

Finding Thankful  
By Releasing Control

Luke 1:26-38

*“When Elizabeth was six months pregnant, God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth, a city in Galilee, to a virgin who was engaged to a man named Joseph, a descendent of David’s house. The virgins name was Mary. When the angel came to her, he said, “Rejoice, favorite one! The Lord is with you!” She was confused by these words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. The angel said, “don’t be afraid, Mary. God is honoring you. Look! You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great, and he will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of David his father. He will rule over Jacob’s house forever, and there will be no end to his kingdom.” Then Mary said to the angel, “how will this happen since I haven’t had sexual relations with a man?” The angel replied, “the Holy Spirit will come over you and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. Therefore, the one who is to be born will be holy. He will be called God’s son. Look, even in her old age, your relative Elizabeth has conceived a son. This woman who was labeled unable to conceive is now six months pregnant. Nothing is impossible for God.” Then Mary said, “I am the Lord servant. **Let it be** with me just as you have said.” Then the angel left her.*

How many of you this morning are willing to admit there are areas of your life that you love to control? Some of you may be saying **“I’m not controlling, I’m just aggressively helpful!”**

For some people really want to control what people think about them so they use social media to achieve that perfect happy image. They get to show everybody the life they want you to see. Filtered and edited.

**The more we want to be in control the more we fight for control.**

That's why today I want to give you one thought. One big idea. It's a simple thought to remember but not so simple to live and to live it we must choose to live it out by faith. So here comes the big thought:

**You don't always have the power to control but you always have the power to surrender.**

To put it in terms that we all can understand, you do not always have the power to control what your husband does or what your wife does. We don't always have control over our marriage, or our finances but we do have The power to surrender.

OK back to Mary. So, an angel appeared to the Virgin Mary and told her what's to come. We look at Mary and say, it's easy for her because she's Mary! After all, there's statues named after her and cathedrals built in her honor, but what we forget is when the angel appeared to Mary, she was an ordinary, every day, run-of-the-mill, teenage girl. She was probably around 15 to 19 years old when the angel came to her.

I am going to assume that Mary had dreams and thoughts of her own about her future but one visitation from an angel completely rearranged her entire life as she knew it.

We all have hopes and dreams and we have life figured out in our heads. For some of you, you were done at two kids only to find you have a bonus round on the way. For some, it's not having a loved one for the holidays for the first time maybe due to a deployment or a move or death in the family and we think this isn't the way it supposed to be.

What do you think about Mary, she didn't know the end of the story. She didn't know that three decades later her son Jesus would be on the

cross and that God would raise him from the dead and you don't know, in your own story how things will turn out either.

Mary had a choice to make. **You don't always have the power to control but you always have the power to surrender.** She had to make a choice between her dreams and God's destiny. What I love about Mary is this, even though she didn't understand she trusted that her father had a purpose.

So, with that said, A thought comes to mind, **there is no partial surrender.** It's either you are surrendered to Jesus or you are not. There are no different levels of surrender.

It's remarkable to me that we will trust Jesus to save our soul but not clean up our language. We trust him to make our paths straight but not with our money. We trust him with our peace but not our plans! That's partial surrender.

**So, what is our desire to control rooted in?** To be honest, my desire to control is rooted in a lack of faith. It's not easy, our culture says, **"if it's going to be it's up to me."** I've got to be strong, I've got to manipulate it, if I just keep my head down, I can make it. I want you to listen to the words of Jesus that goes diametrically opposed to our culture when he says this, ***"If you cling to your life you will lose it, but if you give up your life for me, you will find it."***

In other words, to fully follow Jesus is to surrender control. Let it be, not my will but your will be done.

Share about what my Aunt Judy said concerning Gods will for my mom.  
"Thy will be done."

Surrendering to Jesus isn't a **one and done decision**, it's a daily choice to give up control and surrender. Every time my mom would get sick, I would pray, "I trust you Lord. Not my will but your will be done."

It's amazing to me that when Mary surrendered control to God, she eventually saw evidence of the faithfulness of God. Think about the implications of Mary's surrender. She is engaged to Joseph and she has to tell him this. Can you imagine that conversation?

But look what happens, God sent an angel to Joseph and says all of this is legit, you can believe Mary. She surrenders and she sees the faithfulness of God. Some of you haven't seen the faithfulness of God because you haven't fully surrendered yet and given him a chance to come through for you. **Remember, We don't always have the power to control but we always have the power to surrender.**

Fast forward and you see Mary and Joseph are on the run and there's no room at the Motel 6, but God provides away! How do you pay the bills while you're on the run? Remember she's trusting God and then three Wiseman show up with very expensive gifts. A surrendered life equals a provisioned life.

Let's fast forward one more time. Jesus is in the garden under tremendous stress, so much so that his capillaries burst and is bleeding from his brow. Jesus is feeling the weight of his destiny and he says, "if it be your will let this cup pass from me." In this moment Jesus used the same Greek word that his mother used when she surrendered which translates to, "let it be." Let it be your will not mine.

Now I want you to think about the implications of Jesus is surrender. As Jesus was hanging on the cross suffering for us. His body and face are unrecognizable because of the beating he received. At a moments notice Jesus could have ended it all and taking control of his own

destiny. He could've called legions of angels to wipe them out, but he said as he hung on the cross, **"Father into your hands I commit my spirit."**

This morning I want to ask another question, **what is it that you are trying to control but God wants you to surrender?**