

PRAISE INTERNATIONAL
LET IT BE
LUKE 1:26-38

Good Morning

Prayer Needs

*When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be
And in my hour of darkness she is standing right in front of me
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be
Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be
Whisper words of wisdom, let it be
And when the broken hearted people living in the world agree
There will be an answer, let it be
For though they may be parted, there is still a chance that they will see
There will be an answer, let it be
Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be
There will be an answer, let it be
Let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be
Whisper words of wisdom, let it be*

This well known

On the backdrop of obscurity, poverty, minimal education if any, combined with the strong cultural bias against her gender comes this greeting

- **Greetings Favored One the Lord is with you!** And you will bear a son:
 - *But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. 30 The angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. 31 And **behold**, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name Him Jesus. 32 He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David; 33 and He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and His kingdom will have no end." 34 Mary said to the angel, "How can this be, since I am a virgin?" 35 The angel answered and said to her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. 36 And **behold**, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. 37 For nothing will be impossible with God." 38 And Mary said, "**Behold**, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her. -Behold = see-look*
 - **Mary's invited to Behold and then she the same Behold**

There's something about Mary. "**Greetings favored one**" proclaims the angel Gabriel - God is with her. Her cousin, Elizabeth, says Mary is blessed among women. Even Mary knows this about herself saying, "**All generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me**" (Lk. 1:48-49). "**The mighty One has worked a mighty miracle for me...He can never forget to show mercy**". Favor that reveals life changing mercy that is not around her but within her, growing and it changed everything for her and us! For nothing is impossible for God.

'Let it be'. The promise that remains good news today.

- **Mercy that restores and makes whole revealed in a mystery.**

*And the secret is simply this Christ in you!
Yes, Christ in you bringing with Him the hope of all the glorious things to come.
Col 1:27b JB Phillips*

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'Let it be' a Prayer shaped Eternity from a girl who did not fully understand all the if's and how's this is not about her certainty or reasoning she uttered a simple prayer of surrender - *Let it be* and the course of humanity was shifted!

Favored – now that sounds good...

All of us, I suspect, want to know ourselves as favored and blessed by God. I wonder, though, (thanks to [Nadia Bolz-Weber](#)) whether Mary felt favored and blessed. Did Mary feel favored walking through town with her unwed pregnant belly the subject of stares and judgment? And what about when Joseph planned to quietly leave her and avoid the scandal? Where is the blessing in giving birth on the ground amongst the animals of the manger? There surely was no sense of favoring as she and Joseph took Jesus and fled for their lives to Egypt. Watching her son, the one to whom she gave life and her own flesh, be arrested, beaten, and killed does not sound much like favoring or blessing.

God's favor and blessing do not necessarily mean life is easy, we get our way, or we live happily ever after. It is not God's reward for right behavior or right believing. It is rather a state, a condition, a way of being. Mary's "yes" to God is not the source of or reason for her favoring and blessing. Rather, her favoring and blessing are the source and origin of and the means by which she can say "yes."

Trapped in obscurity - institutional hopelessness - this is Nazareth.....when did anything good come from her home town? Think about this Nazareth is not mentioned in the Old Testament, the Apocrypha, Josephus does not even mention the town.

Tradition tells us that Mary was going to the only well in that region - center of Nazareth

- Its the same well that everyone in the area had to go for fresh water.....tomorrow she would have to do it again.....there was this mundane reality.....no Hope that it would ever change....

The Angel Gabriel greets her in the mundaneness of her life. *Greetings Favored One!*

- Who are you talking too?
- *The Lord is with you....*

In this announcement to Mary came an invitation that would mean **life would never be the same!**

- You are going to have a son.....IMPOSSIBLE.....**Lets not miss the obvious.....**
- She was not praying Isaiah 7:14 over herself everyday....believe it and receive it....amen

She is receiving an announcement....an invitation – to trust what something beyond reason...

- Her response is again understandable.....***How can this be....***
- The original word Mary used is translated - **explain this to me**
- The original word Zacharias used translates - **give me evidence**

The angel explains the Impossible....and says....***For nothing will be impossible with God....the movement of God that goes beyond method it***

Now this is a direct reference point for any good Jewish boy or girl...who through there festivals, temple and synagogue worship would have heard the story of God's covenant with their Father Abraham.....who said how can I bear a son and the Angel of the Lords response in Gen 18:14...***is anything to difficult for the Lord?***

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The very basis of God's covenant was not in mans knowledge or performance but in His commitment to His Promise this is not about certainty but the mystery of covenant.

The Prayer that shaped human history – Luke 1:38

- *Behold the bond-slave of the Lord, may it be done to me according to your word.*
- Oh my goodness did you catch the power of this prayer.....according to your word not mine!
- *the Bondservant of the Lord...*my life will forever be shaped and bound to this word....**there is no other plan b. - speaking words of wisdom...let it be...**
- **The favor of God within her – that did not change her fortune – standing with others or her status in the community – but it changed everything.**

Let it Be – beloved - is more than a classic rock tune.....

- We too are favored and blessed but we must look deeper than the changing circumstances of our lives. Even when we do not see it or understand it – it is Christwithin us, working secretly, creating new life where we thought there could be none. “For nothing will be impossible with God”
- Christ within me – formed by faith....'let it be' = **to become!**

Let it be is not throwing her hands in the air and saying.....OK.....I guess you get your way - to become - she is recognizing the Power of the Word and Participating with her own salvation!

- **Let it be.....**I am participating with the work of Jesus IN me.
- Elizabeth recognizes it vs 45 *blessed is she who has believed - that word believed means being persuaded of His persuasion - Mary was persuaded - let it come into being in my life!*

Now watch this - **it was not the result of her knowledge or performance - Certainty**

- This is about surrender to what she does not fully understand.....let it be.
- Think again about what that prayer meant for Mary!
- We often stop at the her next prayer the Magnificat - *My soul Magnifies the Lord for He has remembered the lowly estate of His bondservant....all generations from this time on will call me blessed.....and it doesn't take long till we have the glorious nativity in our mind.....*you know the pretty portrayals of Mary all over Christendom?
- To this teenage mother who treasured these things in her heart....
- **A Lifetime of serving.....**and being overlooked, misunderstood, judged and rejected!

Let it be.....

- Giving birth in a dark damp cave while cattle are watching you scream through child birth.....
- You will have to raise this child AWAY from your relatives in Egypt - **she NEVER had a break from Jesus.....**come on moms.....who have had toddlers.....
- She nursed him, changed his diapers.....she had to teach him to speak in a foreign land.....

Let it be.....it can look so glorious.....yet the reality...

- So altogether normal **performing the most thankless job on earth MOMMY.**
- In a time there were no modern conveniences.....no disposable diapers...

She returns to Nazareth with Joseph.....and has to resettle....

- and now her son has become interested in of all things the rabbinic tradition which means this

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boy is spending huge amounts of time in synagogue.

We never hear about Joseph after Jesus is found in the temple at about age 12

- We never hear of Joseph in Jesus earthly ministry - tradition and scholars suggest that is because Joseph likely died - not unusual.
- **So Mary is alone...in every account of Jesus earthly ministry....**

But then lets consider the record of Mary AFTER Jesus begins His earthly ministry.....

- Matt 12, Mark 3, Luke 8 all give account when Mary and her sons came to collect Jesus.....and his response? Who are my Mother and my brothers....? **Can you imagine how that felt?**
- John 8:41 seems to confirm the gossip - the open secret about Mary....when the religious leaders turn to silence Jesus saying who are you? **'We are not of fornication...'**
- Luke 11:27 Jesus is finishing His teaching on the Sermon of the Mount and just delivered a demonized man....challenged by the accusations of religious leaders....and He responds. Then a woman in the crowd can't help herself and shouts out...*Blessed is the woman who bore you and who nursed you.....*Now that would have been a great time to give His mother a Mothers day card....but He says....**more than that blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!**

Let it be...watch this - did not mean the end of obscurity - poverty being overlooked and forgotten.

The Prayer of surrender that shifted everything....**simple and yet it had profound and lasting implications** - when it felt like rejection - when it felt like accusation - when it felt like another round of being taken for granted....**Let it be.**

I submit beloved....whether she spoke it out loud or not she had to come back to this prayer again and again....let it be....

Let it be – this is our prayer of surrender to the Mystery of Christ in us...when it looks and feels mundane or when its painful and difficult – let Christ be revealed in my life. This is not passivity or giving up. Greetings favored one – is not just the annunciation to Mary but an invitation for us to participate in God's favor in our life – let it be unto me as you have said!

*And when the night is cloudy there is still a light that shines on me
Shinin' until tomorrow, let it be
I wake up to the sound of music, Mother Mary comes to me
Speaking words of wisdom, let it be
And let it be, let it be, let it be, let it be
Whisper words of wisdom, let it be*

There's something about Mary and you and I. "Greetings favored one" proclaims the angel Gabriel - God is with her . Her cousin, Elizabeth, says Mary is blessed among women. Even Mary knows this about herself saying, "All generations will call me blessed: the Almighty has done great things for me" (Lk. 1:48-49). "The mighty One has worked a mighty miracle for me...He can never forget to show mercy". Favor that reveals life changing mercy that is not around her but within her, growing and it changed everything for her and us! For nothing is impossible for God. 'Let it be'. The promise that remains good news today.

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Closing Prayer and Communion

The Song of Mary

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord,
my spirit rejoices in God my Savior;
for he has looked with favor on his lowly servant.
From this day all generations will call me blessed:
the Almighty has done great things for me,
and holy is his Name.
He has mercy on those who fear him
in every generation.
He has shown the strength of his arm,
he has scattered the proud in their conceit.
He has cast down the mighty from their thrones,
and has lifted up the lowly.
He has filled the hungry with good things,
and the rich he has sent away empty.
He has come to the help of his servant Israel,
for he has remembered his promise of mercy,
The promise he made to our fathers,
to Abraham and his children for ever.
Glory to the Father and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit:
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be for ever. Amen.

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