

Did you Know!

Luke 1:26-38

Grace and Peace to you from God our Father and from our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. May the words of my mouth and the ears of our hearts be open to the word of God this day. AMEN.

There is a modern day song that really stands out as I read this Gospel reading. It is a song first written by a Christian comedian and singer named Mark Lowry and later sung by many different musicians but they all call it, "Mary did you know?" And while I could sing this song to you and butcher the beautiful meaning, I figured I would just read the words to you in case you've never heard this song, played on radios. The song goes like this:

Mary, did you know that your baby boy will one day walk on water?
Did you know that your baby boy will save our sons and daughters?
Did you know that your baby boy has come to make you new?
This child that you've delivered will soon deliver you

Mary, did you know that your baby boy will give sight to a blind man?
Did you know that your baby boy will calm a storm with His hand?
Did you know that your baby boy has walked where angels trod?
And when you kiss your little boy you've kissed the face of God

Mary, did you know? The blind will see, The deaf will hear,
And the dead will live again, The lame will leap,
The dumb will speak the praises of the Lamb.

Mary, did you know that your baby boy is Lord of all creation?
Did you know, that your baby boy will one day rule the nations?
Did you know that your baby boy is heaven's perfect Lamb?
This sleeping child you're holding is the Great I Am

When I first heard this song, I thought it was really a cute song, easy tune to pick up. Then I started to think about the words and what it was asking. What did Mary know? Did she know that the Great I am was going to be born through her, did she know for a fact that her child was going to grow up to walk on water, to heal the blind, to raise the dead, to calm the storm, to save you, me and all humanity once and for all as the sacrificial lamb of God. Did

Mary really know all this? At such a young age herself 14 or 15, did Mary really know what this news of the angels really meant? I wonder.

Parents always hope the best for their children. On hearing that they are pregnant they start announcing it to others and pray for a healthy child. They start preparing the room and getting clothes, maybe there is a baby shower or a party thrown. Maybe they even do a scan to find out if it is a boy or a girl as the month's progress. As the baby grows and is born into the world the parents hope the best for their child. They may try to help them grow smarter, giving them those toys and videos that supposedly help them read and learn. They may hope that their child becomes athletic, by going outside and playing catch with them, teaching them to swim, or run. Some parents, mine gave up, think perhaps their child maybe could become musical, and so send them to classes like piano, guitar, or voice lessons. Then as the child turns into an adolescent and into a teen, the parents hope that their grades and interests are top notch so that the child will find that they can achieve anything they set out to do. Most parents hope that their children will become better off than they are, better jobs, better homes, better relationships, all in the hopes of making sure the child, who is now an adult is happy. Did Mary hope all these things for her child? What did Mary know?

Did Mary know what she was getting into when the angel first appeared to her? When this angel stands before her, did she know that her oldest child, her first born, her son would grow up to become the sacrificial lamb. What if you got a visit from an angel when you were fifteen and you were told that you would become pregnant, that the child would be a son, and "he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end." What more could a parent want. She is told that her son is going to be King forever. To follow in the footsteps of David, the great High King of so long ago. What a glorious message. But did Mary know what this kingdom really entailed. That the throne was a cross, that his royal robe would be stained with his blood. That his crown would be a ring of thorns. That his subjects, his followers would betray him, run away from him, deny him, spit on him, beat him, hurl insults at him, and shout with the mob to "Crucify Him, Crucify Him." Did Mary know all this was going to take place? I don't think so. Not at that point. Remember the Angel said the Holy Spirit will come upon you, it will, will, future tense meaning that it had not at that point. We know that when she greets her cousin Elizabeth in the later part of this chapter, she does have the Holy Spirit filling her with knowledge beyond her years. The spirit fills her with joy and she sings her magnificent, her song of praise, declaring that the Lord will raise the lowly and bring down the mighty. That the Lord will save his people Israel as he promised to their ancestors Abraham

and to all his descendants after him. This young innocent little girl suddenly now is filled with words of the prophets of old, declaring the coming of the Lord. But when the angel first came to her, she had none of that Spirit yet. So even when she said, "I am the Lord's servant, may it be to me as you have said" she did not really know what her future was really going to be like, what this child meant to her and all of humanity.

But did it matter if she knew. The song that I read to you asked if she knew that the baby boy would walk on water, that he would make the blind see, the deaf hear, the mute sing praises to God, raise the dead and become salvation for all. But did it matter if she knew or not. Look again at the text, Gabriel comes in all the light and power of the heavenly hosts and declares that she is blessed, that the Spirit will come upon her and she will bear a son and give birth to the Son of the Most High God, that she will name him Jesus, and he will reign on David's throne forever. Sounds pretty definite, no ifs and or buts, no choice in the matter, no well maybe next year my schedules to busy, no why don't you try Joanna down the street she would be perfect, not even why me's I don't know what to do. Not any of those excuses work, because it had already been decided, God was coming upon her and filling her with the Holy Spirit, she was the one.

God does this a lot in the scriptures. Remember David of our first reading. David's the king that replaces Saul. The people rose up against God and demanded that Saul be anointed the first king over Israel. And trouble ensued almost from the start with their new king, that they picked! So God sends Samuel to the home of Jesse in the small town of Bethlehem and tells him to anoint the new king, the one that God has prepared in the home of Jesse. If you recall the story, Samuel goes through all seven of Jesse's sons from oldest to youngest until he calls Jesse over and asks if there are anymore. Of course there is the little ruddy one that no one even thought to call in from the fields, the youngest of the family out watching the sheep. Surely it can't be him, but Samuel upon seeing David knows by the Spirit that this is the one, and goes and anoints him King of Israel. David is never asked, if he wanted this great blessing, he simply was anointed and the Spirit came upon him and was with him from that day on.

Or how about Paul, of our second reading today. He is another one that was given no ifs, ands, or buts in the matter. He writes these last words of his letter to the Romans, outlining the Christian faith so that others may believe through what he has preached. But was Paul the prime candidate to be the evangelistic preacher/leader of the first century. Paul was a killer of Christians. He lived to seek out Christians to arrest, capture, imprison, and simply to destroy them. But Christ comes to this man and calls him to follow. He says get up, come into the city and you will be shown what to do. And Paul enters the city of Damascus and Ananias even

though he doesn't think Paul is worth it, he goes and lays his hands on Paul, and is baptized and Paul receives the Holy Spirit. He is filled with the Spirit to become a leader of his people, to preach to the gentiles, to establish churches throughout the Mediterranean, to become one of the greatest apostles of the Lord ever.

Do you see a pattern yet, in these people, I could keep on going. Did Abraham know when he looked into the heavens and saw the billions of stars the future struggles and wars and hopes his descendants of the covenant would live through? Did Joseph know as he lay in a dry well, bleeding from the beating his own brothers had given him, know that he would one day save this same family? Did Moses know what the hardness of pharaoh's heart and what the hardness of the dessert life would be like when God called him from the burning bush and empowered him to become the leader of 600,000 freed slaves of Egypt? Did Peter and Andrew, James and John know what their future would be like, the tests and the trials and their own deaths, when Jesus called them to leave their nets and follow him. No Peter and Andrew, James and John didn't know, Moses didn't know, Joseph didn't know, Abraham didn't know, Paul didn't know, David didn't know and yes I believe even Mary didn't, couldn't have known how her life and all of humanity would be changed by this one visit.

Each of us here are like these great legends of the Bible, we have been blessed with the gift of the Holy Spirit, God has come into us in our Baptism and we are picked as his own from now to eternity. Do we know what our future is? Do we know what God has planned for us? No, we don't, but we can be like all those others who have gone before us and say yes Lord, let it be with me as you have said. We still get a choice in the matter. And so many times we choose not to be open to God, letting our own thoughts, desires, wants, opinions get in the way of where God is trying to lead us. Mary said Yes, not even knowing what the future would be she said yes, let it be. May we as a people of God here at Mt. Eden, as individuals in our communities say the same thing, yes Lord, use me as you will. Amen.

May the peace and grace of God be with you this day and through the week to come. Amen.