



## **Courageous Womanhood: The Handmaid of the LORD!**

*The Courageous Series*

May 8, 2022

### **Holy Text: Luke 1:26-38**

What a week to be preaching on Courageous Womanhood! As I'm sure we all know by now, there is a possibility that *Roe vs. Wade* (a wicked and evil SCOTUS decision that created the federal political/legal conditions for 60 million babies to be aborted since 1973) will be overturned.

Other than the carnage, what is amazing to me (and deeply saddening) is the amount of women who will fight to the death to keep the option of murdering their children at their whim. This is the wicked fruit of feminism, which at its core desires to overthrow God's order. It began in the garden with the satanic statement, "Hath God said," (Gen 3:1), and continues this day in various deceptive form.

### **But not so for you, women of Calvary Reformation Church!**

You have girded your loins with strength and strengthened your arms. (Prov 31:17) Indeed, strength and honour *are* your clothing; and you shall rejoice in time to come. You openeth your mouth with wisdom; and in your tongue *is* the law of kindness. You looketh well to the ways of your household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Your children arise up, and call you blessed; your husband *also*, and he praiseth you! (Prov 31:25-28)

***Proverbs 31:30 (KJV)*** *Favour is deceitful, and beauty is vain: but a woman that feareth the LORD, she shall be praised.*

### **Review:**

#### **What is Courage?**

- Courage can be defined as alertness/awareness of problems/dangers and a hardening or resolve to face them. It is not the absence of fear; courage manifest in spite of fears!
- *Biblical Courage is the ability to hold fast to God's Word, repent in the event of failure, and continue on in obedience, regardless of the circumstances.*

#### **Why is this important?**

1. Because obeying God takes courage and faith! There is a reason why one of the most repeated commands in the Bible is some version of "fear not," "be not afraid," "fear ye not," "fear thou not," "be strong," "be of a good courage." Continually overcoming fear and instead walking by faith is a necessary part of our sanctification and our rendering glory to God!
2. Because one of the greatest tools of the enemy is fear! Our sin nature not only produces evil desire in us, but sinful fears as well. One of these sinful fears is unbelief. "Hath God said?" is just as diabolical a question now as it was in the Garden, designed to make us lose our confidence in God's good purposes.
3. Because courage is contagious (as is fear)! God's people need to see other believers be fearless!
4. Because following Jesus comes with a cost! It will take faith, boldness, courage, and conviction to follow our Master wherever He leads! Because Jesus knows our propensity to fear, He says to us like He said to the disciples, rowing on a boat in country winds: "Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid! (Matt 14:27)

5. Because honest self-examination is hard! It takes courage to look into the mirror of the Word and allow God to change you.

### **How does this apply specifically to women?**

Because dear sisters, if there was ever a day where the world needs **Courageous Women**, it's now! As God's daughters, you face so much for which *biblical courage* is required:

1. You face consistent demonic attack. Remember, Satan's first attack was on a woman!
2. You face constant societal and cultural pressure about who you should be.
3. You face confusion about not just "who" you are, but "what" you are! A woman is an adult, human female, made in God's image!
4. You face generational neglect with respect to God's Word for women.
5. You face the generational impact of men who weren't trained biblically to honor you.
6. You face the cultural zeitgeist of devalued motherhood.
7. You face daily concerns for the well-being of your children and/or grandchildren.
8. You face your own concerns about self-worth and purpose.
9. You face the daily pressures of work and provision, a relatively new development in human history.
10. You face a multitude of unbiblical counsel concerning all the above!

Be strong and of a good courage Sisters...

**Zephaniah 3:14-15 (KJV)** *Sing, O daughter of Zion; shout, O Israel; be glad and rejoice with all the heart, O daughter of Jerusalem. 15 The LORD hath taken away thy judgments, he hath cast out thine enemy: the king of Israel, even the LORD, is in the midst of thee: thou shalt not see evil any more.*

### **Our Text: Some Observations**

1. Most of us know the story. The narrative picks up at the point in God's redemptive timetable where heaven moved to bring the Son of God into the world. (V26)
2. For such a grand and glorious purpose, God chose a young woman named Mary from the town of Nazareth and the house of David.
3. She was both a virgin and espoused/betrothed (a stronger form of what we know as engagement). We can infer from these that she was both committed to sexual purity and the holy covenant of marriage. This will be important to remember...
4. As Gabriel greets her, he does so with three purposeful blessings (v28):
  - Thou art highly favored!
  - The LORD is with thee!
  - Blessed art thou among women!
5. We cannot help but marvel at the love of God. Before Mary is given her primary assignment, one for which she would have to demonstrate tremendous faith and fortitude, she was "encouraged."
  - Friends, in some way, ALL of God's children are highly favored! This includes each and every woman here today. If you are born again, you ARE highly favored. God, in Christ, has poured out the riches of His grace upon you. (Eph 1:6-8)
  - Not only that, but as the LORD was with Joshua (last week) and Mary, so He is with you! This is one of our greatest comforts. Scripture says...

**Deuteronomy 31:6 (KJV)** *Be strong and of a good courage, fear not, nor be afraid of them: for the LORD thy God, he it is that doth go with thee; he will not fail thee, nor forsake thee.*

**Deuteronomy 31:8 (KJV)** *And the LORD, he it is that doth go before thee; he will be with thee, he will not fail thee, neither forsake thee: fear not, neither be dismayed.*

**Isaiah 43:1-2 (KJV)** *But now thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine. 2 When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.*

**Matthew 28:18-20 (KJV)** *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. 19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

- Mary was “blessed.” The word here in Greek in context means “caused to prosper.” God was going to do something amazing in Mary’s life. He wanted her to know it. He wanted her to know that she was chosen for a special purpose...that she mattered...that she was created for such a time as this! (Est 4:14) Guess what? Each of God’s daughters is blessed, chosen, and given purpose! Ladies, have you ever thought about “why” God created and called you?
- 6. But the whole scene troubled Mary. (v29) Who was this? Why was he saying these things? And there are things we don’t know. How did Gabriel appear? What did he look like? Where was Mary when all this happened? Despite the encouragement, there was more than enough going on to cause Mary (or anyone else for that matter), to be afraid.
- 7. Seeing her discomfort, the angel’s next words sound a familiar biblical refrain: “Fear not!” (v30) Why, because she had found favor with God! If you are saved, so have you!
- 8. And what great favor indeed; she would bring forth the Son of God, Jesus our LORD! (vv31-33) Mothers, may we never forget how you are favored....

*“Only women can be mothers. Have we forgotten this fundamental? Only a woman can carry in her body an eternal being which bears the very image of God. Only she is the recipient of the miracle of life. Only a woman can conceive and nurture this life using her own flesh and blood, and then deliver a living soul into the world. God has bestowed upon her alone a genuine miracle — the creation of life, and the fusing of an eternal soul with mortal flesh. This fact alone establishes the glory of motherhood.*

*This is one reason why the office of wife and mother is (such a high calling). This is the reason why nations that fear the Lord esteem and protect mothers. They glory in the distinctions between men and women, and attempt to build cultures in which motherhood is honored and protected.”*

9. Verses 34-37 not only describe the great miracle of Virgin Birth, but also Mary's dilemma. Have you ever thought about how scandalous her pregnancy would be? What would her betrothed say? Her family? The people around her? Indeed, God had to send an angel to intervene with Joseph!

**Matthew 1:18-21 (KJV)** *Now the birth of Jesus Christ was on this wise: When as his mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Ghost. 19 Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not willing to make her a publick example, was minded to put her away privily. 20 But while he thought on these things, behold, the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife: for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Ghost. 21 And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.*

10. The main point of today: **for Mary to say yes to God took amazing faith and biblical courage!** Her response to Gabriel is a model for every woman:

**Luke 1:38 (KJV)** *And Mary said, Behold the handmaid of the Lord; be it unto me according to thy word. And the angel departed from her.*

- The word for handmaid in Greek is *doulē*. It literally means “a female slave.” (Thayer)
- This is similar to *doulos*, which is a common word for servant or bondservant in the New Testament.
- A slave lives or dies at the words of his/her Lord. This is what Mary declared!
- Friends, Mary was committing her entire life to the purposes of her Master, regardless of what might come!
- Then, when she went to see Elisabeth, who also called her “blessed” because she “believed” (Lk 1:45), Mary burst forth in song!

### **Some Courageous thoughts on the Song of Mary**

*(Or Mary's Magnificat. In Latin, v. 46 says, “Magnificat anima mea Dominum.”)*

Far from lamenting her lot in life, regretting her decision, or feeling like the LORD had somehow limited her because of His will for her...

1. Mary magnified the LORD! (v46)
2. Mary rejoiced in God her Savior! (v47)
3. Mary sang that she was a lowly slave who was regarded by God! (v48)
4. Mary called God's will for her “great” and worshipped Him as holy! (v49)
5. Mary sang of His mercy, strength, and power! (vv50-51)
6. Mary sang of His judgment and justice! (vv52-53)
7. Mary saw God's will in her life as “help” and “mercy” not just for her, but for others! (v54)

Mothers/Sisters, beware the sin of Eve (discontentment, Gen 3:6) and remember who you are:

1. You, like Mary, are a handmaiden of the LORD!
2. You are a daughter of Christ!
3. You are the backbone of the home and a needed and valued member of the LORD's church.

4. You are designed to be mothers (Gen 3:20), helpers and dominion takers (Gen 1:26-28, 2:18), keepers at home (Titus 2:5) and “corner stones, polished *after* the similitude of a palace.” (Ps 144:12)
5. You bring grace, tenderness, and beauty to the world. You are critical in the plan of God!

Let me say it again and again: You are...

1. **Beautiful** in your role as a daughter of Christ, reflecting our Lord’s tenderness and care, His patience and tenacity, His submission to and love for His Father.
2. **Beautiful** in your role as an unmarried servant of the Kingdom, making the mission of your family and your church your priority until you wed.
3. **Beautiful** in your role as wife and mother, as you take up your role in the picture of Christ and His church (Eph 5), exalted in your role as the submitted bride.
4. **Beautiful** in your role as a mentor and discipler of your children, pouring consistently and exhaustingly into your progeny day after day, crying aloud for them in the secret place as only a mother can.
5. **Beautiful** when you model modesty, rejecting the examples of the world and witnessing to all of creation the Christian virtues of propriety, meekness, and humility.

### **So Sisters...**

Be strong and courageous. Be brave like Mary. Be bold enough to ask, “What does God’s Word say concerning me?” Then say by faith, “Be it unto me according to thy Word!”

- Be strong and courageous like Jael, who used her domesticity to kill an evil ruler. (Judg 4:21)
- Be strong and courageous like Ruth, who trusted in the counsel of an older, wiser woman (Naomi) and found her Boaz. (Book of Ruth)
- Be strong and courageous like Hannah, who despite being in a difficult domestic situation which caused her much bitterness of soul and weeping, trusted God for a child and gave him back to God. (1 Sam 1)
- Be strong and courageous like Abigail, who quickly humbled herself before an angry David, and saved her household despite her very foolish husband. (1 Sam 25)
- Be strong and courageous like Queen Esther, who saved her entire nation from destruction by her boldness and faith. (Est 8-9)
- Be strong and courageous like Lydia or Priscilla, who served the local church in their homes. (Act 16:10; 1 Cor 16:19)
- Be strong and courageous like the daughters of Sarah, of whom the Bible says “are not afraid with any amazement.” (1 Pet 3:6)
- Be strong and courageous, again like Mary, who said to others concerning her Son, “*Whatever he saith unto you, do it.*” (John 2:5)

Amen!