

# “Ready to Serve” – Pr Sprengle – Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday October 13, 2024

- I. **Luke 1:38** – “Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word”
- II. **In the 1940’s, a new law required men to sign up for the Selective Service.**
  - a. The Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 was passed by Congress on September 16, 1940.
  - b. It required all men between the ages of 21 and 64 to register with the Selective Service.
  - c. On December 7, 1941, the Japanese military launched a surprise attack on the United States Naval Base at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii... and following that attack, all men ages 18 to 64 had to register with their local draft board for military service for the duration of World War II (although, only men from 18 to 45 were drafted.)
  - d. Within a month after the Pearl Harbor attack... 134,000 Americans enlisted in the military.
    - i. More than 16 million served in the military in World War II, and over 6 million of those volunteered willingly rather than being drafted.
    - ii. I’m sure you’ve seen the recruiting poster to encourage people to volunteer for service... it was created in World War I, and still used in World War II... Uncle Sam with his pointing finger... and it says, “I Want You for U.S. Army.”
  - e. Today in our Gospel lesson, God points His finger at Mary and says, “I want you!”
- III. **God calls on Mary.**
  - a. How does Mary respond?
    - i. ...In faith and trust in her Lord as a servant.
    - ii. She was ready to serve on short notice for the inconceivable... being the mother of God’s own Son.
      1. God’s Son... the ultimate servant who would give His life as a ransom for many.
  - b. Every week we say the words of the Apostles’ (or Nicene) Creed and state that we believe in Jesus Christ who was born of the virgin Mary.
  - c. Mary may have been as young as 15 in our text today and was engaged to be married to Joseph.
  - d. The angel Gabriel was sent to bring Mary a message that would change everything for her... “Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call His name Jesus.” (vs 30-31)
    - i. No one is worthy of God’s favor, and Mary was a sinner just like us... but God still chose her to be the mother of Jesus.

- ii. Through this young woman, God was about to fulfill His promise to send a Savior... the Savior that would save us all from our sins.
      - 1. After all these years of waiting... God was going to fulfill the promise to redeem His people... and Mary was the vessel through which Jesus would come into the world.
- e. Like anyone in this position, Mary is confused... so she asks, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" (v 34).
  - i. The answer from Gabriel was that "the Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you." (v 35)
  - ii. This child would not be conceived and born in sin.... this child was going to be called the "Son of God."
  - iii. This child that Mary would conceive was going to be God's Son.
    - 1. He would be perfect... without sin.
- f. And then the angel pretty much sums up the whole visit: "nothing will be impossible with God." (v 37)
  - i. The impossible was going to be possible... as a birth would take place without a human father... and with a mother who was a virgin.
  - ii. Gabriel's unbelievable claim would receive the following response: "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." (v 38)
  - iii. Mary was ready to go.
  - iv. Mary had faith... and it was faith that allowed her to accept the angel's message without question and place herself in the position to serve her Lord.
  - v. She was ready to serve.
- g. However, what was at the core of her willingness to serve?
  - i. The Word of God.
  - ii. She believed the message, the Word of God that was delivered to her, and it was the basis for her belief... her trust in God.

IV. **Just as Mary would be ready to serve, so would her Son, Jesus.**

- a. It would not be enough that Jesus was born in a miraculous way, but He had a much bigger job to complete.
- b. In fact, He shared His job description with His disciples.... He said, "...the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." (Mark 10:45)
- c. Jesus, both God and man, came to serve.
  - i. He traveled all over teaching and doing miracles... and then went to the cross to pay for the sins of us all... only to rise again after three days to bring us salvation.
  - ii. He was a true servant... as Paul summed it up in his letter to the Philippians: ... Christ Jesus ... emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human

form, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross (Philippians 2:6-8).

- d. As a true servant He made the impossible possible... because He opened up eternal life to all who believe in Him.
  - i. No longer was the human race bound by sin and death because of the curse of Adam and Eve – but by the rescue mission of our Savior we now have forgiveness, life, and salvation!

V. **So, what about us?**

- a. Mary was ready to serve... Jesus served... What about us?
- b. In today's reading, we can look at Mary and how she responded.
- c. Whether we fully understand how it will all work out or not, we need to be ready to serve our Lord.
- d. It's all possible because we've experienced God's grace through the efforts of His Son.
  - i. Not only that, but God has given us His Word that we hear through both reading and hearing – that tells us over and over again how we've been redeemed and restored through Jesus.
  - ii. And because of that redemption, now we have the opportunity and the power to be servants just like Mary.
    - 1. Paul put it this way: (Jesus) died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for Him who for their sake died and was raised (2 Corinthians 5:15).
- e. We no longer live for ourselves, but are ready to serve... and even joyfully.

VI. **Today we celebrate Lutheran Women in Mission, the LWML.**

- a. Their motto is all about willing service and the attitude of joyfully serving.
- b. Since 1942, Lutheran Women in Mission has focused on affirming each woman's oneness with Christ, encouraging and equipping women to live out their Christian lives in active mission ministries and to support global missions.
- c. They have a great history of willingness to serve and supporting those who reach out with the Gospel.
- d. You may not be aware, but they have a goal for this biennium of 2023 to 2025, to raise through their Mite Boxes and offerings, \$2,350,000 to fund mission projects both in the U.S. and around the world.
  - i. LWML has funded many mission projects right here in our District and even at Ascension... all through their constant willingness to serve.

VII. **Our God called on Mary and she was ready to serve...**

- a. God sent His Son to serve, and Jesus said to His disciples, "the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give His life as a ransom for many." (Matt. 20:28 ESV)
- b. And so, as those who are forgiven and redeemed... may we also be ready to serve.

- i. May our response as His baptized children of God be one of service... and Martin Luther put it so well... “That I may be His own and live under Him in His kingdom and serve Him in everlasting righteousness, innocence, and blessedness.” Amen.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sermon based on “Ready to Serve”, Rev. Dr. Dwayne Lueck, 2024 Lutheran Women in Mission Sunday