



water from rock

## Selah: Stop, Look, Listen- November 26, 2022

The Lord be with you.

What do you sense that God might be saying to you? I ask that because He is, after all, a God who speaks, a God who reveals Himself. We call Jesus the Word as it is God's very nature to want to speak, to want to reveal Himself to us. So I ask, what do you sense that God might be saying to you?

Perhaps God has been saying something to you through a scripture you've read. Maybe God's been saying something to you through world events or saying something to you through a sermon that you've heard or maybe the wise words of a friend. What do you sense God is saying to you? Because He is, after all, speaking to you. And as Jesus says, whoever has ears to hear, let them listen.

For the next few moments, I want to look at a story that begins the Advent season. Where God is speaking to a young teenage girl, her name is Mary. And we know her as the Mary who lives in that tiny backwater village of Nazareth. And one day, I don't know, maybe Mary's gathering firewood or baking bread. We don't know, but God speaks to Mary. He speaks to Mary through the messenger angel Gabriel. And Mary becomes not only Jesus' mother, but she becomes Jesus' first disciple. She's a true icon of faith.

I'm looking at the Gospel of Luke chapter 1, where the angel Gabriel appears to Mary. And he reveals to her, he speaks to her, telling her that she's going to conceive and bear a son. And that son will be great, and he'll be called the Son of the Most High. And he will reign in his kingdom that will have no end. And he will be called the Son of God. Well, you and I, we know the story pretty well. But you know, Mary is hearing all of this for the first time. And it really doesn't make any sense to Mary. She doesn't understand what God is saying to her. I mean, she's not had intimate relations with a man. I mean, how is it that God could do such a great and wondrous thing through such a poor and lowly girl? But the angel reminds Mary. He reminds her that with God, nothing is impossible.

You know, I used to just take it for granted that Mary would say yes to what God was saying to her. I mean, not that I always say yes to God, not that I've always made myself available to God. But you know, I just assumed in reading this story that Mary was going to say yes. But think what it would mean for Mary to say yes to what God is saying to her. I mean, here she is, a teenager girl, who'd be pregnant out of wedlock. And I mean, here's her marriage to Joseph that's going to be called off in place of a dowry for her father. I mean, her father is going to get only shame. According to the law of Moses, I mean, Mary might even be stoned. And so the question is, will Mary obey what God is saying to her? Now, Mary, she could say, she could say, you know, this



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really isn't a good time for me. I mean, could you come back in a year? Or Mary could say, this interferes with my plans. I mean, how about something else? But Mary simply says, here I am, the servant of the Lord.

Now, our word servant here is actually a weak translation of the Greek word that Mary uses. But the Greek word that she uses is the word doule. That's D-O-U-L-E. And doule comes from the Greek word deo, D-E-O, that means, well, it means to bind. As a doule is a female bond slave who is bound by obedience to her master. I mean, that's the word that Mary uses here, doule, to express her binding herself to the word of God, to what God is saying to her. Here I am, the doule, the bond slave of the Lord. And you know, at this moment, Mary is faced with a decision. Will I obey? Will I make way for the life of the Son of God to be formed in me? Or will I avoid the pain? Will I take an easier way? But notice that Mary, she does not resist. She does not argue. She does not offer up another option. She does not try to come up with a plan of her own. But Mary simply says, here I am, the bond slave of the Lord. Let it be to me according to your word.

I like here how Mary is refusing to pray the world's most frequent prayer. Your will be changed. But she's saying to God, your will be done. I don't really understand what all this will mean, but yes, yes, Lord, your will be done.

Now, notice what happens here in this very moment that Mary says yes to what God is saying to her. In that moment that she says, here I am, at that moment, the Spirit of God comes upon Mary and the Holy Spirit begins forming in Mary the very life of the Son of God. She says yes to what God is saying to her. And the Spirit goes to work. No sooner has Mary said, let it be done. And it's done. Let it be to me according to your word. And the Spirit of God goes to work. The word of God that comes to Mary, what God is saying to her, I mean, it's strange. It is startling. But as Mary yields herself in obedience to what God is saying, the Spirit of God comes upon her and begins to form in her the Son of God.

And you know the moment that you and I say yes to what God is saying to us. And keep in mind that God is speaking to us. The moment that you and I say, here I am, Lord, at that very moment, the Spirit of God comes upon us and the Spirit of God goes to work, forming in us the character and image of our Lord Jesus Christ.

I began today by asking if you sense that God is saying something to you, that God might be saying something to you that you don't fully understand. God might be saying something to you, well, it doesn't make sense right now. It doesn't seem like the right time. God might be saying to you something that it's not going to be easy, but as you let it be to you according to God's word, the Spirit of God will go to work in you. The Spirit of God will begin forming in you the life and character of our Lord Jesus Christ, answering your prayer to make you more and more like Jesus.

So let's begin this Advent season saying yes, yes, to what God is saying to us. And as we do, the Spirit of God will go to work in our lives.

Advent does begin tomorrow. And if you've not received the copy of our 2022 Advent devotional, Emmanuel, Goddess With Us, I hope you'll go on our Water from Rock website. And each day of



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Advent, you'll find the daily reading. And it will take you all the way through to Christmas Day.

I am Tim Smith, a fellow traveler. Thank you for listening. Until next time.