



Sermon Notes: December 20, 2015

Learning to Grow with a Miracle

3 of 5 from the teaching series "The Christmas Miracle"
Luke 1:34-38, 2 Timothy 2:20-21 • Pastor Paul Bradford

Luke 1:34-38

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?" ³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail." ³⁸ "I am the Lord's servant," Mary answered. "May your word to me be fulfilled." Then the angel left her.

2 Timothy 2:20-21

²⁰ In a large house there are articles not only of gold and silver, but also of wood and clay; some are for special purposes and some for common use. ²¹ Those who cleanse themselves from the latter will be instruments for special purposes, made holy, useful to the Master and prepared to do any good work.

1) Welcoming God's work in your life brings **sacrifice and joy**.

- When Mary said "yes" to the angel, she said "yes" to being stretched literally through pregnancy as Jesus grew in her womb, but also figuratively through the stretching of her heart and faith.
- Just as having children will forever change things for the parents, obeying God brings change. That's not a bad thing! There will be sacrifice, but at the end of the road is joy. (*John 16:21*)

2) Welcoming God's work in your life deepens your **dependence on God**.

- Mary had no idea what she would face, but her faith would deepen. She took hold of God's promises as treasures in her heart. (*Luke 2:19*)
- When you step out and welcome God's work in your life, your faith, your dependence upon God, will deepen. (*2 Corinthians 4:7*)

3) Welcoming God's work in your life increases your **capacity to love**.

- When parents have more children, their love does not become divided between the children. Their capacity for love grows - there is no limit to how much is available.
- The same is true when we welcome God's work in our lives. The more we give, the more we receive.

4) Welcoming God's work in your life requires **deeper purity**.

- The fact that we have been chosen by God to conceive and bear his miracle calls us to walk worthy of this miracle. The miracle is not conceived because of our goodness, but recklessness can hurt a miracle in progress.
- When a mother becomes pregnant, her diet changes. She knows that she is now eating and living for another. When we realize we are carrying God's miracle, the way we live will change.
- If we cleanse ourselves of the dishonorable, we can be used for the noblest purposes. (2 Timothy 2:20-21)

OUR RESPONSE

Open your life to [God's work](#) and prepare to be stretched.

- You'll face times of uncertainty and hardship, but they'll cause you to trust God more deeply.
- You'll be required to love bigger than ever before, but your capacity to love will grow as the need grows.
- You'll have to face areas of impurity that threaten God's work in your life, or make it less effective, and you'll need to cleanse yourself more deeply than ever before by the grace of God. But deeper purity will result in greater fruitfulness.
- When you welcome God's work, you will be pushed out of your comfort zone, and stretched beyond your capacity. But you will also grow in purity, faith, love, and joy.