

“Let it be”

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Micah 5:2-5

Lay Minister

Luke 1:26-38

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Lord, let the words off my lips and the mediation of my heart be pleasing you My Strength, Our Savior, The Redeemer.

Mary, Mary, Mary....Who was this Mary? She was no super star. It does not appear she had great wealth or status. She was not well known and hadn't won any talent competitions. Mary was just a girl, a Jewish teenager. We do not know her exact age, but scientists from the biblical worldview estimate she was between the age of 12 and 15, because that was the age at which girls of that era became capable of getting pregnant and therefore that is when they were often betrothed to be married.

Little is known about Mary's background, but since she was to be married to Joseph it is inferred that she was from the line of King David. Joseph was from this line and people did not marry outside of their family lineage in those times. It is known that Mary was from Nazareth, which was not regarded as a reputable place. In fact, in John 1:46, Nathanael who ends up becoming one of Jesus's most faithful disciples is quoted as saying to his friend Philip, "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?"

So Mary, this ***no one from nowhere***, is chosen to bring forth the Savior of the world. The fact that this could happen was not really a surprise to young women at this time, because it had been prophesized for 400 years that a young woman would be selected to bear the Christ child in the book of Isaiah. Mothers likely, passed this message on to their daughters over generations, but I wonder if people thought of it more like our story of Santa Claus, where some believed and some did not.

It becomes crystal clear why Mary was chosen to bear the Son of God, in her Song of Thanks in Luke 1 verses 46-55. Mary had memorized scripture. She knew the stories and promises. She praised the good works of the Lord and pledged to be *His servant*. She put her own thoughts and desires second, saying "Here I am Lord, servant of the Lord; let it be with me according to your word." Mary did not let her work of service go to her head and neither did Jesus, for he is quoted as saying to someone wishing to bless his mother in Luke 11; "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it!"(Luke 11:28).

We question our worth every day. I wonder why I was chosen or not chosen for something or by someone. I read into comments made and critiques given through my own lens of

experiences and embedded beliefs about myself. Self-doubt and rejection creep in and tell me things that hurt and fester; despite the fact I know they are not logically true.

I will be starting my fourth year of working with an individual therapist in 2020. Working in the court system for 20 years I recommended this for nearly everyone that I worked with, but not until my life was a crumbled mess did I consider this for myself. I always thought I was strong enough to manage my own mind and I had extreme will power, but when I couldn't fake it anymore I knew I needed help. This was the best decision that I ever made for myself. I have learned so much about who I am and how I had gotten into the situations I did. Most importantly I learned why I should love myself. God has made each one of us unique and special. What we may view as flaws are the attributes that God finds most endearing. I choose to continue in therapy, because I want to stay healthy and keep reflecting and learning about myself. To me, this is just like the daily vitamins I take, my monthly chiropractor appointment, and annual exam. Self-reflection and self-care is all about valuing the person God has created and by enhancing our relationship with ourselves we are further our connection to God.

I just finished an intensive semester of Clinical Pastoral Education. In this course I spent 400 hours working with patients, residents, parishioners, and peers, considering how my own self-image affects everything that I do and how my interactions with others are affected by what I bring into the room. I learned valuable listening skills and simple tactics to sit in tough conversations with people, but the most important fact I learned is that all of us have value and worth and the Holy Spirit intercedes for us if we let it. Mary had a servant's heart. She opened up her heart and soul to the life God had for her. She said to God "Let it be according to your word."(Luke 1:38) Jesus says the same thing to his father when he is in the garden praying before his arrest; "not my will, but yours be done." (Luke 22:42)

There is satisfaction in submission. We do not have to give up who we are and how God made us to serve the Lord, but we probably do have to give up the false images of ourselves that we have created and the ego-self that we present so that people do not see our flaws. Mary was an example of humility. She was not sinless or perfect; she was broken and damaged just like all of us. But just like all of us she was a Child of God, a gift. She knew who her master was and she was willing to trust God above herself. Mary is "blessed among women", as Elizabeth exclaimed in Luke 1:42, because she was a woman among women. She represents the good and faithfulness in all of us. She should be remembered only not for what she did in birthing Christ, but for what she did in believing that it could happen. For nothing is impossible with God. (Luke 1:37).

As we await the coming of Christ let us examine our hearts and accept ourselves for who God made us to be. We are all no one from nowhere, but in God's eyes **we are precious and we**

were fearfully and wonderfully made. Mary is a model of Christian discipleship. She knew her worth and leaned into her faith.

I am a huge fan of The Voice; I love the underdog, and the story behind the story that shows the real person, flaws and all. Rickie Duran sang The Beatles song "Let it be" in the finals of this year's competition. Paul McCarthy wrote this song about his mother Mary who died when he was just 14 years old. She had come to him in a dream as he was a scared adult trying to wade through life and told him to "Let it be" prompting him to write the iconic tune. I found myself singing these lyrics over and over in getting through these past few weeks or extreme emotions. I invite you to join with me..."When I find myself in times of trouble, Mother Mary comes to me, speaking words of wisdom, let it be.....let it be, let it be, let it be, oh let it be, there will be an answer, let it be."

Let all your stress, worry, loneliness, and sorrow rest with God. Let Mary's example inspire you. There will be an answer, let it be. AMEN!