receive the little children, visit the sick,

sing with choirs of angels, be the Body of Christ.

The Word is becoming flesh in you and me.

Yup, it's impossible but it's God, and with God all things are possible.

Amen