

## Pregnant with the Promise of God

Luke 1:26-38

2 Corinthians 1:20 says: "For not matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through Him the 'amen' is spoken to the Glory of God." Luke 1:35 TM says: The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, the power of the Highest hover over you; Therefore, the child you bring to birth will be called Holy, Son of God"

This is absolutely one of my favourite passages in the whole of our bible. There are times when I find myself reading it over and over again. And every time I read it, it is as though life is being poured into me. I can discern and feel the very presence, power and love of God. I am once again reminded that God comes to the poor in spirit and those in humble difficult circumstances to give us His favour. He looks to glorify Himself through people who have no reputation and no ability, in and of themselves. He looks for those who do not consider themselves strong and even those who are inexperienced where life is concerned: People who do not know and understand it all. I'm always encouraged by that because it means there is tremendous hope for me. It also means I am acceptable to Him in whatever condition He finds me. To be favoured as the angel said Mary was, means to be accepted in the Beloved.

However when God chooses you, as He did Mary, there will be challenges. There will be opposition. There will be difficulties. There will be controversy. There will be times you walk alone and all you have to sustain you is the knowledge that God has made you a promise. This is why Mary had to ponder those things the angel told her. She had to keep them in her heart. She had to hold those words close. She couldn't even blab them out carelessly to any and every one. Who would believe her? Sure, you're carrying the Saviour of the world. Sure the baby got there as a divine miracle. Sure God has spoken to you. Don't you think it

crossed her mind that she might have a lot of explaining to do? She had to trust God to work something out for her or she would be destroyed by the circumstances and challenges she would have to face as a result of receiving such a tremendous promise. So God gives you a heavenly promise, but it has to be walked out in the earth. However, there is a measure of grace that the Lord can give you to believe Him that will astound you. It is a kind of divine gift that comes straight from Him and enables you to stand firm and trust Him. It does not mean that you won't get hit, knocked down and even have setbacks. But my testimony would be that the power that is abiding deep down in your heart, will pick you right up, time and time again. Simple trust that He can do what He promises is what He requires. Without faith it is impossible to please Him. So, be encouraged, He will give you the measure of faith that is required for your situation. As a postscript to this reading there is a verse uttered by Elizabeth which says: "Blessed, happy and to be envied is she who believed that there would be fulfilment of those things which were promised to her by the Lord" 1:45. Over the years I have seen many who have started out believing God, who have since given up. When I asked the Lord about this. What I believe He showed me is that we have to be entirely dependent upon Him. It is not our willpower or determination to see our promise birthed. Such an attitude stems from an area of pride. I think this hang on kind of faith is divinely given. I call it a love gift from the Father. I remember a time I asked the Lord to help me understand the faith I was experiencing for a particular congregation (Plaistow Christian Church) I was leading to grow as I couldn't understand it myself. He said to me that my hand had chosen to live by faith for the promise. He reminded me of the story of one of David's mighty men Eleazar whose hand had become frozen to his sword in particular battle against the Philistines. Eleazar overcame in a

situation where there were overwhelming odds against him (1 Samuel 23:9f).

That grace to cling by faith to His promise is something that God gives to you while you journey to its fulfilment. And when he has given you that gift of grace you will worship and praise Him all the more because you are keenly aware of your own personal impotence to bring the promise to pass. You won't take any credit for its fulfilment, because you know that it was only Him that kept you.

So even when those around you can't tell that you are pregnant with a promise, hold on to your baby. Quietly, nurture your promise with the Word of God and with a relationship that snuggles up to God real close until He brings it all into fruition. Trust God to bring it to pass & don't settle for less than His best. Many of us are pregnant with a word that God has spoken to us either directly or through someone else. But if we have been carrying the word for a season with no indication that it is about to be birthed, we can become discouraged.

I wonder what promise has God proclaimed to you personally (perhaps in confidence you would like to tell me so I can pray for you)? Is it the restoration of your family? Is it a particular ministry or calling? Is it for someone to walk with you in Christ? I challenge you not to settle for anything less than what God has spoken to you in the seclusion of your soul. "God is not a man that He should lie" (Num. 23:19); if He said it, He will bring it to pass. The problem that most of us face is not the promise or the provision for it. It is the process we endure to procure the promise. This process often threatens to abort the word before it is brought to full fruition.

When I first really heard the gospel in 1975 it immediately began to take root in my soul. The revelation that Jesus died on an old rugged cross, was buried in a borrowed tomb, rose again on the third day and ascended to heaven so that I could be reconciled to

my heavenly Father, God, revolutionized my life. Salvation was the starting point for all truth to be unveiled to me.

I began to realize I had a promise (indeed that I was a child of promise). That promise included protection, provision, safety, deliverance, wholeness, restoration and eternity in heaven. I remind you that God is "no respecter of persons" (Acts 10:34, KJV). In other words, He "shows no partiality" (NKJV). What He did for me He will do for you. God has a promise for you. You need to tell the devil that you have decided not to settle, not to compromise or give up on what God has proclaimed for you. That is what his tactics have always been designed to do--to convince you to forfeit the promise of God.

His plan for Joseph, the dreamer, is a perfect example--and he used Joseph's brothers to carry it out. When they saw him coming, they said, "'Come therefore, let us now kill him and cast him into some pit; and we shall say, 'Some wild beast has devoured him.' We shall see what will become of his dreams!'" (Gen. 37:19). This is the way the enemy works to defeat us. The first thing he desires to do is to "kill" us. He wants to immobilize us--to paralyze us with so much pain that we are "cast into a pit," or place of bondage. The comment, "We shall see what will become of his dreams!" reveals his motive. He wants to steal our dreams.

How does this work in your life? Your dream is your destiny, it was for Mary, and it will be for you! It is the thing God has promised you. The devil wants to destroy the dream, the destiny inside you. The devil is a liar! Allow God to turn what the enemy meant as a stumbling block into a stepping-stone. He has the ability to take the negatives in our lives and turn them into positives. "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose" (Rom. 8:28).

Whatever God has begun in your life, He will finish (Phil.1:6). What He has spoken, He will manifest. What He has promised, He will perform, as long as you stay the course and trust Him. To endure means to stand firm under pressure. When you are under pressure you discover what is truly in you--and what is in you has already prepared you to overcome. "You are of God, little children, and have overcome them, because He who is in you is greater than he who is in the world" (1 John 4:4).

Scared teenager Mary aged no more than 14 chose to be pregnant with the promise of God: she lived in an independent and aloof town called Nazareth miles from Jerusalem, the same town that would later reject Jesus. Young, poor, female: considered un-useable by God for any major task by the professional clergy but chosen for one of the most important acts of obedience ever asked of anyone. Are you too an unlikely candidate: then God will use you: you simply trust Him and wait in Faith. Mary was said to be highly favoured: mum to the Messiah but it probably didn't feel like it! Pain, ridicule, her fiancé almost rejecting her, her son rejected and murdered. But through the promise birthed her son would become the world's only hope. That's why she is highly thought of by all generations: her submission was part of God's plan that led to our Salvation. If sorrow is weighing you down at present - then focus on Mary - wait patiently for God to finish working out His plan. Sarah may have laughed at her promise, Zechariah may have doubted, but Mary embraced the promise, believed Gabriel's words, agreed to bear the child even under humanly impossible circumstances. Despite all she affirmed: may it be to me as you have said.

So receive this revelation afresh. Don't wait to see the bottom line before offering your life to God: offer willingly even if the future seems bleak. Become pregnant with the promises of God!! And begin to prepare because what a difference a baby makes!!

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